

AN INVESTIGATION OF A LITERATURE-BASED APPROACH TO READING:  
PROMOTING PEER ASSESSMENT IN THE ENGLISH ACCESS COURSE AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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BY

LEADER HILONGWA  
STUDENT NUMBER: 4074013

SUPERVISOR: PROF SIVAKUMAR SIVASUBRAMANIAM

UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that “An investigation of a Literature-based Approach to Reading: Promoting Peer Assessment in the English Access Course” is my work, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



Date: 11 December 2023

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Leader Hilongwa



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Selma Ndinehafo ya Lukas Shilyomunhu and Michael Jackol Hilongwa for their unwavering love and support.

My gratitude extends to Florence Laoletu, Hannes Natangwe and Stanley Joseph Albert for always being present, no matter what the circumstances.



## ABSTRACT

High school leaving learners entering the University of Namibia face a lot of difficulties. Many of them feel threatened by the sheer quantum of reading that they are expected to do. They not only feel unsettled but also find it rather demotivating to read the prescribed academic texts in their English Access Course. The ensuing struggle they experience in such reading further diminishes their poor reading abilities, thereby severely impacting their overall academic performance in English. Given this background, I believe that the use of literature texts in their English Access Course can make their reading more enjoyable and motivating to them as literature texts are ideally suited to facilitating peer assessment and role-play after each reading. Such an educational practice can help create more highly motivated readers, who will be confident to use their accrued reading ability in tackling more complex academic texts during their time at the university.

In light of this, my study investigates aspects of both the students and lecturers of the English Access course, predicated on a well-informed mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. This necessitated my using convenient and random sampling procedures to draw the sample from the population of the study. In this respect, I employed interviews, questionnaires, observation, pretest, posttest, and an assessment tool guide as data collection methods. The study also adopted a thematic approach for qualitative data analysis, where data was grouped into themes based on the research questions. Descriptive, inferential, and correlational statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data.

The findings indicate that there are several factors that may impede students in comprehending literary texts such as difficult vocabulary, figurative language, literary devices, and poor reading skills. The study also reveals that there are students who support of the inclusion of peer assessment in the teaching and learning of literary texts and who not because of student and lecturer factors. The study further reveals that many students enjoy learning language through literature, and the lecturers likewise enjoy teaching language through literature. Literature enhances students' critical thinking skills, provides informative feedback, fosters peer learning, and improves lecturers' content delivery. Finally, the study reveals that based on the pretest and posttest results, the study group's performance improved after the intervention, an indication that incorporating peer assessment in the teaching of reading thorough literature could be effective.



The study recommends further research that incorporates peer assessment in students' written essays. The study further proposes the teaching of literature through media such as TV to facilitate better comprehension of literary texts.



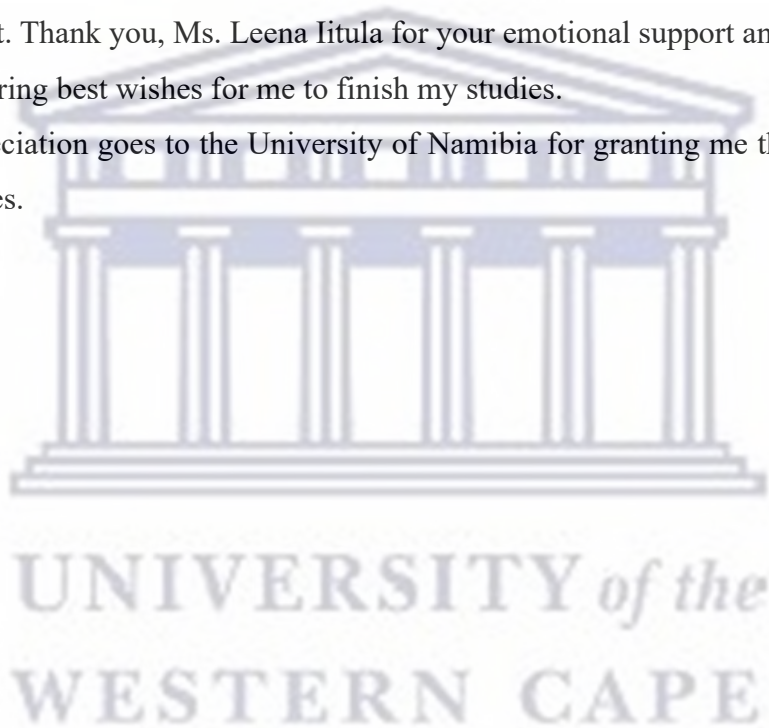
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## KEY WORDS

Literature

Peer assessment

Peer learning

Role-play

English Access Course

Pretest

Posttest

Incorporation

Framework



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## ACRONYMS

ELT	English Language Teaching
ASTP	Army Specialized Training Program
TPR	Total Physical Response
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
CLA	Communicative Language Approach
ESL	English as a Second Language
SL	Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
NRC	National Research Council
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
RRT	Reader-response Theory
OCNSER	Open College Network South East Region
EAC	English Access Course



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51 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction. cy

- He let the son to destroy their ancestor's land ✓
- He punished Mbeha's daughter for no reason.
- Made the fool to explain why he appeared in his dream why/ how
- He instructed the messenger to beat the fool many (3)
- He ask advices from the friend Neo instead ✓

of the ancestors. - He crowned the fool instead of (Don't know) ✓ 15

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1 A Point of Departure

It is important that I provide a point of departure that necessitated my need to carry out this study. I taught English as a Second Language at secondary level for about 10 years before I joined the university. My teaching at secondary level did not include literature as a component of the curriculum but served merely as an entertainment aspect of the subject. This was mainly because there were students registered specifically for literature as a subject. My assumption was that educators believed that there were students who were more capable of learning language through literature and others who did not possess that ability. Students who did not enrol for literature developed especially negative attitudes towards this as a subject and labelled it as a difficult component of English studies. On the other hand, those who studied literature often seemed to feel superior and more deserving. Upon commencing teaching at university level, I found that within the English courses that I had to teach, there was a literature component. This meant that a class group might include both those who had had an exposure to literature at secondary level and those who had not. I also realized that among the same students, there were those who did not like literature, those who enjoyed it and those who struggled to understand it and perceive its purpose during the lessons, and these were the students who generally performed poorly in the literature component as opposed to the grammar. It was the latter part of my observation that prompted me to investigate whether there was any way the teaching and learning of literature could be made more interesting for the students and motivate them to engage in reading literary texts. It is therefore against this background that I decided to investigate whether incorporating peer assessment in the teaching of literary texts would enhance comprehension and promote positive attitudes in students towards literature.

I believe the inclusion of literature in English language teaching has been at centre stage since time immemorial. A number of scholars (Collie & Slater, 1987; Maley, 1989; Ihejirika, 2014 and Simataa & Nyathi, 2016) have argued that the study of literature plays a significant role in the development of language abilities. I must highlight here that literature's usefulness in English language teaching can be seen as a panacea for nurturing cognitive and emotional aspects of the reader. Moreover, it can build vocabulary and expand language awareness for

developing students' interpretive and critical thinking skills (Lazar, 1993). Furthermore, literature promotes analytical skills, develops social skills, and encourages the use of imagination, as well as assisting students in embracing cultural diversity (Burke & Brumfit, 1986). Despite all these benefits, the inclusion of literature in English language teaching continues to be challenging for some students as they display negative attitudes towards literature.

One challenge associated with the teaching and learning of English is the inappropriate and ineffective teaching methods often resorted to as being reliable (Dahiru, 2020). Based on my teaching experience, I believe that teachers possess limited knowledge of different teaching methods, which could be attributed to lack of adequate instructional strategies during their teacher training. According to Noraishah et al. (2015), this challenge could have a detrimental effect, as students will not enjoy literature lessons if the teacher is ineffectively presenting explanation. Many teachers still deliver literature lessons using what is termed the traditional method, namely that the lesson is more teacher-centred, the focus being on the teacher as the instiller of knowledge, while students simply listen and may not have any input (Faiza & Azlina, 2020; & Yahya, 2017). It is therefore important to consider that the teaching of literature may be improved and made more educationally engaging and inspiring if educators adapt methods that are more integrative and interactive so as to arouse and maintain student interest (Patesan, Balagiu, & Zechia, 2016). Similarly, in order to prevent students developing a narrow perception of language function and style as evidenced by literature (Chen, 1999), students need to be exposed to a wide range of representational material which can encourage them to think critically and become emotionally and creatively involved, assess the text and draw connections between the material and their own experiences.

Kapur (2018), argues that education is important for the progress and development of the community and the nation, and for educational improvement to take place, we need to utilize modern as well as innovative techniques and methods. However, providing engaging activities that encourage learners to learn is undoubtedly the most challenging task for language instructors. In this regard, literature is believed to have a high motivational force due to its emphasis on personal experience (Llach, 2007). Therefore, it is our responsibility as educators to provide students with more thought-provoking and stimulating texts and activities that will encourage deeper engagement and give them a sense that they are using language for real purposes (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012).

## 1.2 Aim and Scope of the Study

My study aims to investigate the use of peer assessment in the English Access Course (EAC) classroom, a mandatory course offered at the University of Namibia (UNAM). In the context of my study, peer assessment is an assessment of learners by his or her peers which is regarded as an effective way to engage learners in both their own and others' learning. Through this collaborative learning, learners benefit significantly from the exchange of knowledge among themselves (Geyser, 2004).

This study further aims to generate an understanding of the difficulties that students in the EAC experience when reading literary texts. It also aims to generate an understanding of students and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts. Finally, the study aims to determine whether incorporating peer assessment as a teaching approach would encourage and motivate students to appreciate and understand literary texts because of the nature of peer assessment. Based on this, the rationale behind the use of peer assessment presupposes that the students will better understand literary texts and discover that there can be more effective ways to enhance language learning, such as within socially constructed groups.

Peer assessment is a very important component of my study because it serves as the intervention, I intend to use in teaching literature. Seifu (2016) is of the belief that students need to take charge of their own learning since the process of peer assessment empowers students to be in control of what they are learning. Through this process, learners are able to offer judgement through critiquing, and they also receive and give feedback. When students criticize one another, they observe how others have presented their work and ultimately learn from one another. Equally, when students give and receive feedback, they become cognizant of their mistakes and devise strategies to overcome them in future.

Peer assessment, however, can be difficult to maintain if it is not properly managed by the educator. The educator needs to make sure that the students know the rationale behind using peer assessment in the classroom. Failure on the part of the educator to highlight this may result in students taking the peer assessment process for granted and thus not serving its intended purpose. However, despite this, peer assessment has been greatly valued by scholars (Boud &

Falchikov, 2007; Falchikov, 1986; Gravette & Geysler, 2004; McGarrigle, 2013) as it can extensively enhance knowledge acquisition.

Integrating peer assessment in the teaching and learning of literature concurs with the notion that literature is an interaction between the reader, the author and the text. As students participate in reflective discussions with their peers, they develop strong analytical skills and appreciate others' viewpoints. Furthermore, it is through this type of engagement that students learn to cooperate, share ideas and listen in order for them to enhance their understanding of the subject matter. Therefore, by embracing peer assessment in the teaching of literary texts, educators facilitate an active learning community where students learn not only from their teachers but also from each other. This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also nurtures a supportive and interactive learning environment. As we explore the potential of peer assessment in the context of literary education, we embark on a journey to empower students not only as readers and interpreters but also as contributors to the vibrant tapestry of life-enriching literary discourse. Therefore, by incorporating peer assessment into the teaching of literary works, educators may engender and foster an engaged learning community. This approach improves the quality of education and also creates an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Educators strive to empower students to become readers and interpreters, as well as contributors to existing knowledge.

### **1.3 Context of the Study**

I conducted my study in Namibia, on one of the satellite campuses of the University of Namibia, namely, the Oshakati Campus in the Oshana region, one of the fourteen administrative and geographical regions of Namibia. The University of Namibia holds the distinction of being the first state-owned and funded institution of higher learning in Namibia. My study participants were all drawn from the Language and Development Department (DLD). The Language and Development Department is a centre for the study of language as well as teaching and research. The primary objective of DLD is to help enhance students' proficiency in the English language by teaching them various courses offered by the university in the Department of Language and Development. These courses include English for Academic Purposes, Academic Writing for Postgraduate Studies, English for General Communication, English Communication and Study Skills, Academic Literacy 1, Academic Literacy 2 and the bridging course, the English Access Course. It also offers bridging courses, such as the English Access Course (EAC), which was developed to address the needs of a large number of



Namibian students who perform well at secondary level and meet the minimum required points for admission to the university but who are unable to obtain the minimum requirement of a C symbol in English as a subject. It is for this reason that the EAC is the most sought-after bridging course at the university.

The Open College Network South East Region (OCNSER) (2009, p. 4) defines a bridging course as “a programme of learning which enables a learner to progress from a context where s/he is capable of studying at Level 3 to a context where s/he is capable of studying at Level 4.” According to OCNSER (2009), a bridging course equips students with the necessary abilities needed to function at Level 4, and this is done through contextualizing the learning for the individual learner. Bridging programmes aim to narrow the gap between students’ current English skills and the level of competence needed for undergraduate through the English language (OCNSER, 2009). The Department of Language and Development is responsible for meeting the needs of students from previously disadvantaged educational backgrounds by helping them to acquire the necessary grade symbols in English in order to continue their studies (UNAM, 2017).

According to UNAM (2017), the course is developed to serve students who wish to pursue their studies at the University of Namibia, as the course introduces students to university language skills which they need throughout their academic career and beyond. In contrast to the styles of teaching and learning at secondary schools, EAC is meant to signal a shift to a style of teaching and learning that places more responsibility on the student.

Students enrolled in the EAC programme are taught grammar (language usage) and literature. The aspects of language usage consist of the fundamental components of all language skills that are regularly taught in a holistic manner. The purpose for teaching language usage is to assist students to use the language with precision and appropriateness. In the same vein, the literature component exposes students to many different unusual language expressions (Shazu, 2014). Also, it is through literature that students are expected to acquire a comprehensive understanding of various texts which enable them to form connections and reach conclusions among other competencies (NSSC (H) English 2<sup>nd</sup> Language syllabus, (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Despite this effort (the bridging course), some students in the EAC still struggle to perform above average in the literature component. I believe that this is because the teaching of literature has not been accorded enough importance, as opposed to the emphasis placed on grammar. My sentiments concur with those of Mart (2018) who had argued that at some point in time (late 1960s and 1970s), literature fell into abandonment because it was assumed to be difficult, complex, and inaccessible to students. This, as Khatib (2011) argues, was due to the fact that no analogies or linkages were formed between the students' cultural traditions and those of the text, the teaching of literary texts became less fruitful, and language teachers began to regard literature as having little value in achieving teaching and learning objectives (Khatib, 2011). With the advent of new technology and innovative ways of doing things, I have now noted that scholars and teachers began to recognize the value of teaching language through literature, and they were eager to find ways to make this strategy more effective.

As I delve into the teaching of reading through literature, I would like to present how my philosophical assumptions address and underpin my study. I must, however, point out that a detailed discussion of the theories underpinning my study will be presented in Chapter 2 of the literature review.

In the ever-changing field of education, the study of literature is underpinned by the diverse pedagogical theories and practices that shape the way educators approach the teaching of any subject matter. As I embark on investigating the teaching of reading through literature and incorporating peer assessment as a teaching method in the language classroom, I take into consideration the reader-response theory, the constructivist theory, the cooperative learning theory, and the hermeneutics theory. I believe that all these theories allow for a comprehensive student-centred experience, given their affiliable and affinitive aspects that are synonymous with the commonalities and complementarities that exist between them.

The reader-response theory postulates that meaning in literature is not fixed within the text but is co-created between the text, author and the reader as the reader engages with the text. This is why it is important that readers' existing knowledge that they bring to the text should not be underestimated (Rosenblatt, 1938). It is therefore this kind of engagement that affects the way that reader extracts meaning from the text. For instance, if the reader's experience does not align with what is intended in the text, this results in communication breakdown between the reader and the material being read.

The constructivist theory, on the other hand, holds that readers learn by interacting with others (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of teaching literature, the constructivist theory emphasizes the importance of creating situations, especially social encounters where students get opportunities to create their own meaning. A peer learning group is an ideal environment where students can create interpretations of the literary texts. As the students participate in the peer assessment activity with their peers, they build their understanding of the subject matter through meaningful discussions.

Johnson & Johnson (1989), the proponents of the cooperative learning theory, argue that cooperative learning groups enhance collaborative environments where students construct knowledge through interaction with peers. Through working together, students exchange ideas, challenge each other's interpretation, and most importantly, learn from one another. Peer assessment calls for collaborative learning in order for learning to take place, because when students engage in peer assessment, they are not only assessing each other, they are also developing insights on the what, how and why of the phenomena they are discussing.

The hermeneutics theory centres on text interpretation (Gadamer, 1975). With regard to literature instruction, this theory guides teachers on how they can guide students to interpret literary texts in order to understand the writer's envisioned meaning. The extent to which a student reads and interprets the text is influenced by context. This is because the meaning embedded in text is not static but rather constructed and reconstructed as the reader tries to understand it. In keeping with the notion that literature fosters an engagement between the reader and the text, it emphasizes the significance of reflection and interpretation as important aspects of the education process (Gadamer, 1975).

#### **1.4 Attitudes and Beliefs Underlying the Researcher's Stance**

At this juncture, I wish to present my stance together with rationale for the choice of epistemology that I have employed in my investigation. It is my hope that this presentation will provide the synergy for the investigation and the underpinnings it needs to justify the methods I have used. Every research study is conducted on the basis of some underlying philosophical beliefs, and it is imperative that my study be situated in a particular research paradigm. My study adheres to the pragmatic theoretical orientation because it incorporates both qualitative



and quantitative research methodologies. Within this framework, the pragmatist design is divided into two dimensions, where the qualitative design follows the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, and the quantitative design follows some aspects of the positivist paradigm.

#### **1.4.1 The positivist paradigm**

The positivist paradigm implies that reality is objectively determined and is quantifiable, using attributes that are autonomous to the research instruments (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). It is a philosophical approach to the discovery of knowledge using evidence derived from scientific measurements and observations, independent of human influence (Shikalepo, 2021). There is a distinct difference between the researcher and the person being researched. The researcher takes on the role of an observer and treats the social world as if it were the natural world. Through the use of prediction, control and methodological measures, this approach automatically eliminates the influence of values, biasing and confounding variables on the study's findings. (Guba, 1990). This is one of the qualities of the positivist paradigm that does not value a subjective view.

Another view which necessitated the choice of the positivist paradigm in my study is that research approaches can be experimental and consequential (Adeyele, 2017). In order for me to comprehend events through their underlying causal links, the focus of my research was on conducting experiments. More specifically, I was interested in determining how the treatment impacted the experimental group's overall performance in literature. The hypothesis of experimental research is that experiments are the only valid way to determine the truth; however, I am obligated to point out that nothing can ever be absolutely accurate. Nevertheless, I do understand the numerous controversies that surround this notion.

#### **1.4.2 The Interpretivist/Constructivist Paradigm**

This school of thought rejects the positivist notion that there is a distinct, objective reality that can be comprehended through the application of scientific methods (Lynch & Bogen, 1997). Constructivism and interpretivism are similar in the sense that they both have faith in the social creation of knowledge and the plurality of realities as represented by various participants in research projects, particularly qualitative ones (Shikalepo, 2021). The interpretivist approach aims to comprehend the examined phenomenon from the point of view of the people involved,

and this has led to it embracing a number of different interpretations (Elshafie, 2013). Access to reality, whether it is given or socially created, is only possible through social constructions like language, perceptions, and shared interpretations, according to the interpretivist paradigm (Myers, 2009). Interpretivist scholars are able to use their varied perspectives on phenomena not only to describe objects, people, or events, but also to thoroughly understand them in their socio-cultural settings as they believe that they share the same beliefs in their communities. This is another one of the benefits of this paradigm (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022).

Since my study investigates the role that peer assessment may play in the process of language learning through literature, it focuses on a number of social, psychological, cultural and language elements involving both readers and texts. Given that many of these components cannot be directly or objectively observed or assessed, there is even greater justification for me to use an interpretivist approach in this research. These aspects require the participants in the study to interpret the social environments in which they were placed. These activities can only take place in social environments in which the participants consider both internal and external factors, including cultural, linguistic, and social beliefs, to influence how they carried out the role-play and the peer assessment observation.

The use of two different philosophies (positivist and interpretivist/constructivist) and two different research approaches (qualitative and quantitative) in my study forms synergy through which these tools can be strengthened. By the same token, the philosophies are made stronger, and the research methods are made stronger because weaknesses posed by one philosophy, or one research approach will be mitigated by the other philosophy or research approach. As a result, the utilization of the two tools in my study not only strengthens the research methods but is also meant to strengthen the research findings of the study. Most importantly, my philosophical choices are intended to bring about a counter-balance to those claims arising out of a positivist persuasion via numerical quantifications, thereby accentuating the mediating and mitigating role and influence of interpretivist and constructivist epistemic orientations in my study.

### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

Although literature is regarded as significant in the language curriculum, various language educators face some problems in their teaching of language through literature. Babae & Wan Yahya (2014) argue that language curricula do not adequately prepare educators to include literature in their lessons, in addition to a severe lack of suitable teaching materials that incorporate the teaching of language through literature. Furthermore, although some language teachers have tried to consider literature in their classrooms, the persistent inadequate training in this area has made them diffident with regard to delivering the teaching objectives.

One of the classroom barriers impeding effective acquisition of English language is the approach taken to teaching literature (Ihejirika, 2014). Taking this into consideration, my study aims to propose a framework which anticipates assisting the teaching of literature. According to the records of the EAC students' performance in literature for the past five years, the traditional method of teaching literature has not been yielding good results. This has negatively affected the overall performance of the EAC students in literature and in English as a subject in general. Therefore, in addition to the framework, this study will also seek to establish the relationship between the students' performance in literature and their overall academic performance in English, and finally, assess the effectiveness of peer assessment in literature instruction.

### **1.6 Research Objectives**

My study will attempt to realize the following research objectives based on the issues and insights that I have presented so far in the previous sections.

1. Explore the factors that make literary texts difficult for EAC students to understand.
2. Assess the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.
3. Assess whether a beneficial relationship exists between the teaching and learning of literary texts and the academic performance of students in English.
4. Assess the students' and lecturers' attitudes toward the teaching and learning of literary texts.
5. Propose a framework to assist the teaching and learning of literary texts.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

The issues and concerns that I have voiced so far necessitated my proposing the following research questions in my study.

1. What difficulties do EAC students have in reading literary texts?
2. What are the students and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction?
3. What is the effect of peer assessment on the overall academic performance of the EAC students?
4. What are the students and lecturers' attitudes toward the teaching and learning of literary texts?
5. What type of framework could be employed to ease the teaching and learning of literary texts?

## **1.8 Significance of the Study**

In developing an insight into what influence peer assessment has on literature instruction, as well as the difficulties students have in reading literary texts, language instructors and language teacher trainers will better understand the difficulties students face when engaging with literary texts. In addition, the findings of the study could also assist course developers on the development of informative literature teaching approaches. It is my hope that students' performance may improve if the proposed framework is found to have a positive effect on their performance in literature, and that it can have a beneficial impact on students' overall academic performance in English. It is also anticipated that students may change their attitudes towards the reading of literary texts and thus may experience non-threatening as well as engaging ways to deal with the predicament of reading such texts.

A cause-and-effect analysis of the difficulties many students face when reading literary texts would alert us to be aware of these difficulties. This awareness will allow both the educators and students to identify and understand the difficulties, as well as help us find ways to minimize and overcome those difficulties. Gaining insights on students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment would enlighten us as to whether peer assessment might be a beneficial teaching strategy capable of improving a student's academic performance as well as a lecturer's teaching method. By the same token, gaining awareness on the students' attitudes towards



literature in English would inform educators on how students positively or negatively perceive literature. This awareness would serve as an eye-opener for the educator in terms of what improvements need to be effected and what can remain unchanged.

Finding out students and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts also serves as an eye-opener to stakeholders in the education fraternity as they become aware of the beneficial effects of literary texts. Equally important, when students show a liking for literature but demonstrate challenges in interpreting the meaning depicted in the text, it remains a persistent concern that requires attention. Also, when a teacher attempts to deliver the literature content to the best of his or her abilities but there are no observable improvements, it still remains an obstacle that needs to be tackled.

### **1.9 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

Numerous theories on how to evaluate and teach literature exist, but not all adequately address the notion of literature instruction as signposted by new criticism, structuralism, language-based approaches, critical literacy practice and stylistics (Van, 2009). In light of this, my study will be predicated on the principles of reader-response, hermeneutics, and constructivism, as well as cooperative learning.

This study centres on the teaching of literature where active student participation is vital. In light of this, the reader-response theory, with its primary focus on the active role of the reader in text interpretation and comprehension, is well placed to provide interesting and meaningful ways of teaching literature in the second language (SL) classroom. Likewise, I believe that the cooperative learning theory emphasizes learning through sharing, where students actively discuss content and assess themselves in order to determine the acquisition of the learnt content. The pedagogical dimensions in both the reader-response theory and the cooperative learning theory, I believe, can guide the learning process by making sure that students construct their own knowledge through learning actively from each other. Notwithstanding the inclusion of the two afore-mentioned theories, I selected the hermeneutics theory because of its emphasis on interpretation as one of its key principles. The hermeneutics theory applies to this study in that it lays a foundation with the notion that the reading of texts requires interpretation for meaning to take place. In the absence of theories, results from research would be disorganized,

because researchers and practitioners would have no overarching frameworks to which the data could be connected (Schunk, 2009).

Louise Rosenblatt, an emeritus American professor, and researcher is the principal proponent of the reader-response theory. According to Rosenblatt (1982), reading is a transaction and a two-way process with the involvement of text and reader at a specific time under certain conditions. The reader-response theory posits that reading is a transactional process between the reader and the texts, and meaning is created when the reader's prior knowledge, values and assumptions interact with the text (Spirovska, 2019). Flood & Lapp (1988), point out that the reader-response method is a method of teaching literature which shifted from the standpoint that literary interpretation is a right or wrong component to a view in which literary interpretation is regarded as a transaction between the reader and the text.

According to Rosenblatt (1993), every individual, including students, constructs an interaction with the text based on their own linguistic and life experiences. Rosenblatt further says that several interpretations of text exist, and hence warns that there could never be a single meaning to a text. Another researcher in support of this notion is Iser (1978), who states that a number of text interpretations are a result of the reader's efforts in trying to make meaning while busy filling the gaps that the writer provides in the text.

Rosenblatt (1982,1993), Iser (1978) and Karolides (2000), all point to the active participation of readers in the reading process, asserting that it is because of the reader that the text comes into existence. Beach (1993), also in support of the learner's active participation for the purpose of construction of meaning proposes a set of theoretical perspectives on the meaning-making process of the reader. These include the textual perspective, which is the reader's understanding of rules, the experiential perspective, which is the reader's personal involvement, the psychological perspective, which is the reader's cognitive or subconscious process, the social perspective which is the reader's place in society and beliefs about the environment. Lastly, cultural perspective that can influence the reader's societal roles and perceptions of attitudes and contexts. Besides focusing on the meaning-making process of the text these perspectives, also try to clarify the relation between the reader, text, and context (Beach, 1993).

Karolides (2000), also indicates that there are certain prerequisites for the reading transaction to occur. Firstly, the text should be comprehensible in relation to language, characters, events, and themes. Secondly, it is essential for the reader to be proficient in language and possess some prior experience. Lastly, the readers are expected to display both emotional and intellectual enthusiasm when they engage with the text. In this regard, Karolides (2000), concedes that the above-stated three points need to be accomplished because they are important and may affect the reading process.

It is important for my readership to note that the reader-response theory may also be used as a teaching strategy in the literature class as this theory focuses on the active participation of students in a learning situation, for example, during dramatization or role-play. Numerous scholars (Probst, 1994; Tucker, 2000; Spirovska, 2019) have suggested a number of benefits resulting from using the reader-response method as a teaching approach or when it is used as a guide to teaching on literary texts. Some of the benefits of employing the reader-response method as a teaching approach are that it promotes students' participation and their responsiveness towards literary texts (Spirovska, 2019) and enables them to understand how texts shape their thoughts and emotions, and how the texts encourage an individual to see things from different perspectives (Probst, 1994). It further enables students to experience relevance in the learning task (Tucker, 2000).

Bada (2015) posits that constructivism is a teaching and learning approach based on the principle that cognition is the result of mental construction. According to this source, students learn by fitting new information together with what they already know. In addition, students will constantly try to derive their own personal mental models to reflect the new information. According to Bruffee (1993), the constructivism theory relates to collaborative learning and this learning occurs as people reach a collective understanding about the information required for a given task. In the same vein, when diverse groups of learners collaborate, the zone of proximal development grows owing to the varied experiences of all group members, hence, increasing each group member's learning potential.

Cloud (2014) suggests that since time immemorial, teachers of the world have been trying to find the most effective strategies to educate their learners. Various teaching methods have been attempted. While many teachers have failed in their attempts to make teaching and learning successful, others have succeeded. According to Cloud (2014) there was however one teaching



strategy that continued to be questioned by teachers, the cooperative learning approach. In Cloud's (2014) views, cooperative learning is more than just group work, it is a complex process that does not really guarantee that students put in groups will work together. As such, for cooperative learning to take place successfully, it requires thoughtful planning (Gravett & Geysler, 2004). According to this source, the educator should be actively involved in all stages of the planning and progress of the teaching and learning events and must acquire skills to guide the students towards attaining the envisaged learning outcomes.

Slavin (2014) and Wang (2007) have argued that cooperative learning has been recommended as the solution for a wide range of educational challenges. It is often cited as a means of highlighting thinking skills and increasing higher-order learning (Meyers & Jones, 1993; Johnson & Johnson, 1987), as a substitute for grouping students according to abilities, providing remedial education, or offering special education; as a means of improving interactions between racial groups; and as a strategy to prepare students for collaborative environments. In addition, cooperative learning is regarded as a teaching strategy that can enhance language acquisition, academic achievement, and social skills through student engagement (Wei, 1997).

Cooperative learning works for every subject at every academic level from grade 0 to postgraduate level and with students of every class and social background (Petty, 2006). It may also be seen as a form of learning that strengthens the educator's instruction by creating opportunities for students to take part in discussions or practice skills already taught by the teacher (Slavin, 2014). Studies done on the cooperative learning technique by Wang (2007) point to cooperative learning's significant role in providing students with greater possibilities to use English and to learn more effectively from peers as well as educators. Furthermore, cooperative learning facilitates the development of interpersonal connections through active engagement with other group members (Johnson & Jonson, 1994; Lai, 2002).

Meyers and Jones (1993) comment that there is an important advantage in using cooperative learning, which is that it can create a more pleasant atmosphere for learning than traditional approaches where students often find themselves in competition for good grades. A competitive atmosphere in traditional learning situations may hinder learning for students who lack self-confidence ( Scot & Heller, 1991).

According to Gravett & Geysler (2004), the successful completion of cooperative learning tasks depends on group members who can perform specific functions in the group. According to these authors, the more varied a member's functions become in the group, the more extensive and inclusive his or her contribution to the effective function of the group will be. Furthermore, the increase of cooperative learning groups in educational settings often involves peer and self-assessment. This is the reason that cooperative learning will form part of this study as it connects with peer assessment and role-play. These two practical activities have in common that they are both cooperative learning activities.

The hermeneutics theory came into existence when it was proposed by Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), a theologian. According to Meckenstock (1998), Schleiermacher believed that hermeneutics should be used to facilitate understanding of all forms of human expression. Similarly, a German scholar, Willem Dilthey (1833–1911), made a distinction between science and non-science. In Dilthey's view, non-science refers to subjects such as ethics, art, music, and theology. It was this same scholar who developed a well-considered theory of education known as the humanistic theory of education, in which understanding, and the science of understanding took centre stage (Higgs & Smith, 2002).

According to Higgs and Smith (2002), defining hermeneutics has not been easy because it is described differently by different people. Some people define it as the science of understanding, while some say that it is the art of interpretation, and others say it is the science of communication. Either way, all these definitions indicate that understanding is about transferring meaning from one person to another.

In the past, proponents of hermeneutics paid more attention to text comprehension, i.e. the written word. However, hermeneutics is not only about understanding the written word (Higgs & Smith, 2002). According to this source, whenever we deal with human beings or aspects of human beings, then automatically, we are involved in hermeneutics.

The following quotation clearly illustrates how and why hermeneutics speaks to my study (Higgs & Smith, 2002).

One of the most important things we should realize is that, in any process of understanding, we have to start from where we are now. Such a process of understanding has to begin by the two partners accepting each other as they are and not as they think they should be. The two partners of understanding influence

each other – they will each have unique life experiences and consequently, their own beliefs and prejudices, but their act of mutual communication will help both to re-interpret and re-understand themselves and their worlds. (p. 22)

The point of contention in this study is that students experience difficulties in understanding literary texts. By its nature, literature requires one to interpret what is written. In addition, this study goes further to suggest peer assessment as a remedy to this problem, because individuals learn more effectively from self-criticism or cooperative groups, and this is the view that hermeneutics seems to emphasize, “Two partners of understanding influence each other...” (Higgs & Smith, 2002). This utterance may be translated as suggesting that when students work together, they inspire one another by acknowledging each other’s views and flaws, and ultimately learn from each other.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned issues, some people criticize hermeneutics on the grounds that it is too vague and too subjective. It is imperative to understand that the concern in hermeneutics is common understanding, and in my view, common understanding may involve subjectivity as a conclusion is reached (Higgs & Smith 2002).

### **1.10 Definition of Key Terms**

The following terms are defined based on the context of my study, despite their having various meanings depending on how they are used in different settings and contexts.

#### **1.10.1 Literature**

“It is used to refer to one of the school subjects studied by students or a university discipline” (Ihejirika, 2014, p. 86).

#### **1.10.2 Literary Texts**

A piece of writing where writers of literature use their imagination to entertain the reader emotionally and intellectually which can be in the form of prose or poetry (Tandy, Koszary & Gibbons, 2019).

### **1.10.3 Role-Play**

Role-play can be defined as “a created situation in which students deliberately act out or assume characters or identities they would not normally assume in order to accomplish learning goals” (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005).

### **1.10.4 Peer Assessment**

“Peer assessment refers to an assessment of the learner by his or her peers and can be a valuable means of involving learners closely in their own and others’ learning” (Geysler, 2004, p. 105).

### **1.10.5 Peer Learning**

Peer assessment is “the use of teaching and learning strategies in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of the teacher” (Boud, Cohen & Sampson 1999, p. 413).

### **1.10.6 Figurative Language**

Figurative language is the use of language to express ideas in a non-literal way (Perrine, 1969).

### **1.10.7 English Access Course**

The English Access Course (EAC) is a bridging course that was developed to address the needs of a large number of Namibian students who perform well at the secondary school level and meet the minimum required points for admission to the University of Namibia (UNAM), but who are unable to obtain the minimum required C symbol in the English subject (University of Namibia, 2017).

### **1.10.8 Bridging Course**

A bridging course is “a programme of learning which enables a learner to progress from a context where s/he is capable of studying at Level 3 to a context where s/he is capable of studying at Level 4” (Open College Network South East Region 2009, p. 4).

### **1.10.9 Pretest**

A pretest is a test given to the research participants before the experimental treatment in order to determine the participants' level of competence in the subject matter before the intervention/treatment (Lodico et al, 2010).

### **1.10.10 Posttest**

A posttest is a test given to determine the effectiveness of the treatment (Gay et al, 2012).

### **1.10.11 Teaching Approach**

A teaching approach can be a teaching method that aids learning and helps to communicate ideas and skills to students (Dorgu, 2015).





## 1.11 Organisation of the Chapters of the Study

I have structured this thesis in such a way that it would help me investigate the literature-based approach to teaching reading. In each chapter, I explore the different aspects of this investigation in my attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of its principles, methodologies, and outcomes. It is therefore against this background that in this section I present the organizational structure of the six chapters in this thesis.

Chapter **One** presents an introduction and the background of my study where I explain the rationale behind the aim of the study. The overview of the English Access Course and its mandate is also presented. I further discuss the aim and scope of the study, the context of the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives, the research questions and the significance of the study. Furthermore, the chapter presents, in brief, the philosophical theories that underpin my study.

Chapter **Two** presents a review of relevant literature on the teaching and learning of literary texts as well as a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework. It is in this chapter where the key elements of the study are discussed, namely, literature, peer assessment, peer learning, role-play, and assessment.

Chapter **Three** discusses the methodological approaches that are used in my study. The research paradigm, research design and research instruments are all described in this chapter. I outline the rationale for my decision to use a mixed-methods design and explain the research setting and context of the problem. It is in this chapter that I align the research questions to the research instruments. The statistical pre- and posttests are also presented in this chapter.

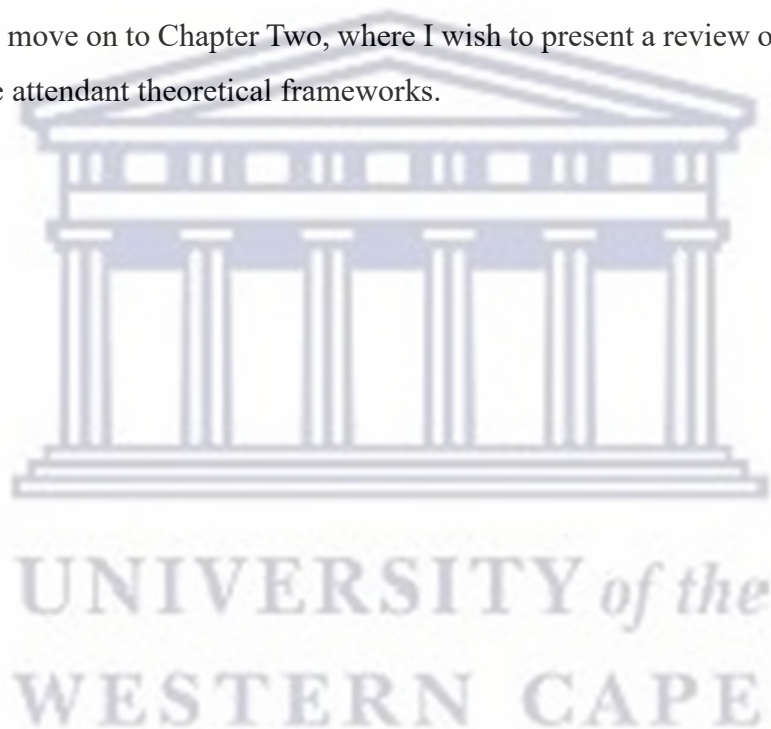
Chapter **Four** discusses the analysis of data where I present both the qualitative and quantitative data findings. The analysis of data is presented in accordance with the research questions and objectives. Qualitative data is presented in themes, while quantitative data is statistically presented.

Chapter **Five** discusses the research findings. First, the quantitative findings are presented because they inform as well as relate to the qualitative findings, and second, the qualitative findings are presented.

Chapter **Six** presents a summary of the main findings of the study. It is in this chapter that I have attempted to show that the research questions have been answered. The conclusions, limitations, implications, and recommendations for further study are also presented in this chapter.

### **1.12 Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, I have so far presented the introduction, background and rationale for my study. I have also given an overview of the research problem and presented the context of the study in relation to the participants of the study. Finally, I presented the outlines of all chapters in my study. I will now move on to Chapter Two, where I wish to present a review of related/relevant literature and the attendant theoretical frameworks.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

##### 2.1.1 Issues and Insights into English Language Teaching

At the outset, I would like to discuss the educational, cultural, and social concerns that necessitated my undertaking of this study. In light of this, I hope that the discussions that I present in this chapter will act as an awareness-building exercise and a point of departure for this research. The issues and insights that I present in this chapter will straddle as well as intersect one another as they constitute the very substance that is central to both my conceptual and theoretical frameworks. In light of this, I have chosen to present them in an entwining and integrating manner rather than presenting them in individual chapters. This, I believe, can augment the epistemic fabric of my study and its appeal to my readership. My study investigates the effectiveness of the student peer assessment reading approach to teaching literature in the English Access Course at the University of Namibia. In light of this, I will review literature related to the topic. First, the literature review explores the definition of the concept of literature and explores how literature as a body of literary texts came into existence. In addition, I also discuss the teaching approaches used in literature classrooms. Second, I present the process of literary reading focusing primarily on what happens when readers read texts, and I follow up with a discussion on the relevance of literature in the language classroom as well as students' engagement with texts. Third, the literature review explores the key features of the study, namely, role-play, peer assessment, peer learning, and the concept of assessment in general. The presentation of these elements begins with a definition of role-play, and thereafter the term assessment is explored, with a focus on its benefits in teaching and learning. Lastly, the review presents in detail the relevance of peer learning and peer assessment in making the process of successful teaching and learning of English achievable.

## 2.2 Defining Literature

The term literature needs to be defined in order for a distinction to be made between the types of literature that exist. Ihejirika (2014, p. 86), explains that the term literature is used in two different ways: “First, it is used to refer to any written material on a subject. Second, it is used to refer to one of the school subjects studied by students or a university discipline”. I would like to highlight at this juncture that it is the latter version of the description of literature that my study will concentrate on, the view of literature as a subject in the curriculum. I chose this view of literature for the following reasons: firstly, the subject view of literature addresses educational goals that serve as a foundation for language acquisition through the stimulus and support generated by the literary text (Widdowson, 1975). Hence, students and teachers using literature as a language learning resource need not master specialist procedures relating to critical concepts, literary conventions and metalanguage used in talking or writing about literature, nor is there any need for them to view literary texts as belonging to a background of specific historical, social, and ideological contexts (Widdowson, 1975) as cited in Sivasubramaniam (2004).

Secondly, according to the view of literature as a subject, students are expected to try to determine the extent to which the literary works they read are significant and applicable to their own lives (Carter & Long, 1991). It places a strong focus on language-based approaches to literary texts, since these techniques offer a "way-in" to the literary work being studied (Carter, 1997). Lastly, according to the view of literature as a subject, teachers are expected to play the role of enablers when it comes to assisting students in the development of a sense of involvement with the text, as well as in assisting students in the exploration and expression of their emotional and experiential involvement with the text (Carter & Long, 1991; Duff and Maley, 1990; Widdowson, 1975, as cited in Sivasubramaniam, 2004).

Sivasubramaniam (2004) warns that a subject view of literature does not presuppose that a student studying literary texts will graduate as a literary scholar or critic. However, Sivasubramaniam believes that the subject view of literature presupposes that the student will not miss any opportunity to discover rules of grammar and language use through a continual appreciation of the discourse value of connected language within a supportive framework. As a discipline, literature can enhance students' potential in attaining a degree

of proficiency in the target language, learning how to correctly employ idiomatic expressions, improving their accuracy in speech, and becoming more fluent and creative in the target language. It is therefore against this background that my study focuses on literature as a subject.

At this point, I have realized that there is no single definition of literature as different scholars define the term differently making the concept difficult to describe. In light of this, the following are various scholars' definitions of literature.

Literature is defined by Onuekwusi (2013, p. 5), as “an imaginative and beautiful creation in words, whether oral or written, which explores man as he struggles to survive in his existential position, and which provides entertainment, information, education, and excitement to its audience”. However, Ihejirika (2014) cautions that not all literary work is imaginative, some are factual, and others are not, hence the classification of the prose genre into fiction and non-fiction becomes inevitable.

Literature can also be defined as “a body of written texts produced by a culture and highly valued within that culture over a period of time as part of its literary heritage” as posited in Sivasubramaniam (2004, p. 108). Kenneth (2020) adds that language, historical time, genre, and subject matter are some of the ways literature may be characterized. According to Mustafa (2016), literature is seen as a historical artifact that provides accurate information about the time it was created and the society that existed at that time. Therefore, literature not only provides us with pleasure but also imparts to us factual information about different periods and societies.

The discussion presented above defines the term literature and includes my stance on the type of literature my study wishes to follow. In the following section of the study, I present literature as a body of literary texts. I also present the teaching approaches used in a literature classroom.



### **2.3 The Evolution of Literature in Education**

At this juncture, I wish to discuss how the teaching of literature as a subject came into effect in ESL/EFL classrooms, and what the English curriculum included before the introduction of literature. The discussion also gives an overview of language teaching approaches that have evolved, what each focused on, and the characteristics of the lessons. The discussion aims to provide insight into how the teaching of literary texts with the aim of improving language skills came to dominate the very system that discriminated against it. This discussion also serves as an eye-opener for second language teachers of English who at times question the relevance of literature teaching, especially in situations where students are not coping. I believe that the study of literature plays a significant role in the development of language skills in students; however, it took academics a considerable amount of time to realize this importance, and as a result, their focus was solely on the grammar-translation method and the audiolingual method (Ellis, 2001). This was due to the fact that language was primarily viewed as an intellectual process involving study and memorization of vocabulary lists and explicit grammar rules (Ellis, 2001).

The progression of language instruction over the past hundred years lends credence to the idea that advancements in the quality of pedagogical approaches will inevitably lead to enhancements in the effectiveness of those approaches, and that sooner or later, an efficient approach to the instruction of foreign languages will be devised (Richards, 2001). In early approaches, the teacher was expected to teach with material already provided, following specific instructions for the order in which topics should be covered and when. On the part of the learners, they were provided with an approach to follow for learning. This indicates that particular roles for educators, students and educational materials had already been established prior to this point (Richards & Rogers, 1986). However, I do not share this view, because I believe that for a teacher, the teaching style depends on the most important element in the teaching and learning environment, namely, 'the learner'. Sharing the same sentiment, Richards (2001, p. 188) argues that "the teacher's job is to match his or her teaching style as well as the learners' learning styles to the method". In line with this, successful learning is perceived as dependent on the teacher's ability to control and manage the classroom. However, what is taken for granted is the fact that the student's agency and engagement are equally important. Based on this argument, it is important to note that the teacher merely represents only half of the picture in the classroom (Richards, 2001).

The traditional methods in language teaching gave priority to grammatical competence on the premise that grammar was the cornerstone of language mastery. These approaches were predicated on the notion that grammar could be mastered through direct instruction, repetitive practice and drilling (Chesler & Fox, 1996). The approach to teaching grammar was, however, a deductive one, as students were presented with explicit grammatical rules and then allowed to practice using the rules, a practice I refer to as teacher-centered, where students are seen as empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge and skills taught by the teacher. In contrast to this is the inductive method, where students are provided illustrative sentences containing a grammar rule and asked to deduce the rule on their own (Chesler & Fox, 1996).

According to Knight (2001), during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the grammar-translation method was the dominant language teaching methodology. This occurred as a direct result of public schools placing a significant emphasis on the study of Greek and Latin. The study of Greek and Latin at this time focused on accessing literature, something which was thought to be best achieved by consciously memorizing the grammatical rules and lexical items of the target language. During that time, sentence construction served as the fundamental building block of the curriculum, and students spent a significant amount of time translating both into and from the target language (Knight, 2001).

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ideas which previously had only a limited influence were now being widely supported. The Reform Movement, whose most significant member was Henry Sweet (1845–1912), emerged from the establishment of the International Phonetic Association in 1886. According to Khatib (2001), Henry Sweet advocated for a scientific approach to the practice of language teaching in his book, *The Practical Study of Languages*. Sweet's point of view is that the phonetically transcribed spoken sentence is the natural unit of language acquisition rather than the individual word. In his view (Sweet, 1899), the efficient learning of a language depends on grasping sentences as whole without initially parsing them grammatically or analysing them by word division. Knight (2001) further adds that this reform movement posed a challenge to the grammar-translation technique, and as a consequence, a rising interest in the ways in which children acquire language led to the creation of natural approaches to the instruction of language.

Long (2001) points out that the Second World War and its aftermath provided a great spur to language teaching. As a result, in 1942, a program that would later be known as the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was established, and this in turn influenced the development of what would become known as the audio-lingual method of language instruction. According to Long (2001), the role of the learner in the audio-lingual approach was that of an empty vessel who needs to do more to learn the target language than merely take part in the drills organized by his/her teacher. In this type of language approach, teachers were held in high regard as models of the target language whose mandate was to assess students' work and manage classroom activities (O'Connor & Twaddell, 1960). In the audio-lingual approach, the content was delivered within the confines of a fairly strict curriculum, and any deviations from the prescribed methods were frowned upon. Researchers such as Richards and Rogers (1986) commented on this stringent guideline to imply that those who failed did not follow a proper application of the method.

From the 18th century through the middle of the 19th century, English literature was developed with a significantly expanded curriculum that included not just poetry and fiction but also history, biography, scientific, didactic, and explanatory writing (Bagherkazemi & Alemin, 2010). In the 18th century, the field of English studies placed emphasis on connecting the ability to produce oral and written discourse with a comprehension of literature. In other words, according to these authors, literature was not treated as a distinct subject; rather, study thereof was intertwined with instruction in classical rhetoric which was aimed at improving students' capabilities in the areas of discovery and communication. According to Mart (2018), in the late 1960s and 1970s, literature was largely abandoned on the grounds that it did not conform to standard grammar rules, and the widespread perception was that students would find literature challenging to understand because of its language complexity. In Mart's view, students should not be introduced to literature until they have reached an advanced level of linguistic competence (2018). The decade of the 1970s saw the emergence of a variety of teaching approaches that are referred to be "humanistic" (Long, 2001, p. 167). In Moskowitz's (1978) view, the term humanistic refers to a student as a whole person, and the classroom is viewed as a setting in which more than the transmission of knowledge takes place. However, none of the humanistic methods achieved widespread acceptance, despite the fact that they deserve some acknowledgment due to the fact that they are strategies for language learning that come from directions other than linguistics (Long, 2001).

The following approaches gave rise to what came to be known as humanistic methods of language teaching.

### **2.31 The silent way**

Caleb Gattengo proposed the Silent Way in two publications in the 1970s (Gattengo 1972). The objectives of the Silent Way are to promote self-expression in the target language, independence on the part of the learner, and the development of the learner's own capacity to assess correctness (Long, 2001). In this approach, students are encouraged to provide constructive criticism to one another as part of the process of helping them become more familiar with one another. Of interest here is that peer correction, which is essentially synonymous with peer assessment, has been the focus of language education, which, in my opinion, is a demonstration of its significance in the field. On a different note, Gattengo's Silent Way adheres to the traditional structural view of language, which emphasizes the priority of spoken language over reading and writing, which are not formally taught but are considered to naturally follow spoken language after it has been mastered.

### **2.3.2 Communicative Language Learning**

In this approach, the role of the student is that of the client, and the role of the teacher is that of the counsellor. The teacher makes it easier for students to communicate with one another using the target language by translating what students wish to say from their L1 into the target language (Long, 2001). It is the responsibility of the instructor to cultivate a safe and encouraging environment in the classroom, as this has been demonstrated to be an essential component of effective education. In addition, the information exchange between the teacher and the student is only one aspect of the relationship between the two parties. Richards and Rogers (1986) compare this kind of interaction to that of a parent assisting a child in achieving greater levels of independence. The student should be able to speak in the target language while at the same time gaining insight into their own learning and taking increasing responsibility for it. This is the desired objective of Community Language Learning, which will be achieved if the learner is successful (Larsen-Freeman, 1986).



### **2.3.3 Suggestopedia**

Suggestopedia, the system espoused by Georgi Lozano, is possibly the best-known humanistic method due to the media interest it attracted, and the magnitude of the claims made by its proponents (Lozano, 1978). It is well-known for the fact that it makes use of music to produce a nonthreatening environment that is favourable to learning, and although it is not based on a model of language, Suggestopedia often defines a language based on its vocabulary and grammatical structure. The primary goal of Suggestopedia is to improve students' ability to hold natural conversations in the target language (Long, 2001).

### **2.3.4 Total Physical Response**

Throughout the second half of the 1960s and 1970s, James Asher commended Total Physical Response (TPR) as a language teaching strategy (Asher, 1965). Long (2001) posits that the defining characteristic of TPR is the linking of language learning with physical movement, and it draws on models of first language acquisition, in particular the idea that comprehension comes before output, and that early learning is typically associated with the concrete rather than the abstract. Long argues that the linking of language learning with physical movement is the key to its success (2001). Learners typically react physically to orders given by the instructor, and the learner's output is not expected until the learner believes he or she is ready. Due to the method's inherent limitations, it is only seldom employed beyond the beginner level. This method has seen more widespread use than the other humanistic methodologies discussed here. In this approach, it is the responsibility of the educator to direct the lesson in a variety of ways, including the selection of learning materials and all other activities for the class (Long, 2001). Similarly, it is the responsibility of the student to pay attention to the directions given by the instructor and carry them out. In this section, I have discussed the emergence of literature as it is documented by scholars. I now wish to explore the inclusion of literature in the language classroom.



## 2.4 The Inclusion of Literature in the Language Classroom

In this section, I will discuss the inclusion of literature in the language classroom, particularly the importance of teaching literature as a subject.

According to Durant (1993), incorporating literature in English as a second language can be categorized into three phases: traditional, functional and discourse stylistics. In the traditional phase, literature is considered worthy and appropriate in the language classroom (Mart, 2018). The functional phase, which covers the 1960s and 1970s, saw the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) losing its popularity, and the teaching of literature was likewise not spared (Mart, 2018). In the discourse stylistic phase which emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s, literature was revived in the language classroom (Mart, 2018). This is the period that saw a decisive switch against literature in teaching English as a foreign language (Collie & Slater, 1987). In the mid-1980s, there was a need to provide basic content knowledge for language learners; therefore, literary texts came into prominence (Mart, 2018). In this phase, it was proposed that it was important to study a wide range of literary texts to promote Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Literature thus survived a period of distrust and became a valuable tool for fostering the development of language competence (Mart, 2018).

There has been a lot of discussion regarding how to teach literature in a language lesson. Some teachers argue that students are uninterested in reading literary books, while students argue that the texts, they are given are obsolete and include difficult terminology (Padurean, 2015). Students may wonder why they have to study literature at university. They may dislike studying literature because they believe it serves no purpose for them, or as Kay (1982) puts it, it serves no purpose for their academic or professional needs.

Researchers who reject the notion of teaching language through literature argue that the language employed in literary texts is too complex and difficult and that it does not help students learn grammar and lexical patterns that they can use in their daily lives (Kay, 1982). Although not wholly opposed to the idea, Aina (1979) proposes that literature be taught through combining ideas and themes from many areas rather than focusing solely on the four language skills of reading, speaking, writing, and listening. In this way,

literature should help students develop their literary and cultural skills. Some scholars, according to Widdowson (1984), argue that literature has no place in the language classroom because it has no practical use. I believe the practical application is lacking because we, as educators, fail to be innovative in our classrooms. Literature can be taught in a variety of ways.

According to Khatib (2011), the majority of teachers in traditional classes were English literature graduates who attempted to teach literature in the same way they were taught. This included literary text analyses that were critical, rhetorical, and stylistic in nature, and activities that did not meet the communicative /experiential learning goals of language learners. As a result of these prevalent issues, language teachers came to view literature as an ineffective tool for achieving teaching and learning objectives. However, language teachers have recently acknowledged the value of literary works, such as short stories and novels, in the development of various aspects of a second language. Khatib adds that traditionally, literature had a central role in language classrooms; however, there were several problems with the use of literary texts in traditional language classrooms. Teaching literature, according to Khatib (2011), entailed the tedious memorization of word lists derived from texts and the translation of literary masterpieces. Because no analogies or linkages were formed between the students' cultural traditions and those of the text, the teaching of literary texts became less fruitful, and language teachers began to regard literature as having little value in achieving teaching and learning objectives (Khatib, 2011).

Most students who study the English language with an emphasis on reading and writing skills may not recognize the value of studying literature, particularly if they have no ambition to pursue English or translation studies at university (Baca, Flores & Gonzalez 2010). If I apply this circumstance to my students, I believe that this observation is accurate. First, the fact that these students have not been informed about the rationale for teaching literature as a subject makes it difficult for them to be interested in studying it. Second, most Namibian secondary school students do not study literature as a subject, and as a result, they are typically intimidated by it because of how they see literary texts. These students feel that only students who are well-spoken and are academic high achievers are eligible to study literature as a subject. As a result, the vast majority of them do not even want to hear about it.

In the past, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) used literature to teach a foreign language because the assumption was that the language used in literary work was perceived to be grammatically accurate. Koutsompou (2015) points out that the course emphasis was placed on form, and on learning grammatical rules and lexical items exactly as they appeared in the text with no attention given to literary- or content-related aspects. With the passage of time, the GTM lost its importance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Views contrary to what was believed prior to this are that language used in literature in the GTM is not consistent with everyday language usage and that students needed to be inspired to develop their communicative skills (Padurean, 2015). Thus, a communicative approach to language was favoured. Likewise, Shazu (2014) writes that from the 1950s to the early 1980s, English language teaching was dominated by discourses that supported strong pragmatic approaches to language where priority was accorded to communicative competence and specific practical and functional purposes. The Communicative Language Approach (CLA) or communicative language teaching (CLT) focuses on developing learners' communicative skills for practical purposes (Padurean, 2015). There has been no universally accepted definition of the communicative language approach or communicative language teaching, and the terms are used interchangeably to mean an approach that focuses on the communicative needs of the learners (Dodson, 2010). Nevertheless, Richards (2006, p. 6) defines communicative language teaching as “a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning and roles of teachers and learners in the classroom.”

Communicative language instruction has become a prominent notion in language pedagogy and is perceived to be one of the most prominent paradigms for language teachers interested in improving their students' communicative fluency (Stern, 1981; Namundjebo 2016). The term fluency refers to language production and is usually reserved for speech. It is based on the idea that if the purpose of classroom learning is to enhance language capacity, then communicative practice must be included (Hedge, 2000). However, not everyone agrees with this viewpoint. According to Hedge (2000), there are successful language learners who have gone through an English language instruction curriculum that places less emphasis on communication abilities. Widdowson (1984) argued for literature in the language classroom for precisely the reason that language courses should not merely train

students in certain fields. It is also against this view that in the 80s, various scholars and linguists advocated for literature in English classrooms (Padurean, 2015).

Contrary to the above views on communicative language teaching, Little, Devitt and Singleton (1994) point out that there have been numerous widespread critics of the CLT, firstly because CLT is concerned solely with the spoken language and secondly because CLT is indifferent to grammar. The former came up as a result of the fact that the initial communicative programs were focused on teaching students whose primary requirement was for a fundamental level of proficiency in oral communication. There are two schools of thought that subscribe to the view that the communicative approach is indifferent to grammar. Some people are of the opinion that the first form should be avoided because as a matter of pedagogical principle, it is antagonistic toward the explicit treatment of grammar. With regard to the second kind, there are those who argue that the communicative approach, which is primarily concerned with the exchanges of meaning, does not give sufficient weight to grammatical form because it is so focused on meaning exchanges. According to Little, Devitt, and Singleton's (1994) reasoning, this claim originates from the idea that in essence, real sense communication is dependent on grammar, because if it is not taken into consideration, there can be a communication breakdown in terms of accurate usage of the language. This is a point of view with which I agree, because, in general, the instruction of grammar is important; however, we should exercise caution in the way that it is presented.

Following the approaches described above, interest in literature as one of the most valuable language teaching materials resurfaced significantly (Sanz & Fernandez, 1997). Hişmanöglü (2005) argues that the role of literature as a basic component and source of authentic texts in the language curriculum, rather than as the end goal of English training, has gained momentum. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses, for example, in which literary works have never been considered as one of the most valuable resources available, literature has induced a fresh, impressive atmosphere (Thom, 2008). As a result, scholars thought to develop several pedagogical ways for teaching literature, and three major approaches to teaching literature emerged: the language model, the cultural model, and the personal growth model.



### **2.4.1 The Language Model**

The language model comprises both positive and negative characteristics. Its focus on how language is utilized in literary texts and the fact that it fosters the acquisition of knowledge connected to the text are two of its positive aspects. It also sees literature as a means of reinforcing vocabulary, grammar, and language manipulation, with a particular focus on presenting students with actual language texts (Iida, 2011). This language model on the other hand, discourages creative thinking and diminishes the pleasure of reading literature (Padurean, 2015).

### **2.4.2 The Cultural Model**

In this approach, students are taught how to interact with literary work in relation to the target language. It is critical to note that the cultural model pays attention not only to language acquisition but also to understanding a country's culture and ideology. Students use this model to investigate and interpret a text's social, political, literary, and historical context (Yimwilai, 2015; Koutsompou, 2015).

### **2.4.3 The Personal Growth Model**

In this model, the emphasis is on students being able to voice their thoughts and beliefs, to connect their own experiences to the text, and to employ critical thinking skills. The interaction that takes place between the literary text and the reader encourages students to create their own knowledge as prompted by the text (Iida, 2013). Students should be emotionally and intellectually invested in the literary work (Padurean, 2015). In order to support personal growth, teachers should choose texts that allow students to respond and use their imagination and ideas creatively (Koutsompou, 2015).

Although each of these language models has its own characteristics, in the context of my study, I find all models appropriate as they all discuss what constitutes literature and what literature can offer. For instance, the study of language through literature aims to foster development of language skills in addition to grammar and vocabulary, and this is what the language model emphasizes. In the same vein, literature aims to create cultural awareness among readers, allowing the reader to appreciate a diverse range of cultural groups that exist. This is what the cultural model centres around. Last, the aim in literature is to evoke emotions in the reader as well as develop the reader's intellectual abilities by fostering



critical thinking and analytical skills. These benefits align well with the personal growth model where readers are encouraged to use their own imagination and experiences.

Having discussed how literary texts came about, I now wish to include the following quotation, first, because of what Muhammed (2013) says about literature teaching, and second, because I believe the quotation serves to remind literature teachers to keep abreast of the technological developments which have impacted almost every aspect of our lives, including education. According to Muhammed (2013), “traditional education does not take into account the experiences that young people may have, nor does it match their abilities and needs, because it imposes its rules and facts on the learning process while students are in a complete state of receptivity and obedience.” According to Padurean (2015),

It is very important for teachers to understand that literature is a very sensitive subject in a digitized era. Less and less students read out of pleasure and most of them do not read at all. Digital summaries replace printed books and if teachers do not change their approach to literature, soon they will be the only ones who understand what they talk about. (p. 197)

Besides the development of teaching approaches to literature, there are conditions that support the use of literature in the language classroom. Firstly, the linguistic criterion requires that literature should be included in language instruction as it offers students actual, authentic samples of language as well as actual examples of a variety of style, types of texts, and registers (Koutsompou, 2015). Babae and Wan Yahya, (2014) advocate for language students to be taught a variety of literary genres and styles and how to distinguish their functions accordingly.

Secondly, the methodological criterion points out that literary texts can be interpreted differently, resulting in different opinions from students, and as a result, meaningful, inspiring contact between the text, students, and teacher are created (Widdowson, 1983). This criterion also requires the student’s active participation, with the literary text being the central focus of attention. The students’ active participation leads them to become autonomous thinkers, a characteristic which is crucial to the learning process (Koutsompou, 2015).

Finally, there is the motivational criterion. This principle deals with the writer's true feelings and how these feelings motivate the learner. Students access this personal experience through the literary text, and if the theme touches them and provokes them, they will be able to tie what they are reading to their world and what they know and feel. Because literature has a high motivational force due to its calling on personal experience, just as stipulated by the reader-response theory, teachers should devise stimulating activities that encourage students to engage with literary texts.

Once again, I wish to state that all these criteria align with my study. Firstly, the linguistic criterion encourages the inclusion of literature in the language classroom because literature is authentic and introduces students to different genres. This is important in the English classroom as students can appreciate the benefits of literature, such as vocabulary acquisition that emanates from the different literary texts. Secondly, the methodological criterion also informs my study because it encourages the subjective view of the student. In this approach, the focus is more learner-centered in that the student is viewed as the discoverer of his or her own knowledge. Lastly, the motivational criterion focuses on how the author evokes the emotional aspect for the student. The reader needs to become deeply immersed in the literary work in order to comprehend it. Without the emotional engagement, the reader may not completely understand the author's point of view. It is intriguing to consider how these criteria align also with the constructivist theory (methodological criterion and linguistic criterion), and the reader-response theory (motivational criterion) that underpin my study.

Having discussed the inclusion of literature in language teaching, I now wish to discuss the nature of literary reading in the language classroom.

## **2.5 Literary Reading in ESL Classroom**

As I alluded to earlier, this section centres around the nature of literary reading in the ESL classroom.

Teachers sometimes find it simpler to impart their literary knowledge directly to students; however, students benefit most from reading texts when they are accorded opportunities to think critically and thoughtfully on their own terms without the influence of others' opinions. The reader-response theory supports this notion that students need to be transformed into engaged, thoughtful, and critical readers (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017).

With use of the reader-responses technique, students' increased comprehension of literary texts is a direct result of their increased transactional interaction with the texts. An individual's ability to read a text and comprehend its meaning is referred to as reading comprehension, and the amount of reading comprehension that a student possesses is directly influenced by the student's capacity to connect with and think critically about the content of the text (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017).

Learners of various different learning abilities and disabilities can partake in meaningful authentic experiences with classroom application of reader-response strategies that are practical in nature. These experiences help students improve their literary skills and their comprehension of literary texts. Students are motivated to respond to literary works through the use of these types of instructional applications as a means of meaningfully interacting with a variety of texts and gaining useful insights into literary works (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). Incorporating reader-response into the curriculum as opposed to relying solely on the teacher-centred traditional approach encourages students to interact with each other and the text. This approach is particularly beneficial as it results in increased reading comprehension and student engagement (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017).

Reis (2019) states that before attempting to assist students in improving their reading skills, one must first determine the reasons for the students' reading difficulties. In many cases, students might engage in basic reading strategies, but university students need to read with more engagement. According to reading theorists referenced by Reis (2019), students should become deep readers who focus on meaning rather than surface readers who read for facts and information.

Reading is defined as an activity in which a reader employs a variety of abilities to comprehend the meaning of the printed and written text (Venn, 2007). Other researchers argue that reading is an integrative model of communication with intra-active and interactive aspects (Landsberg, Kruger & Swart, 2016). According to Alt and Samuels (2011), reading is intra-active, when readers use a wide variety of their own abilities, skills, and knowledge to access the text at a high level of automaticity and make sense of it. On the other hand, reading is interactive when readers engage in a conversation with the text in order to digest the author's intended message and develop their own meaning based on the text provided (Crystal, 2010).

Students enter academic institutions with limited reading experiences and strategies (Bharuthram, 2006), as I have experienced in my language classes as well, where the majority of students do not comprehend what they read, and some have difficulty deciphering words. When these students are given reading texts, most find it difficult to retell what they have read. This is worrisome because these are the same students who are expected to read and interpret literary texts. The question then is how can they interpret what they do not understand?

I am advocating for a change in the way literary content is delivered, or better yet, in the entire field of English as a Second Language. As educators, we need to try different strategies to discover what works and what does not. The idea behind teaching English through literature, in my opinion, stems from the fact that literary texts can evoke emotions and eagerness to participate in the lesson. As educators, we need to make sure that literature teaching approaches address the issue of students' responses to texts in a way that also includes development of text comprehension and interpretation skills. Reading a story involves imaginative collaboration between the reader and author through which a secondary world is created. This phenomenon that occurs when one reads or listens to a story is the fundamental subject matter of literature teaching (Benton & Fox, 1985).

According to Benton and Fox (1985), writing and reading are indissoluble. The writer's sense of audience and the reader's sense of textural voice complement each other and establish both a social bond and an imaginative bond. The imaginative world that the author and the reader create differs but is related. Readers who understand what they read, according to Westwood (2016), may easily deduce, forecast, guess, conclude, and connect the information in the text. Inadequate schemata, a writer's failure to explain thoughts effectively, or an incomprehensible text or part of a text can all lead to a lack of understanding (Wessels, 2014). To interact with the text, readers require two types of schemata: formal schemata, which include readers' knowledge of books and rules governing both spoken and written language, and the content schemata which include tangible items that we have in the world around us, such as tables, chairs, gardens, and images (Carrell, Devine & Esky, 1988; Wessels, 2014).



Tolkien (1964) posits that when we write or read, we enter an imaginative in-between state of mind that draws on both an individual's unique psychological make-up and the real world. According to Benton and Fox (1985), the primary world's time and place disappear and are replaced by the story's time and place. We become lost in a book as readers, participating in an imaginative game in which both the writer and the reader create an alternate universe to replace the one that the book has temporarily obliterated. The world readers create is not literal, yet it has enough presence and power to interest and affect readers, but it lacks the substance with which to threaten them (Benton & Fox, 1985). Writers and readers in the secondary world require both bidden and unbidden imagery to create their alternative worlds. The author shapes his images by means of words into a text and the reader shapes the text by means of images into meaning (Benton & Fox, 1985).

The reading experience of every reader is unique. The differences are so numerous that they make the whole area of reader-response both fascinating and indescribable. What the reader brings to a story are three elements, namely, the experience, the purpose, and the psychological makeup (Benton & Fox, 1985). With experience, readers try to make meaning out of a text by bringing to it their own individuality, which can affect the interpretation of the text being read (Benton & Fox, 1985). The reader usually has a sense of purpose to read either for study or for fun. The most influential element is the psychological makeup of an individual reader. Holland (1975) points out that most literature teachers have noticed that individual students reveal personal patterns of reading behaviour which recur irrespective of the nature of the book being read. According to Holland (1975), some readers seem to find more satisfaction in one or other elements of the activity of reading, while others enjoy anticipating the intricacies of the plot and reading their way towards the end of the book as rapidly as possible. Some, again, find pleasure in pausing along the way as they read in order to allow their own experiences to interact with those of the text or to create a clearer picture of characters and events, while others find themselves rereading a paragraph to relish the writer's skill in catching a moment of conversation (Benton & Fox, 1985, p. 16–17). In my view, the reading process involves a collection of different interactions on the part of the reader.

The above discussion reviewed literary reading in EFL/ESL settings. In the following section, I discuss the motivational aspects of students' engagement in texts.



## 2.6 Motivation

According to Oxford and Shearin (2018), learning is a complicated process in which motivation plays a significant part. Furthermore, motivation impacts how far an individual is actively involved in the process of L2 acquisition. Students who are not motivated to learn cannot realize their potential in second language abilities since they are not sufficiently immersed in class. The assessment of students' motivation levels encompasses various factors, such as how often the students use second language strategies, how often the students engage with native speakers of the target language, the amount of input the students receive in the target language, how well the students perform on curriculum-related achievement assessments, to what extent their proficiency level has improved, and how long they preserve and maintain their second language skills after completion of their study (Gardner, 1992; Robin & Oxford, 1992).

Frank (1985) outlines four broad classes of motivation theories from general psychology: need theories, instrumentality theories, equity theories, and reinforcement theories. The view that the need theory is intimately related to an extended understanding of L2 learning motivation is what initially attracted my attention. My focus is on the need theory of motivation, which is predicated on accomplishment and the associated tendencies toward fear of failing and fear of succeeding in one's endeavours (Oxford & Shearin, 2018). A great number of students taking L2 classes experience the need to succeed, others feel the need to avoid failing, and a few may even feel the need to avoid being successful. This need accomplishment theory holds that L2 teachers are required to supply students with work that leads to success. Students are also encouraged to think that performing the defined activities will yield good results, and that these rewards are personally valuable (Oxford & Shearin, 2018). However, it is essential for teachers of a second language to be aware that the factors that motivate students to achieve may vary from student to student. As a result, teachers of a second language need to determine which aspects of learning a second language are most personally valuable to their students in order to devise activities that support those aspects (Oxford & Shearin, 2018).

Having discussed the motivational aspects of student learning of my study, in the following section, I discuss the relevance of literature in the ESL/EFL language classroom.

## 2.7 Relevance of Literature in the Language Classroom

This section of the study explores the importance of teaching literature in the language classroom.

The employing of literature in a language classroom, in my opinion, generates a lively classroom atmosphere. When a literary lesson arouses their interest, students are usually excited to read what happens next in a novel, discuss their favourite characters, and guess what the next reading will be about. Similarly, Koutsompou (2015) claims that the language class not only becomes entertaining but also encourages impulsiveness and interest. This is learning that has a long-term impact on the minds of the students. This form of learning eliminates the dullness of typical language sessions and allows the teacher to introduce the students to a broader context of language use.

Ihejirika (2014, p. 86) is of the view that literature and language have a symbiotic relationship, as “literature and language are not only intertwined but also interrelated. Literature presupposes language because it is with the instrument of language that literature is concretized. Therefore, it sounds absurd to study literature without language at the centre stage or to study language without literature playing a prominent role”.

In keeping with the above-mentioned view, Udor and Ubahakwe (1979) state that there exists a connection between literature and language. Because literature is completely and certainly rooted in language, the study of language and literature should therefore link together. Furthermore, because literature presupposes language, there is no clear distinction between the two (Udor & Ubahakwe, 1979).

Muhammed (2013) claims that incorporating literature in ESL/EFL classes has been controversial, particularly among those who believe that teaching literature to non-native students is less important than using traditional language teaching methods. Muhammed believes that these types of traditional techniques of group education, such as studying literary works, are a waste of time.

According to Norling (2009), the curriculum for studying literature is aimed at developing students' abilities to read literature in English with strong comprehension and reflect on texts from many perspectives. Students can thus broaden their understanding of the world around them (Norling, 2009). The goal of employing literature in the language classroom

is to make the lesson interactive, because an interactive class improves learners' communicative competence and leaves a lasting impression on their minds. This type of class can help students improve critical thinking skills while also maintaining a learner-centered environment where students can share their thoughts (Koutsompou, 2015). Literature also puts the reader in the shoes of the character. Students who study literature may find consolation in the knowledge that others have gone through or are going through the same difficulties that they are experiencing or have experienced (Lombardi, 2021).

Moreover, according to Lombardi (2021), students who study literature and read for enjoyment have a higher vocabulary, better reading comprehension and better communication abilities, such as writing ability. Students also learn skills such as analysing cause and effect and utilizing critical thinking when they study literature. Unconsciously, these students begin to analyse characters from a psychological or sociological standpoint, as well as determine the characters' intentions for their behaviour and look for any hidden motives. This is a personal response, as defined by Koutsompou (2015), in which learners are required to draw on their own experiences. As a result, the use of literature emphasizes the positive benefits of a literary text in terms of exposing the learner to various registers and patterns of language usage. Many scholars have claimed that literature is important in English language instruction (Collie & Slater, 1987; Maley, 1989; Ihejirika, 2014), and the significance of literature as a useful resource in language teaching is strongly advocated by these scholars (Erdem, 2016). The study of literature helps students' development of language skills by teaching them how to construct meaning from a wide range of language cues (Simataa & Nyathi, 2016).

Literature, as a rich source for language learning, exposes students to a wide range of linguistic expressions and uses. Students eventually get familiar with many linguistic uses and traditional forms of written style, as well as their communicative capacity. Literature further provides learners with the opportunity to process and comprehend new language in a specific context (Shazu, 2014). In a similar vein, Maley (1989) claims that literature can help teachers accomplish the goals of communicative language instruction as it fast-tracks interpretations, classroom debates, and student exchanges, as well as teacher-student interactions.

Literature, according to Ihejirika (2014), aids in the development of comprehensive reading skills. According to this source, research findings strongly suggest that substantial reading and language acquisition, particularly good reading, are linked. Wilkins' (1978) point of view is similar to Ihejirika's, who believes that reading can help with vocabulary development and good writing in a second language. Reading, according to Wilkins, allows students to access a broad repertoire of lexical objects in their natural linguistic contexts. Ihejirika (2014) adds that the ability to employ appropriate words to construct meaningful sentences that are logically and sequentially linked is a hallmark of excellent writing. As a result, according to Ihejirika, all writing efforts will be in vain if the writer does not have a strong mastery of the target language's lexicon.

Obediat (1997) claims that literature can assist learners in achieving a degree of proficiency in the target language, learning idiomatic expressions, speaking appropriately, and becoming more fluent and creative in the target language. Literature, according to Custodio and Sutton (1998), opens doors of possibility and allows learners to probe, criticize, and investigate matters of concern. In summary, literature provides students with a wealth of authentic content, and once the students become accustomed to the subject, they become capable of internalizing the language (Elliot, 1990). In a classroom setting, a student who is proficient in the target language has fewer difficulties understanding the subject matter and, as a result, may do better than average performers.

A text is considered to be authentic if it was written with the intention of serving some social function in the language community in which it was generated (Little, Devitt & Singleton, 1994). Consequently, works of fiction, poems, articles from newspapers and magazines, handbooks, manuals, recipes, and directories of telephone numbers are all instances of authentic pieces of writing (Little, Devitt & Singleton, 1994). On the other hand, in the context of language instruction, the term 'authentic text' has come to have a rather more limited meaning. Ironically, however, according to Little, Devitt and Singleton (1994), when language teachers use the term authentic text, they often mean a piece of writing that originally appeared in a newspaper or magazine which is probably of ephemeral value and interest. I posit that these teachers lack knowledge as to what literary texts could offer, such as a long-lasting effect of perceptions of life, in addition to language-related skills.



Little, Devitt, and Singleton (1994) highlight three reasons why authentic texts should occupy a central role in any process involving second language acquisition. To begin with, authentic texts are those that have been created for communication. As a result, they are more enjoyable to read than writings that have been made up in order to demonstrate the application of some aspect of the language to be learned. Therefore, it is more probable that students will grasp information that promotes acquisition. Second, the content of authentic texts takes precedence over the form of the text itself. This is partly due to the fact that authentic texts offer a more varied and richer linguistic diet, and partly due to the fact that authentic texts encourage students to focus on uncovering the meaning that lies beneath the surface structures. Finally, the use of authentic texts in sufficient amounts can begin to duplicate the immersion that individuals experience in their first language from the moment they are born.

If teachers want to create a truly acquisition-rich atmosphere, they must provide students with a substantial number of authentic texts that cover a wide range of topics. Authentic texts in a classroom setting for a foreign language can, to some extent, stand in for the naturalistic language learning environment of a community of native speakers. In other words, the greater the number of authentic texts that we present to our students, the greater the number of opportunities that we will generate for acquisition to take place (Little, Devitt & Singleton).

According to Daskalovska and Dimova (2012), including literature in the language classroom allows students to experience and explore the language in a more creative way, as well as building a stronger awareness of the language they are studying. Although communicative methodologies in the 1970s emphasized the importance of authentic materials and activities in the classroom for improved communication competency, in actuality, most classroom activities emphasize the inferential function of the language and do not provide opportunities for imaginative involvement; hence, the introduction of literature. (Daskalovska & Dimova, 2012).

In support of the relationship between language and literature, Llach (2007) claims that literature and language are inextricably linked and that it is through literature that the author and reader communicate, while Carter & Long (1991) state that literature provides language



learners with a variety of linguistic opportunities and allows teachers to create stimulating activities of greater interest and involvement.

Hişmanoğlu (2005) similarly argues that literature is not only a tool for improving students' writing and spoken skills in the target language but also a window into the target language's culture, allowing students to gain cultural competence. Furthermore, there is no better technique to improve students' understanding of verbal and nonverbal parts of communication in the country where that language is spoken (Hişmanoğlu, 2005) other than teaching that language through literature. Literary works, including novels, plays, and short stories, facilitate students' comprehension of how communication works in that country (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Even if a novel, play, or short story takes place in a fictional universe, it depicts a rich and colourful environment in which characters from various social and regional backgrounds are described. Literature is thus termed as 'culturally enriching'.

Khatib (2011) supports this notion, stating that literature provides an excellent opportunity for ESL/EFL students to become acquainted with the culture of a second language. On the other hand, students' comprehension of L2 literary texts is heavily reliant on their acquaintance with the cultural notions discussed in the book, but language teachers frequently overrate this reciprocal relationship between literature and culture to the point where students' own cultures are disregarded, if not entirely ignored.

Literature, according to Collie and Slater (1987), boosts readers' receptive vocabulary through extensive reading, a benefit termed language enrichment. Literature contains a wealth of new vocabulary and language structures, and it can help readers improve their writing skills by allowing them to practice composing different types of sentences and learning new methods of connecting ideas. Oral work is also aided by reading books. Students who are put into groups present portions of literary texts or participate in role-plays to improve their communication skills. Additionally, when students read a diverse and contextualized body of literature, they become acquainted with numerous facets of the written language. They learn about syntax and discourse functions of sentences, as well as the different sentence structures and various ways of how to connect ideas. All these skills enhance students' writing skills (Hişmanoğlu, 2005).

According to several researchers (Dechant & Smith, 1977; Dickinson & Neuman, 2006; Van, 2009), students must develop complete reading abilities, particularly word knowledge, in order to improve their text comprehension. According to Simataa and Nyathi (2016), students' vocabulary knowledge needs to be developed in order for them to comprehend the meaning of any work. They must also learn strategies for deciphering the meaning of words in context and connecting them to their vocabulary. This method can be learned by reading a variety of literary works (Simataa & Nyathi, 2016).

Literature thus improves all language skills, and as a result, can be a useful and effective tool for improving students' writing, reading, listening, and speaking abilities (Povey, 1972; Khatib, 2011). Furthermore, Muhammed (2013) contends that literature has a sophisticated structure that assists in the acquisition of the language to be learned, hence assisting users in becoming more competent in that language. Literature, according to Frantzen (2002), helps learners improve their L2 vocabulary, grammatical understanding (Tayebipour, 2009), and knowledge of L2 lexical phrases and fixed expressions (MacKenzie, 2000).

A student becomes personally involved with literature due to its power to facilitate language learning through the emotional engagement it elicits in readers (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). When a student reads a piece of literary text, he or she becomes absorbed in it. Understanding the meanings of lexical words or phrases becomes less significant to the student than following the story's progression. As events unfold, the student becomes engrossed to find out what will occur; he or she feels connected to the characters and shares their emotional responses. According to Maley (1989), readers can relate to literature because it deals with thoughts, feelings, and events that are either perceived to be part of the reader's experiences or that the reader can imagine.

According to Collie and Slater (1987), most works of literature are not written with the primary goal of teaching a language in mind. Many authentic instances of language in real-life contexts, such as forms, cartoons, or magazine articles, are already incorporated within newly developed course materials (Collie & Slater, 1987). As a result, learners in the classroom are exposed to real language samples from real-life situations. Literature can therefore be a useful supplement to such resources. Students' imaginations may be captured by themes such as love, friendship, prejudice, death and revenge.

Since a well-chosen piece of literature encourages students to read the text all the way through, this may motivate students to read a text written in a foreign language. Widdowson (1983) argues that literary work can be interpreted in a variety of ways, resulting in a variety of ideas among students, which leads to creative, driven exchanges between the text, the students, and the teacher, an engagement that enhances communicative competence. In addition, the use of literary texts in the classroom motivates and encourages students to read literature and easy-to-understand literary texts can operate as an inducement and play an introductory role at the beginning of literature training (Mustafa, 2016); however, challenging texts may also assist students to understand the language in-depth as students engage with historical, biographical, and poetry literary works.

Furthermore, literary texts have various levels of meaning, and can encourage classroom activities that allow students to express their feelings and opinions. These activities can also ignite students' response potential (Sivasubramaniam, 2004). According to Sivasubramaniam, students find these activities and the context in which they participate in these activities so absorbing that they enjoy taking risks in their search for intrinsic meaning.

By deconstructing meaning from the text, literature allows students to appreciate the world around them. Literature, according to Shazu (2014), plays a pivotal role in the ESL curriculum and in language education, and is thus a useful tool in language instruction. Literary works such as poetry, novels, narratives or plays, according to Mustafa (2016), should be employed in foreign language instruction since they comprise all of the elements essential to teach a foreign language. In addition, using literature as a resource in English learning classrooms boosts creativity, writing skills, reading comprehension, and language enjoyment (Mustafa, 2016). Finally, none of the benefits of literacy discussed in this section can be obtained through grammatical learning or the academic texts seen in classrooms (Mustafa, 2016).

In this section, I have discussed what it means to incorporate literary texts in the language classroom. I now wish to discuss in the following section the key elements of my study, namely, role-play, assessment, peer assessment and peer learning.

## **2.8 Role-play**

Role-play is an important part of my research since it facilitates the acquisition of skills as well as knowledge to be learned. The use of role-play in this study is intended primarily to promote the active participation of students in a literature classroom. I propose that it is through role-play that educators can use peer assessment when teaching literary texts. I view role-play as a teaching technique that provides students with an opportunity to engage deeply with the learning activity in order to facilitate learning and subsequently assist in the attainment of learning goals.

### **2.8.1 Defining Role-Play**

Role-play can be defined as a created situation in which students consciously act out or adopt characters or identities, they would not normally take on in order to accomplish a learning objective (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005). Ladousse (1987, p. 211) suggests that when we define role-play, we must first define each word separately. Regarding the word 'role', participants assume a role when they play a part, either their own or someone else's, in a specific situation or scenario. Students must actively apply information, skills, and understanding to successfully speak and act from a different, assigned perspective (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005). Play, on the other hand, implies a role enacted in a secure context where players can express themselves creatively, engage their imaginations, and find pleasure in acting out their parts in a less intimidating atmosphere (Ladousse, 1987; Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005).

In order to further understand what role-play means, a distinction must be made between role-play, drama and simulation. These words have a lot in common, because they all involve actors playing roles in social situations, but they are not entirely similar. First, Surbhi (2020) describes drama as a literary genre or staged art in which the actors perform the roles of several characters in order to transmit the story to the audience and promote interpretation. Drama is mostly created for theatre productions in which individuals are allocated roles and perform those roles when the action takes place on stage. Drama's goal is to educate, inform, and entertain the audience, but imitation, story, action, and language are its four main features. Second, the term 'play' refers to a work of literature composed of one or more acts, each of which contains different scenes. Various characters appear and disappear in each scene to play their respective roles and speak their lines. In a play, the



writer's sentiments, emotions, and ideas are expressed through characters, and the writer employs numerous dramatic elements to deepen the viewers' understanding. The plot, characters, conversation, setting, conflict, and resolution are the play's main elements. The plot of the play follows a pattern: the rising action is followed by a climax, and then the falling action occurs (Surbhi, 2020). Finally, simulation is a type of role-playing that is more structured, with settings that are far more intricate and realistic. Students may play other characters or represent themselves during simulations, and there may be more formal rules to obey and fewer decisions to make (Valdespino, 2018).

Role-play was established to diagnose interacting skills, provide models for practice, and push people to pay more attention to their own influence (Johnstone & Percival, 1976). According to Johnstone and Percival (1976), the fundamental goal of role-play is for students to become actively involved in the learning process, which results in better and deeper understanding. Role-play also gives students an opportunity to experience realia in a conducive setting (Johnstone & Percival, 1976).

### **2.8.2 The Relevance of Role-Play in Teaching**

I would like to begin the discussion of this section with a quotation from Chesler and Fox (1966) which leads in to the appreciation of role-play as a teaching technique:

If a skill in understanding feelings, thoughts, and role of the other is important for successful interpretation of events and relations, then an instructional tool that provides such experiences should be very helpful. (p. 9)

Role-play is one of the most popular methods of teaching English as it stimulates the students' environment, enhances students' speaking abilities, and also allows shy students to express themselves and improve their interest in reading (Teng Ma, 2018). Role-playing is entertaining and can help students improve their language abilities while also fostering a sense of cooperation and on-site reaction (Teng Ma, 2018). In addition, Chesler and Fox (1966) argue that a great number of educators have found that using role-play as a tool to help manage interpersonal issues that arise in the classroom and to teach skills related to human interactions is highly beneficial. Furthermore, role-play has also been used to aid subject-matter learning through the staging of older literary works and contemporary events.



The demand for communicative skills is gaining momentum in higher institutions since it has become the primary tool for assessing students' communicative competence. In classes taught in English, dramatization and role-playing are by far the most conventional forms of assessment used in determining students' levels of competence in relation to their communicative skills (Zaidi, Rani & Rahman, 2017).

I believe that as a teacher, I have a responsibility to convey information, ideas, skills, and knowledge in a way that helps students learn. I am able to do all these partly because of my teaching experience, workshops attended, conversations with other teachers, and feedback from students. There is no ideal way to provide content; as educators, we face constant challenges presented by the context in which teaching and learning take place, as well as particular student characteristics and the content to be delivered. As a teacher, I strive to be the best that I can be, so I use every means at my disposal to ensure that teaching and learning are successful. I therefore chose to utilize role-play to teach language through literature in order to investigate whether a change in content delivery would yield better results. My views are best described by the following quotation from Deelip, Faruk, and Gadilohar (2016).

The use of innovative methods in educational institutions has the potential not only to improve education but also to empower people, strengthen governance and galvanize the effort to achieve the human development goal for the country. With a number of educational options available before the present generation of learners, newer trends seem to have emerged in the field of education that has entirely changed the face of the traditional system of education. Recent trends, methodologies, and developments portray the vital role of the education sector in general with its internalization of the education process, stress on quality above quantity, increase in the adoption of technologies, a necessity for professional talent. (p. 54)

When diverse teaching methods are used effectively, they can increase students' academic performance, and even if no gain in academic achievement is seen, they can improve students' behaviour, self-esteem and attitudes toward each other (Petty, 2006). In my opinion, this is equally important because one of the aims of education is to help students develop their personalities in a way that is consistent with their values and belief systems. In this regard, there are several applications for role-play that can be employed in the classroom. It is possible to use role-play to improve the effectiveness of academic learning

by depicting contemporary events or historical settings, as well as by dramatizing plays or books (Chesler & Fox, 1966).

Chesler and Fox (1966) argue that playing roles in simulated circumstances has been demonstrated to be effective in a wide range of contexts and settings. It has been utilized in the settlement of labour-management disputes to provide a mechanism for each side to comprehend the viewpoints, sentiments, and behaviours of the other side, which has helped the disputes to be resolved more speedily. This has not meant that the problems have gone away or that the perspectives have automatically shifted; rather, it means, rather, that both parties have a better understanding of the concerns and interests of the other and have been able to deal with each other with greater honesty and patience. In a similar vein, role-play has been employed in educational settings, namely universities, with the goals of fostering learning and improving mutual comprehension among students, teachers, and administrative bodies. A variety of professionals, including social scientists, welfare workers, and psychiatric counsellors, have made use of the method in an effort to aid their students or clients in gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of society as well as the dynamics of their own behaviour (Chesler & Fox, 1966).

Role-play is crucial because it provides an active environment for students to experience the emotional and cognitive responses of a fictitious persona or situation. It is an example of learning by doing, according to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005). This viewpoint is easily accepted since we have been taught that if you learn by doing, you will almost certainly remember what you have learnt; hence, this form of learning by doing is effective for students. As the Chinese philosopher Confucius expresses it, “I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; and I do and I understand”.

Teng Ma (2018) claims that traditional teaching methods such as rote learning or memorization are tedious because they focus on vocabulary, grammar, texts, and reading activities which can make it difficult to arouse students’ interest during the teaching process. However, when students learn a language through role-play, they learn the language actively. This kind of reaction from students improves teachers’ teaching practice and makes teaching and learning complementary (Teng Ma, 2018). This learning benefit is also identified by McCarthy and Anderson (2004), who conducted a comparative study on the effectiveness of learning through role-play and learning through traditional methods.

Their study revealed that active learning techniques such as role-play enable students to absorb and retain information better than non-active traditional teaching methods. Alkin and Christie (2002), who share similar beliefs, suggest that various students opt for hands-on learning activities rather than engaging in passive observation.

Active learning is becoming more and more widely recognized as a way to promote students' involvement, motivation, and accountability in higher education (Westrup & Planander, 2013). Role-playing is a pedagogical technique that falls under the category of active learning. A pedagogical method is "instruction that is ideal for reaching understanding of issues and forcing pupils to be independent" (Westrup & Planander, 2013, p. 208). Psychology, law, history, medicine, nursing and business and administration are among the academic disciplines that use role-play to incorporate active learning into their teaching (Westrup & Planander, 2013).

According to Rojas and Villafuerte (2018), English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers regularly use role-play to help students learn English. Students' communication, learning atmosphere, classroom motivation, and overall speaking skills have all been shown to increase when role-play scenarios are used. Furthermore, rather than focusing just on the technical parts of the language, role-playing presents true instances that students may encounter in the real world, allowing them to build genuine meaning from their interaction. When teaching a literary text, a teacher may offer a typical lecture, which some refer to as the traditional method, or students may be given the opportunity to role-play the topic. Overall, role-play encourages students to better grasp difficult processes or concepts by bringing them to life through a creative application. Role-play allows students to reflect on their learning in a way that makes implicit knowledge explicit and engaging. Valdespino (2018) states that once a student assumes a role and is able to apply theory to actual practice, what may appear to be complex or ambiguous concepts become much more real, thereby making it easier for assimilation.

According to Salies (1995), role-play is an ideal method for teaching language since it prepares students for the unpredictability of real-life communication, and not only that, but role-play also teaches appropriate language use and increases students' self-confidence. In addition, role-play contextualizes language usage while also exposing students to conversational routines and cultural dialogue. Furthermore, role-play provides students

with immediate feedback on their language proficiency, promotes retention, and encourages participation in a relatively risk-free environment (Salies, 1995).

Teachers may also use role-play to evaluate students' knowledge or perspectives of the character roles, as well as their immersion throughout the role-play (Chan (2009). According to Chan (2009), role-play is successful especially when applied to second language learning, because it allows students to practice and develop the target language. Students receive comprehensible feedback, engage in genuine dialogue, and actively participate in the activity during the role-play, all of which help them learn the new language efficiently (Chan, 2009).

In support of role-play, Westrup and Planander (2013) argue that using vigorous learning techniques increases the likelihood of providing students with various learning styles, as well as fostering a high level of student participation in the learning process and promoting a greater understanding of and interaction with the learning content (Alkin & Christie, 2002). Views emerging from several studies (Lederer, 2016; Andresen, 2005; Stagnitti & Unsworth, 2000) on using role-play to teach children in the second language (SL) or foreign language (FL) emphasize the importance of role-play in motivating children to start a conversation in which they can practice their L2 without fear of making mistakes, thereby increasing their self-esteem and confidence. As a result of this, children develop positive attitudes regarding the subject matter. Furthermore, Harries and Raban (2011) claim that role-play encourages learners to collaborate and form relationships because they are immersed in a social dynamic setting.

One of the outcomes of a study on leadership conducted by Westrup and Planander (2013), which included role-play, is that student conversations were an important element of the role-play. The role-play in this study facilitated dialogues and provided insight into the diverse behaviours and communication styles of the participants. According to the findings, acting roles encouraged students to engage in social contacts and discourse, which helped them overcome basic shyness. In addition, role-play helped students gain insight into a complicated leadership scenario by stimulating a shift in perspective, a shared understanding, and a sense of belonging.



A study conducted by Teng Ma (2018) on English instruction for Chinese students highlights that most students are unable to communicate properly in English, even after several years of study. These attempts to communicate in English have earned the moniker "dump English." The main source of this challenge has been linked to the English teaching methods used by the teachers. Teng Ma claims that in addition to Chinese students being embarrassed to speak English, teachers' instruction focused mostly on traditional methods such as teaching reading and writing, while ignoring other language skills such as speaking and listening. Role-play was eventually discovered to be an effective solution to this problem. Each student in the group has a certain role to play and communicates in English, regardless of whether their articulation is good or not. In a relaxed and casual environment, students overcome the challenge of opening up and developing confidence. In addition to all this, the enthusiasm for learning makes it possible for students who can communicate fluently in the group to effectively encourage other students who have difficulties communicating.

While some students may enjoy role-play, others may be self-conscious or uncomfortable in their roles, and as a result, may dislike the exercise. To avoid or reduce this unease, educators should ensure that the role-play takes place in a non-threatening environment, and that students are adequately informed about the role-play and its purpose prior to participating (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005). Furthermore, Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005) advise educators to reassure students that while acting is important, the purpose of the role-play is to achieve specific learning goals such as grasping the play's content, developing communications skills, and developing interpersonal skills, rather than to test or develop acting skills.

According to Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005), role-play could be videotaped for assessment reasons. However, I disagree with this viewpoint to some extent because some students may feel uncomfortable, knowing that their behaviours are being recorded. As previously stated, (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005), a conducive environment for students to achieve their best should be developed.

Role-play is beneficial in education because it helps students build interpersonal and social skills while also allowing them to practice skills in a safe environment which allows them to explore emotional concerns (Petty, 2006 & Chan, 2009). Similarly, role-play encourages



students to be creative and imaginative thinkers because students must communicate properly, accept their role responsibilities, and relate to others while acting character roles. Furthermore, role-play allows students to see things and approach challenges from different perspectives since it alters their perception of the world, and it also allows them to study the sentiments, attitudes, values, and culture expressed by the play's characters. Dramatization, for example, usually elicits a strong emotional response from actors since they are frequently required to portray life issues that the characters may not have experienced in real life.

In discussing the benefits emanating from role-play, it is important to remember that any instructional teaching approach has the potential to have some undesirable characteristics. Chesler and Fox (1966) contend that the use of role-play in the classroom as a pedagogical tool should not be treated as an isolated classroom event or experience. Based on this view, Chesler and Fox (1966) recommend that role-play be used as part of a larger teaching strategy, just like any other useful educational tool. Any specific role-play scenario must be chosen and implemented on the basis of the teacher's professional discretion as he or she diagnoses and evaluates the educational needs of the classroom. The decisions made by the instructor regarding how and when to implement this strategy are essential to the success of the learning process (Chesler and Fox, 1966).

Supporting the above-mentioned views, Rao and Stupans (2012) emphasize that while role-play can be beneficial to learning, the instructor must have a strategy and clear objective in mind when selecting role-play in order to get the most out of it. There will always be students who refuse to take part in the play because they consider the method too immature, or because some students exaggerate to the point that the tale loses its realism, or when humiliation or tension between players is produced. In instances like this, the teacher must be well-versed in the method and have previous experience dealing with concerns that may emerge prior to, during, or after the play.

A further challenge faced by the students when they engage in role-play is the psychological aspect of the introverted students. According to Sano (1989), whenever students are required to give oral presentations in front of an audience, they frequently experience feelings of anxiety. It is thus possible that some students may be reluctant to take part in a play, while others might become nervous about it (Kerr, Troth & Pickering, 2003).

Although role-playing may appear to be a simple activity, it may actually be rather challenging and tedious if it does not correspond to real-life scenarios, and it can be even more challenging if the students do not take it seriously (Zaidi, Rani & Rahman, 2017).

Chesler and Fox (1966) point out that it is essential for educators to sequence the role-playing activity in order to allow for a logical ordering and development of the role-playing session. The first step in the sequence is preparation, which entails giving instructions to both the audience and the participants. Second, the role-playing, as well as the subsequent discussion and interpretation of the action, are all included in this stage. Third, the instructor and the students should participate in an evaluation in which they discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the role-playing experience. In order for the teacher and the class to determine whether or not additional role-playing or re-enactment of the scene is necessary, it is essential to do an analysis of the purpose, techniques, and effects of such a learning experience.

In the light of all the studies discussed so far, it can be seen that the use of role-play in language classrooms is extremely beneficial. Students not only gain exposure to language use through role-playing, but they also gain exposure to the communicative component of the activity, such as being cooperative and participatory, which helps to boost their engagement in the task (Dailey, 2009). In addition, role-play gives actors the opportunity to better remember the events that unfolded in the plot, and more significantly, it gives the characters the opportunity to experience circumstances from their perspectives.

According to Liu and Ding (2009), incorporating role-play into the classroom not only provides a change of pace but also allows for a significant amount of language output in addition to a great deal of enjoyment for the students. The world of the classroom is expanded to include the outside world, which, in the end, offers a much wider range of language opportunities for students to speak, write, read, and listen. Likewise, role-play creates a platform where quieter students get the chance to express themselves in a more forthright way (Liu & Ding, 2009). Since the student's own behaviour is not the issue during role-play, the actor-students, the teacher and the audience can observe and comment more objectively on the behaviours produced (Chesler & Fox, 1966).

Moreover, role-play not only offers a change in the method of instruction, but it also makes it possible to use a learning strategy that is more focused on the student. In contrast to the traditional system, in which only the most courageous pupils ask questions, role-plays encourage participation from all students. Students are better able to sense issues, experience tension and conflict, and enter into negotiation and cooperation when they are given the opportunity to play roles and act out scenarios. It is for this reason that role-play increases student participation and stimulates interest in the subject, and encourages students to continue reading (Howell, 1992). Role-play can be very helpful in improving students' communicative competency as long as the educators can assist in dealing with the challenges associated with it. The main element in making sure role-play is effective is for educators to make sure that the students have adequate rehearsals and effective planning.

In this section, I defined the term role-play as well as its relevance in the EFL/ESL classroom. In the following section, I will discuss assessment, peer assessment and peer learning as key elements of my study.

## **2.9 Assessment**

Assessment, in general, has multiple dimensions and serves multiple purposes. Therefore, in this section, I wish to explore various perspectives on assessment, what it comprises, and the drawbacks associated with it. Finally, I will discuss peer assessment and peer learning and their relevance to my study.

I believe that in any educational context, we assess in order to determine the degree to which a student has mastered a skill. Teachers' assessments need to focus on how well students recall, grasp, apply, analyse, evaluate and express themselves resourcefully through functional and creative writing in order for effective assessment to take place (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). At this juncture, let me begin with a quotation from Petty (2006) that encapsulates the importance of assessment in a nutshell.

Assessment in education measures the breadth and depth of learning. It has been criticized as being inaccurate and unreliable, and for distorting both teaching and the curriculum, and yet society and teachers are unable to manage without it. In the right hands, assessment can inspire, motivate, and provide feedback which is

essential for targeting prompt corrective help. But it can also lead us to ignore what cannot easily be measured. (p.449)

### **2.9.1 Defining Assessment**

According to Eble (1998, p. 22), "Assessment is a way of teaching more effectively through understanding exactly what students know and do not know." Assessment is not about simple dichotomies such as grading versus diagnosis; rather, it is about teaching students by supporting them in better comprehending the goals of the curriculum and reporting on their achievements. It is crucial to evaluate the academic progress of students and identify any specific areas of confusion that may be holding them back from achieving their educational goals. Assessment is concerned with the quality of both learning and teaching because it asks us to learn from the experiences of our students and to change ourselves in the same ways that we expect our students to develop. In summary, it does not solely depend on the things that an individual is capable of doing.

### **2.9.2 Rationale for Assessment**

Assessment is said to play an important part in both the teaching and learning of languages, as stated by Cheng and Fox (2017). Daily evaluation of student learning is without a doubt one of the most critical, difficult, and time-consuming activities that a teacher is responsible for. Both the teacher and the students are involved in the assessment. An activity that serves as a form of assessment can be carried out either between a teacher and a student or between the students themselves. These activities include both the classroom tests and daily assessments that teachers use in the classroom (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

The modern way of life includes various activities for testing and assessing. Assessments are routinely given to students all around the world, whether it is to track how far they have come in their education or so that governments may gauge the effectiveness of their educational institutions. Adults go through evaluations to determine whether or not they are qualified for the jobs for which they have applied or whether or not they have the abilities essential to advance in their careers (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the objectives of assessment is a crucial step towards making informed decisions. This is due to the fact that the objective of an assessment helps



determine the frequency and timing of the assessment events and the assessment methods, as well as how the actual assessment is conducted (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

According to Green (2017), there are two primary goals that teachers should keep in mind when conducting assessments with their students. The first is to better the learning process by ensuring that students are making progress. They do this so that they can choose whether or not to present more challenging activities to learners when they are ready for them. This type of evaluation is known as formative assessment or assessment *for* learning. Second, educators need to evaluate the extent to which students have mastered the material covered in a class so that they can communicate this information to the students' parents, the management of the school, or the appropriate educational authorities. The assignment of grades or scores is typically a part of this process. This type of evaluation is referred to as a summative assessment or an assessment *of* learning.

### **2.9.3 Formative assessment**

Formative assessment is a type of evaluation that happens throughout the duration of learning and serves as a source of feedback to both teachers and students in order to improve teaching and learning. According to the National Research Council (NRC) (2000), formative assessment, also known as educational assessment or assessment for learning, offers a stream of information that can direct day-to-day teaching (Balley & Heritage, 2008). Central to formative assessment is feedback. Formative assessment is an assessment process that informs the teacher about the students' progress. Furthermore, it facilitates the learning process by determining the next step to be taken by the teacher in the learning process (Balley & Heritage, 2008). According to Trumbull and Lash (2013), formative assessment is rooted in the Bloom's taxonomy concept of mastery learning, which is an instructional approach that promotes the use of assessments to gauge students' progress towards mastering a learning goal (Bloom, Hastings & Madaus, 1971).

Teachers are required to prepare formative assessment not only to establish whether or not students have acquired the content to be learnt, but also to investigate students' analytical skills in order to uncover the reasons behind any learning gaps that may occur (Trumbull & Lash, 2013). In addition to this, formative feedback is exploratory and provisional, and its primary purpose is to encourage increased participation from students as part of an ongoing dialogue between and among students and teachers (Pryor & Crossouard, 2008).



It is imperative for educators to note that the purpose of marking in assessment for learning or formative assessment is not to make comparisons between the students, but rather to highlight each student's strengths and weaknesses and provide feedback that will progress the students' learning (Lorna, 2003).

#### **2.9.4 Summative assessment**

Summative assessment, also known as assessment of learning, entails evaluating students' learning, skills acquisition and academic achievement, usually at the conclusion of a programme, course, semester, or school year (Cheng & Fox, 2017). Assessment of learning aids educators by allowing them to use evidence of student learning to evaluate students' levels of accomplishment in comparison to predetermined outcomes and standards (Harapnuik, 2020). The importance of points, grades and healthy competition among students is emphasized. In addition, because summative assessments are administered at the end of a certain period of instruction, they are typically used for evaluative purposes rather than diagnostic ones. This means that they are better suited to be used to determine learning progress and achievement, evaluate the efficacy of educational programs, measure progress toward improvement goals, or make course placement decisions, amongst other possible applications (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

It is clear from the definitions that all of these different types of assessment are necessary if one wishes for successful teaching and learning to take place. In agreement with my view is Harapnuik (2020), who acknowledges that the interplay of both formative and summative assessments is not only realistic but also the most productive approach to improving the learning environment. If we consider assessment of/for learning to be an integral part of the learning environment and we aim to fully integrate assessment as part of the learning process, we do justice to our learners by assisting them in experiencing a balance in the assessment of/for learning. This is further elaborated on by Harapnuik (2020), who states that as educators, we are required to acknowledge that our teaching and learning environments are significantly influenced by the assessment we use. This study values both assessment for learning or formative assessment and assessment of learning or summative assessment. The study, however, predominantly employs assessment for learning because I would like to determine the progress students are making during the teaching and learning process. Similarly, the study also takes into consideration summative assessment because

it enables me to diagnose my students' progress at the end of the year following engagements in formative assessment. My belief is that assessment for learning should be used as a foundation for assessment of learning, although assessment of learning is by far the most common form of evaluation used in educational settings. This is because it is through assessment for learning that students can amass a wealth of knowledge and skills through the continuous activities in which they participate with the assistance of the instructor in the process of content acquisition.

Teachers evaluate the quality and quantity of students' work with the help of standardized tests, and the majority of their time is spent marking and grading students' work (Lorna, 2003). Typically, activities for assessment of learning do not give much hint of mastery of particular ideas or concepts because the test content is typically too restricted, and the scoring is typically too straightforward (Lorna, 2003). In language classroom practices, teachers use both formative and summative assessment. Both practices have a significant impact on students, and both are necessary in classroom instruction for effective teaching and learning to take place (Cheng & Fox, 2017).

Assessment also comes in many different forms, such as formal and informal assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018). Formal assessments are processes that are typically structured to draw information on an individual's body of acquired knowledge. They are ways of planned and organized sampling that are developed to give both the teacher and the student an evaluation of the student's level of achievement (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018). On the other hand, informal assessment encompasses several methods, starting with incidental, unplanned comments, and responses as well as coaching to evaluate the students' progress. The use of informal methods of assessment does not end there. A significant portion of a teacher's informal assessment is incorporated into classroom activities that are designed to elicit performance without recording outcomes or drawing definitive conclusions about a student's level of competency. This type of assessment is known as "observation." The vast majority of the time, informal assessment is not judgmental. This is due to the fact that, as a teacher, one is not making final judgements about the student's performance; rather, one is simply attempting to be a good coach (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018).

Now that I have presented types of assessment, I wish to discuss modes of assessment, as well as principles of assessment in education.

### **2.9.5 Assessment tools**

I refer to assessment tools as mechanisms through which students are evaluated in order to determine their competence in the learnt content. Such mechanisms include tests, assignments, examinations, group work, observations, quizzes, drama, essays, and/or oral presentation.

Fulcher and Davidson (2007) argue that when students are provided with clear concepts about what should be learned and the criteria or expectations for 'excellent' work, as well as when assessment objectives are matched with instructional objectives, assessment tools have the potential to assist student learning. As instructors or educators, it is imperative that we keep in mind that the assessment tools we use need to be compatible with both the type of learning being measured and the objectives of our learning instruction (Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). This is necessary in order to prevent a situation in which there is a mismatch between the material that is being taught and the activity that is being assessed.

### **2.9.6 Principles of assessment**

According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2018), there are five major principles of language assessment, namely, practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback. These principles are important because they are the foundation of any type of assessment, be it formal or informal, and therefore, with the exclusion of any of them, the results of the evaluation may not be reliable.

#### **2.9.6.1 Practicality**

The term practicality alludes to the administrative, logistical, and everyday concerns that are at play in the process of creating, administering, and scoring an assessment tool. These include expenses, the time needed to prepare and give the test, how simple it is to score, and how straightforward the results are (Mousavi, 2009). According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2018), a test that proves unable to meet such criteria is unrealistic.

### **2.9.6.1 Reliability**

The term reliability in this context refers to the test being characterized by consistency and dependability. In other words, when the same test is administered to the same students or matched students on two separate occasions, the results should be comparable (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018).

### **2.9.6.2 Validity**

According to Messick (1989), the validity of a test is by far the most complex requirement for determining its usefulness. Validity refers to a comprehensive and evaluated assessment of the degree to which empirical data and theoretical rationales substantiate the sufficiency and suitability of inferences and actions derived from test scores or other forms of assessment.

### **2.9.6.3 Authenticity**

Authentic is a term that has been used as a response to prefabricated patterns of textbooks, while authentic texts are non-pedagogical texts that help students develop their communicative and cultural skills (Ciornei & Dina, 2014). According to Widdowson (1990), authenticity of a text lies not in the text itself but in how readers and speakers employ it, and especially in their reactions to it. In addition, authenticity also entails the extent to which the qualities of a certain language test match the characteristics of a target language task.

### **2.9.6.4 Washback**

The term washback refers to the fact that standardized testing can have an impact on classroom instruction. In particular, assessments have the potential to affect both what and how teachers teach in formal classroom settings, as well as what and how students learn in such contexts. One strategy for improving washback is to provide comprehensive and specific feedback on how well the test was performed. Washback can be positive or negative. Positive washback occurs when there is a match between what is taught and what is tested, and test tasks "require the same authentic, interactive language use promoted in the classroom in order for there to be a match between what is taught and what is tested" (Weigle & Jensen 1997). The goals of instruction and the focus of testing can sometimes



diverge which can result in negative washback. This frequently results in these objectives being neglected in favour of preparation for the test (also known as teaching to the test) (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018). This becomes an issue of concern because such action neither allows students to master content taught nor meets the lesson objectives but rather promotes rote learning for a specific task, such as learning for the test.

Boud and Falchikov (2007) highlight the general view of assessment stating that assessment, rather than teaching, has a significant impact on students' learning. According to them, assessment motivates students to study and has a significant impact on what they do and how they do it. Furthermore, the assessment informs students about what they can and cannot accomplish. Finally, while assessment might boost confidence in certain students, it can also highlight how inept they are as students and destroy their confidence in their ability to succeed in the future. This means that whenever we, as teachers, test our students, the assessment should have an impact on their learning; otherwise, we will be failing to adequately educate these students for their futures and careers (Boud & Falchikov, 2007).

According to Geyser (2004), assessment in higher education has grown dramatically in recent years. Geyser further claims this is because higher institutions of learning have a lot of students who need to be assessed. As a result, the need for accountable quality assessment is inevitable. The main objective of learning is to assist students in achieving a grade linked to the subject or educational objectives, and if possible, to take them beyond that. This is what I refer to as transforming learners into self-reliant beings, problem solvers, and creators of new knowledge. Teachers need to be cognizant of the various evaluation methods available, including the essay or traditional examination paper, portfolios, peer evaluation, self-assessment, and authentic assessment (Ashcroft & Foreman-Peck 1994; Kvale, as cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Bitzer, 2007). This is to ensure that the evaluation methods employed are goal-oriented and will help each student reach their maximum potential. Thus, assessing students merely for the purpose of assessment will not result in high-quality instruction that will help students meet their learning objectives.

According to Capel, Leask, and Turner (1999), assessment is important because it provides information about individual students' progress, assists teachers in developing appropriate teaching and learning strategies, provides parents with useful information about their



children's progress, and can be used to compare students and schools. Academics such as Hedge (2000) and Le Grange and Reddy (1998) agree that in addition to its importance, assessment can be utilized for a variety of reasons. To begin with, assessment can be pedagogically driven, meaning that the teacher can use the information gleaned from assessment on the progress of the students as the foundation for future classroom work. Second, assessment can be used to monitor students' progress. This is the form of assessment that fits into an institution's administrative requirements, such as a school's curriculum, in which all subjects are assessed (Hedge, 2000). Furthermore, assessment serves to support teaching and learning, and provides information about students, educators and schools. It can also act as a selection and certifying device and an accountability procedure that drives curriculum and learning.

Although the discussion presented above focuses on the positive aspects of assessment, Reddy, Le Grange, Beets, and Lundie (2015) point out that assessment may be both facilitative and inhibitive to educational aims, and that suitable procedures must be employed to accomplish desirable educational goals. It is also for this reason that assessment must be prepared with a clear sense of curriculum goals and distinct levels of analysis, including who the assessment is intended for and for what purpose.

James (2006), in support of Reddy, Le Grange, Beets, and Lundie (2015), claims that assessment should be aligned with learning, teaching, and content knowledge in order to validate it, but in fact, this is not the case in practice. Some assessments, according to Entwistle (2005), do not tap into conceptual knowledge or exploratory processes that are important to ways of thinking and doing. Furthermore, the assessment systems do not adequately account for students' understanding of how they acquire the subject matter, the difficulties they face, and how they overcome them (James, 2006).

James (2006) goes on to say that some assessment procedures are less effective than others in encouraging the types of learning outcomes that today's and tomorrow's students require. Therefore, teachers should know what types of learning methods work best for their students, and they should choose and improve teaching and assessment methodologies accordingly. Learning theories rarely provide comments regarding how learning outcomes within subject content should be assessed and this, according to James, could explain why some assessment processes lack an acceptable theoretical foundation, as well as why

assessments aligned with some of the most exciting new learning theories are yet to be developed.

Assessment should, however, not dictate what should be taught and learned. Rather, assessment should be the servant, not the curriculum's master. It should not, however, be a last-minute addition. Rather, assessment should be a constant source of 'feedback' and 'feedforward' throughout the educational process. Based on this, assessment should be consistently included in teaching methodologies and practices at all levels. Since the assessment results might be used for a variety of purposes, these purposes must be considered when creating assessment tasks (Capel, Leask, & Turner, 1999).

In the same vein, Boud and Falchikov (2007) assert that assessment activities should not only fulfil the direct needs of certifying students' present learning or providing feedback to students on their learning, but they should also underwrite in some way to the students' future learning. This is a very important purpose for assessment, and in support of this view, Rowntree (1987) posits that assessment needs to prepare students for life and help them understand their own learning by providing feedback, and it should make them less dependent on others for knowledge of how well they are doing. Trumbull and Lash (2013), who share similar sentiments, add that the assessment procedures need to be embedded in the instructional process in such a way that information they provide will determine how instruction can be implemented to improve students' learning.

After an assessment has been completed, teachers need to be able to determine the "gap" between the learner's present level of knowledge and the targeted learning objectives, and then use educated instructional actions to "close the gap" between the two (Balley & Heritage, 2008). This notion aligns with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) (1978). Trumbull and Lash (2013) define ZPD as the developmental gap that exists between a student's ability to manage a problem or complete a task independently and the level at which the student is able to manage and complete the same task with the aid of a teacher. The role of the teacher in education is therefore that of a mediator between the student and the learning objective, providing the student with scaffolding and other forms of learning assistance in order to facilitate the student's achievement of the goal (Black & William, 2009).

Having discussed assessment and what it entails, I now wish to explore peer learning and peer assessment.

## **2.10 Peer Learning**

Before I proceed with the discussion of peer assessment and its impact on teaching and literature, I would first like to explore peer learning, since it serves as a basis for peer assessment. The students in this study were required to participate in a role-playing activity with the goal of reinforcing cooperative learning and peer assessment so that peer learning would precede peer assessment. According to Boud (2001), we continue to learn from one another every day of our lives; thus, in all classes and at all levels, students learn from one another. Peer learning encompasses a variety of activities, such as discussion seminars, private study groups, collaborative projects and peer assessment. In light of this context, peer learning should not be viewed as a single educational technique (Boud, 2001).

### **2.10.1 Defining Peer Learning**

Boud, Cohen and Sampson define peer learning as “the use of teaching and learning strategies in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of the teacher” (1999, p. 413).

Additionally, peer learning, according to Boud (2001), entails participants sharing ideas, knowledge, information, and experience. Students gain a lot from expressing ideas to one another and participating in peer-to-peer learning activities. Students learn to organize and arrange learning activities, collaborate with others, provide feedback to one another, and evaluate their own learning. Peer learning is important as it entails sustaining the level of student learning without input from the educator. In the view of Boud, Cohen and Sampson (1999), peer learning places a higher importance on collaboration rather than on competition and results, with more regard for the participants' diverse capabilities and backgrounds. According to Sardareh and Saad (2012), students that work together to complete a task increase their ability to resolve problems, reflect on their own learning and move to the next step in their learning.

There are both pragmatic and principled reasons for the current emphasis on peer learning in university courses. The most evident reason is the pragmatic one. University educators

are now teaching more students due to financial constraints that universities are facing. This has resulted in a search for teaching and learning strategies that assist educators to manage their teaching without increasing their workload (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999). I would like to caution, however, that educational institutions should not use peer learning for the purpose of relieving their staff from teaching larger groups but rather use it to facilitate teaching and learning.

During peer learning, students gain more experience in communicating with others in the subject area than they do in learning situations where educators are present. This is due to the fact that students can explain their thinking, have it criticized by others, and gain from taking on the role of a reciprocal partner (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999). Furthermore, it is important not only to construct peer learning procedures to complement other aspects of teaching and learning, but also to correlate assessment with them. This is because it is impossible to teach effectively without both of these components (Boud, Cohen, and Sampson, 1999). It is my experience that students place a high value on learning activities that are graded because of the time and effort that they invest in such activities. When they realize that the learning activity will not be assessed, they become less motivated to engage in further activities, which may result in the targeted content not being successfully mastered. This is due to the fact that one of the primary goals of peer learning is for students to effectively learn from one another, which in turn makes the process of mastering the material more expedient and less difficult. However, there are some peer learning activities that do not call for any kind of formal assessment; this kind of evaluation is known as an assessment of the activity's intrinsic worth (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999). This involves peer learning activities for part-time students who are already professionals. In cases such as this, students find participation in such collaborations to be intrinsically fulfilling (Robinson et al., 1985).

It is crucial to remember that a lot of peer learning happens informally, without the assistance of an educator, and that students who are already effective gain more benefit than do other students (Boud, 2001). Formalized peer learning, on the other hand, may help students learn more effectively. It allows students to learn from each other in an educational context where resources are limited and where the teaching staff is limited in number. Peer learning, according to Boud (2001), should not be viewed as a replacement



for activities created and conducted by educators, but rather as a helpful addition to already existing teaching and learning activities aimed at improving the standard of education.

Although group work can be considered peer learning, it is important to distinguish it from cooperative learning because the two categories are not interchangeable. Peer learning, according to Jaques (2000), involves one-on-one learning as opposed to cooperative learning, which focuses on bigger groups. Peer learning encourages certain types of learning objectives, such as students' collaborative learning, critical thinking, self-reflection, communication and learning strategies (Boud, 2001).

The section above discussed peer learning and its effects on teaching and learning. Next, I would like to explore peer assessment and its relevance in teaching and learning environments.

## **2.11 Peer Assessment**

Although there are many types of assessment, including essays and traditional examination papers (Ashcroft & Foreman-Peck 1994), portfolios, peer assessment, self-assessment, and authentic assessment (Kvale, as cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Bitzer, 2007), peer assessment constitutes the focus of my study. I chose peer assessment because it goes hand in hand with my study's primary features of cooperative learning and role-play. In the above learning methodologies, peer assessment is the primary assessment instrument. It is designed to show how beneficial it is in improving students' knowledge and skills of the subject matter to be mastered.

### **2.11.1 Defining Peer Assessment**

“Peer assessment refers to an assessment of the learner by his or her peers and can be a valuable means of involving learners closely in their own and others' learning. It is productive in terms of improved learning and learners can learn a great deal from each other” (Geyser, 2004, p. 105).

Peer assessment has long been recognized for its potential advantages, which are still pertinent to date. However, many existing assessment methods undercut the aims of peer learning, which discourages students from engaging in collaborative learning. Boud, Cohen



and Sampson (1999) argue that if assessment conveys to students that only individual success is valuable and that collaborative effort is as good as cheating, then the benefits of peer learning may not be realized.

According to Rousseau (2018), peer assessment is usually characterized by students giving feedback on the work of peers using criteria common to the assignment. Students are offered an opportunity to think about their work from a new perspective and to reflect on the areas in which they can make improvements when they are given feedback (JISC, 2015). The fact that peer assessment is typically used as a form of formative assessment means that it enables both the student and the instructor to gain a better understanding of the student's overall performance, as well as the areas in which the student could improve. Furthermore, it intensifies the amount of feedback that a student receives (Rousseau, 2018). In defence of student assessment, Boud, Cohen and Sampson (1999) argue that assessment has the most powerful effect on learning in formal courses, and if the assessment is not well planned and designed, it can easily undermine the intended objectives of an important strategy in the repertoire of teaching and learning approaches. Through the process of peer assessment, students learn about each other's work and are able to tell the difference between a piece of work that has been performed successfully and one that has room for development (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999).

Falchikov (as cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2007) asserts that students are increasingly becoming involved in assessment in a variety of methods, with peer assessment being the most common. Peer assessment, according to this source, takes numerous forms, typically in the context of group activity, and almost always demands the inclusion of feedback. When employing peer assessment, students are expected to offer feedback or evaluation to their peers on the process or performance being carried out, as stipulated in the stated criteria. Peer assessment also allows students to learn through discussion and argument, and as a result, they become more mindful of their own abilities and skills (McGarrigle, 2013).

According to Seifu (2016), students should be active in the assessment of their own work and progress. If students are permitted to participate in the assessment process, this involvement could convey various messages that are in line with the cooperative learning paradigm (Gravette & Geysler, 2004). In addition, because educators are not the exclusive

arbiters of success or failure, the assessment process is shared. According to Gravette and Geysler (2004), students are significantly more effective at judging their peers than are educators, and they learn accountability for their contributions in the peer assessment process. They understand that they are responsible for their academic achievements as well as their contributions to the group. Students rarely mock each other in this type of setting, so they benefit from peer assessment and learn important lessons about the learning process and teamwork.

Peer assessment, according to Ashcroft & Foreman-Peck (1994), can also be used in a variety of contexts, including providing qualitative feedback on written work and assessing contributions to project work. These researchers assert that peer feedback is a valuable means of considering a variety of perspectives, but it can also be problematic because it is difficult to provide sensitive critique in a way that assists rather than destroys students' confidence. Similarly, Ashcroft and Foreman-Peck (1994) believe that receiving criticism may be challenging, since the peers' authority may not be acknowledged, and a natural reaction to criticism would be defence. Peers called on to offer criticism should be advised to deliver constructive criticism, such as identifying areas of strength or making a proposal for improvement, without making a value judgment. In my view, in this type of criticism, the strengths should outweigh the weaknesses.

### **2.11.2 Relevance of Peer Assessment in Education**

The goal of peer-to-peer evaluation is to transform students from passive receivers of knowledge transmitted by teachers for the purpose of memorization and recollection into active participants in the learning and evaluation process who cooperate and explore in order to construct new knowledge characterized by critical thinking and creativity (Alzaid, 2017). When students participate in commenting on the work of others, it increases their capability for making intellectual decisions and judgements. Additionally, when students receive feedback from their peers, it aids in their acquisition of a wide range of ideas about their own work, which promotes and achieves development and improvement in the students' learning (Alzaid, 2017).

Moreover, the benefits of peer assessment extend to both students and educators (Falchikov, as cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2007). Educators experience personal gains,

since the benefits received by their students provide them with professional satisfaction. In a similar vein, Bangert's (1995) statistical investigation of the effects of peer assessment supports the belief that peer assessors perform much better than students who ignore peer assessment activity. Other benefits of peer assessment include students taking charge of their learning (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans., 1999), developing their presentation skills (Price & Cutler, 1995), becoming more involved in their learning, and enhancing their critical and independent thinking skills (Falchikov, 1986), increased confidence in those participating in peer assessment (Lapham & Webster, 1999), and improved intrinsic motivation (McDowell, 1995).

An additional benefit that I have noticed about peer assessment is that it provides students with an opportunity to examine their own work through the lenses of others by comparing each other's work. While students may receive subpar evaluations from their peers, they still have the opportunity to gain valuable lessons from their peers which assist them to better grasp the content to be learnt and the strategies to use. A similar sentiment is shared by Moore and Teather (2013), who carried out a study assessing how students react to peer learning activities. The students who participated in this research indicated that the activity involving peer learning was beneficial. The students were given the opportunity to develop critical reading skills, gain knowledge of proper and improper reading practices, and learn ways to improve their performance. Through this, the students discovered that peer assessment empowered them to gain insights into their own work's strengths as well as areas which needed improvement. Furthermore, the students realized that peer assessment clarified assignment expectations, helped them finish tasks, and enabled them to develop assessment and feedback skills (Rousseau, 2018).

Although peer assessment is important in student learning, subjectivity should not be overlooked. Tsagari and Cheng (1997) argue that students may be either too critical of themselves or overly self-satisfied. They also may not identify their own errors, particularly in the event of performance evaluations. Similarly, when it comes to giving marks or grades, peer assessment can be challenging to handle because it can be difficult to link peer marks to an individual student's final performance (Gravette & Geysler, 2004). In the same vein, if a student does not have the opportunity to learn about standards or utilize the grade as a measure of comprehension or skill growth, the act of assigning a grade may be worthless (Falchikov, as cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2007). Educators and psychologists

both emphasize the importance of peers in learning and growth, since peers are a vital component of education both in the classroom and in the professional arena (Falchikov, as cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2007). According to this source, whatever form of peer assessment is employed, students should be able to make credible assessments about how far they have progressed toward the desired goal.

I have presented in this section a review of the background that informs the integration of peer assessment and role-play in teaching language through literature. Next, I wish to discuss the issues and insights that constitute the theoretical and conceptual framework of my study.

## **2.12 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The focus of my study is on the integration of peer assessment or collaborative learning in learning English as a second language through literary texts. In the following sections of the chapter, I present the key issues and insights that are in keeping with the theoretical and conceptual framework of my study and explain how these can help explain the foundational aspects.

My research focuses on student-centric literature instruction, which requires active student participation. With its major focus on students' active engagement in text interpretation and understanding, I believe that the reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938), is well positioned to provide engaging and relevant approaches to the teaching of literature in the second language (SL) classroom. By the same token, the cooperative learning theory (Johnson and Johnson, 1990) stresses learning through collaboration in which students actively discuss knowledge and analyse their performance in order to determine whether or not they have mastered the content to be learned. I believe that the pedagogical elements of both reader-response theory and cooperative learning are eminently placed to direct the learning process by ensuring that students develop their own knowledge by actively learning from one another. Notwithstanding the inclusion of the two afore-mentioned theories, I have also incorporated the hermeneutics theory (Schleiermacher, 1768–1834) since it places a strong emphasis on interpretation as one of its guiding principles. The hermeneutics theory speaks to this study as it supports the view that the reading of literary texts requires interpretation for meaning to take place. Without adequate theoretical



support, researchers and practitioners would lack comprehensive frameworks to which research findings would be linked so as to confirm support either for their underlying premises or the research questions raised in their respective studies (Schunk, 2009).

Further to this, my educational beliefs and value systems necessitate my taking into consideration the role of sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the role of ecology and semiotics in language teaching (van Lier, 2004), as well as dialogic imagination (Bakhtin, 1981) as the intrinsic social nature of my classroom study necessitates a less generalized approach than the normative one-size-fits-all application of theories in traditional second language acquisition (SLA) studies. This, I believe, will resonate with the ethos of my investigation in addition to augmenting the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings constituting my epistemic stance. Most importantly, as literature is language, it is imperative for me to attempt appropriate theoretical and conceptual synchronizations to signpost commonalities and complementarities that operate between literature and language to create a dynamic bidirectionality. I further suggest that any attempt either to skirt this vital composite issue or to feign ignorance of it will severely undermine the epistemic focus of my study.

### **2.12.1 Reader-response theory (RRT)**

The reader-response hypothesis was postulated by Louise Rosenblatt, an American professor emeritus and researcher. Reading, according to Rosenblatt (1982), is an exchange in which the text being read and the reader reading it interact at a specified time and under specified settings. The text stimulates the reader's personal experiences with literature and with life. It directs the selection, rejection, and order of what is presented, and it controls what should be brought to the reader's mind (Mart, 2019). According to Dias and Hayhoe (1988), a reader's involvement in the act of reading is not adequately addressed in many reading models. The reader-response method, however, involves learners in the learning process as active participants (Davis & Stratton, 1984).

According to Rosenblatt (1938, 1978), there are two types of reading, efferent and aesthetic, which help the reader create meaning from the text. Aesthetic reading incorporates what readers have experienced or the quality of the experience they have in the text (Rosenblatt, 1977; Mart, 2019), whereas efferent reading is concerned with what is extracted and

retained after reading the text; in other words, efferent reading is what is known as information reading (Rosenblatt, 1977; Mart, 2019). According to Woodruff and Griffin (2017), the goal of efferent reading is to acquire new knowledge or to gain an understanding of how to carry out a task; efferent reading thus does not generate a number of different interpretations. Aesthetic reading, on the other hand, places emphasis on the readers, encouraging them to immerse themselves in the material they are reading and to take pleasure in the act of reading (Graves, Graves & Dewitz, 2011). In Rosenblatt's opinion, the purpose of writing literature is to provide an aesthetic experience. In line with this view, readers are encouraged to engage intensely with the text in order to grasp all meaning therein, both hidden and overt.

Reading literature, according to Rosenblatt (1995), is an enquiry in which readers use their feelings and background experiences to generate meaning. Rosenblatt (1995) further states that meaning is created by a communication between the reader and the text. Throughout these transactions, learners employ their past knowledge and disposition (Iser, 1972) as well as their views of the text to deduce the information missing in the text (Fish, 1980). According to Kim (2004), the reader's interpretations and meanings are reflections of both the reader and the text.

The reader-response model, according to Flood and Lapp (1988), is a technique of teaching literature that has shifted from the perspective that literary interpretation is a right/wrong entity to one that recognizes it as a dialogue between the reader and the text. According to Rosenblatt (1993), individuals form an interaction through their own linguistic experiential resources and past transactions in life and language, whether that individual is the listener, writer, speaker, or reader. Rosenblatt goes on to state that there are many different interpretations of a text, and thus there can never be a singular meaning to a text. Iser (1978), another proponent of this theory, claims that a number of text interpretations are the direct product of the reader's efforts to create sense while processing the information that the writer presents in the text.

Rosenblatt (1982, 1993), Iser (1978), and Karolides (2000) also emphasize the readers' active involvement in the reading process, claiming that the text exists because of the reader. Beach (1993), who also supports the active participation of students for the purpose of meaning construction, proposes a set of theoretical perspectives on the reader's meaning-making process. These perspectives include: the textual viewpoint, which is the reader's

understanding of conventions; the experiential viewpoint, which constitutes the reader's involvement or experience; the psychological viewpoint, which incorporates the reader's intellectual or subconscious process; the social viewpoint, which is consistent with the reader's social position and insights of the social context; and the cultural viewpoint, which is in keeping with the reader's cultural responsibility, as well as his or her perception of attitudes and contexts. These viewpoints can help to elucidate the link between the reader, text, and context, in addition to focusing on the text's meaning-making process (Beach, 1993).

According to Karolides (2000), certain conditions must be met for the reading transaction to take place. First and foremost, the work must be understandable in terms of its language, characters, settings, and declared themes. Second, the readers must possess the proper language and experiential basis. Finally, readers should feel passionate about the text's emotional and intellectual engagement.

I believe that the reader-response theory is important in the setting of literary debates because it emphasizes the importance of reader-text engagement, which is another reason for its centrality and primacy in my study. Several researchers (Probst, 1994; Tucker, 2000; Spirovska, 2019) have identified numerous advantages associated with reader-response as a teaching method or as a guide to teaching literary texts. The advantages include its influence on students' participation and their expressive responsiveness to literary texts (Spirovska, 2019), the fact that it enables students to learn how texts shape their thoughts and emotions, the fact that it allows them to see things from different perspectives (Probst, 1994), and finally, that it allows students to experience embedded relevance-making in the learning task (Tucker, 2000).

However, before designing practical tasks for teaching literature, we must first ask what a reader does when he or she engages with a text. To answer this question, Benton and Fox (1985) propose that the use of Tolkien's concept of the secondary world. According to Tolkien (1997), a writer creates a secondary world, as opposed to the primary world in which we live, for the reader to enter. With little effort and imagination, and through the help of a skilful author, the reader is able to reconstruct this world and believe in it. According to Benton and Fox (1985), a reader within a secondary world is engaged in four separate processes of response to literature, namely, the anticipation/retrospection process,

the picturing process, the interacting process, and the evaluating process. Anticipation or retrospection constitutes guesses on the part of the reader as to what happens in the text, what events influence current situations and how the text ends. The picturing process involves the pictures that are created in the mind of the reader, such as the characters' faces or the setting. In the interacting process, the reader forms opinions on various aspects mentioned in the text, while evaluation refers to the reader's comments or criticism regarding the skill of the writer (Benton & Fox, 1985).

Many research studies have highlighted the benefits of using literature as a teaching resource in educational contexts (Collie & Slater, 1987; Maley, 1989; Ihejirika, 2014). Jewell and Pratt (1999) discovered that when students engage in conversations about literature, they ask literal and inferential questions in order to develop meaningful understanding. Students apply themselves to creating meaning through exposure to a variety of viewpoints presented by a text. In so doing, students improve their reading comprehension and cognitive growth (Lehman & Scharer, 1996; Farnan, 1996).

The reader-response approach, according to Van (2009), contributes significantly to readers studying and analysing literature as well as relating it to personal experience. The reader-response method is also favoured because it capitalizes on the fact that emotional reactions to a story, poem or drama may be effectively used in teaching (Bleich, 1975). Based on their research, Van (2009) and her colleagues suggest that activating students' prior knowledge when they are reading literature is vital, and that customizing the learning experience promotes student involvement and motivation. These basic concepts of communicative language teaching are known to foster language development by engaging students in activities that are centred around their needs and interests, as well as around the learning process (Van, 2009).

Discussions in literature classes develop moral reasoning, human sensitivity, and intelligent reasoning, and improve students' understanding of the subject matter (Mart, 2019). Furthermore, literature conversations in the classroom provide a conducive environment for eliciting student responses and nurturing students' perspectives in order to increase their depth of interpretation (Mart, 2019). In a study conducted in Istanbul by Akyel and Yalcin (1990), students did not consider literature as having a potential for achieving language learning outcomes because they were rarely encouraged to respond directly to literature,



and the language-based activities in the classroom did not promote communication. In the same vein, Davis, Gorell, Kline and Hsieh (1992) discovered that while EFL students have positive attitudes about literature, language learning targets are rarely met if the teaching style fails to accommodate students' personal responses that make literature material meaningful to them. It is therefore imperative for educators to guide students on how to respond better to texts and how to actively engage in dialogues. Through this engagement, students are also encouraged to explore a range of potential interpretations through asking both literal and inferential questions to foster cognitive growth and comprehension (Mart, 2019).

The fundamental component of reader-response involves the provision of possibilities for students to establish significant, genuine interactions when reading texts (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). In using the reader-response approach, students actively interact with literature as they establish significant personal connections between what is written and their own lives. In this context, teachers become facilitators rather than trainers (Woodruff and Griffin, 2017).

Moreover, reader-response not only revitalizes reading instruction for teachers but also reignites students' enthusiasm for reading since it creates a balance of emphasis on both the reader and the text rather than focusing on the text as an isolated entity (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). The act of reading a text through the prism of prior knowledge, various views and personal encounters presents a challenge to the reader. Students become better critical thinkers as a result of using a reader-response approach because they are not simply told how to think about a text; rather, they are required to justify their multiple interpretations of a text using textual evidence and support. This helps students become more independent in their thinking (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017).

According to Larson (2009), delivering literary content does not foster the construction of far-fetched interpretations without sufficient explanation, nor does it create disorder. When interacting with a text, students should be inspired to draw from their own individual experiences and prior knowledge (Larson, 2009). In support of this view, Woodruff, and Griffin (2017) argue that the reader-response strategy develops students' critical thinking ability when they engage with literary texts by challenging them to read beyond the words on the page and explore the underlying significant meaning. My proposal is that the reader

should also use inferential skills when attempting to interpret the text. This, I believe, is because inference aids generally in the comprehension of written texts through the connection the reader makes between words or sentences. Woodruff and Griffin (2017) believe that this is the most effective way to teach students how to analyse a text.

The reader-response approach to interpreting a piece of literature can be effective as it allows students to make their own generalizations about the text rather than merely embracing the teacher's interpretation of it (Mitchell, 1993). Woodruff and Griffin (2007), caution, however, that reader-response theory does not imply that all interpretations are accurate. That is why to justify a specific response to a text, readers must confirm their reactions based on textual evidence (Graves, Graves & Dewitz, 2011).

Although the reader-response approach can be beneficial in most literature classrooms, it is essential to understand that the reader-response can also result in significant drawbacks (Van, 2009). Students' interpretations of the work may differ significantly from the original, making it difficult to respond to and analyse the text. The level of language difficulty and new cultural content might make it difficult for students to provide meaningful interpretations; thus, choosing relevant materials can be a challenge. Students' ability to grasp and respond to the text may further be hampered by a lack of linguistic instruction. The culture of the pupils may make them hesitant to openly communicate their feelings and reactions. In a similar vein, the reader may fail to recognize the author's intended meaning, and as a result, their responses to a piece of writing may be limited since they exclusively examine their own viewpoints without considering other perspectives (Woodruff & Griffin, 2017). In this instance, I recommend that the reader provide evidence from the text that they are analysing to back up their interpretation of the text.

Having discussed the reader-response theory with its focus on the reader and text and/or literary text interpretation, in the following section, I will explore the cooperative learning theory as documented in literature.

### 2.12.2 Cooperative Learning Theory

Before I present the cooperative learning theory that underpins my study, which is predicated on peer learning, peer assessment, and role-play, let me begin with a quotation from Wessels, (2014) that encapsulates the cooperative learning theory's underlying value and pointedly depicts what a cooperative learning environment entail.

In no way is anyone in any cooperative working group trying to be the winner; it is not about competing and winning. Rather, it is about using the resources available in a group to deepen understanding, sharpen judgment, share ideas, and support one another while participants construct new knowledge and skills. (p. 9)

In this study, I chose to explore the cooperative learning theory because, first and foremost, it links well with peer learning and assessment, which are two crucial factors in the study that are expected to improve the study outcomes. In a cooperative learning environment, more opportunities are provided for students to practice English and learn more efficiently from their peers because the educator allows them to debate knowledge or practice techniques that were taught first by the teacher (Slavin, 2014). Similarly, in a situation where peer learning or peer assessment takes place, students learn a great deal from sharing their thoughts with others and learning from each other. Students also benefit from the process of peer review, which I refer to as assessment, and thus learn valuable lessons about the learning process itself and about teamwork, which eventually translates into cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is defined differently by different researchers. Johnson and Johnson (1990, p. 336) define cooperative learning as "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning", while Slavin (2011, p. 344) defines it as "instructional methods in which teachers organize students into small groups, which then work together to help one another learn academic content". Despite the fact that no single formal definition of cooperative learning exists, all scholars refer to it as a "collection of strategies in which students work together in small groups and help one another to attain learning objectives" (Johnson & Johnson, 2006, p. 69). I believe such a position encapsulates its composite make-up and identifies its unidimensional characteristics.

According to Van Dat Tran (2013), cooperative learning garnered significant attention because it has a big impact on student learning. Those who are taught through cooperative learning have better academic, social, affective and psychological abilities than students who are taught through traditional methods. Individuals who collaborate work to accomplish outcomes that benefit both themselves and the rest of the group (Johnson & Johnson, 2018).

According to Cloud (2014), many teachers have attempted to figure out the most effective approach to teaching their students, and a variety of instructional techniques have been used. Despite the fact that many have failed, some have succeeded. Cooperative learning is one teaching technique that teachers have continued to interrogate. Cooperative learning, according to Cloud (2014), is more than just group work; it is a powerful teaching method that is not as simple as it may appear because it does not guarantee that students placed in groups will work together. Cooperative learning therefore involves careful planning in order to be successful (Gravette & Geysler, 2004). The educator, according to Gravette and Geysler (2004), should be proactive in every aspect of instructional and educational tasks as well as possessing the ability to guide students towards the desired learning outcomes.

According to Slavin (2014), cooperative learning is often proposed as a remedy for several educational challenges. Meyers and Jones (1993) and Johnson et al. (1981) argue that it is viewed as a method that can improve students' thinking skills and enhance students' cognitive abilities, as well as creating an increased collaborative work group and fostering positive relationships among groups of students. Furthermore, it is one of the teaching strategies that use student engagement to increase language learning, academic accomplishment, and social skills (Wei, 1997).

Cooperative learning works with students from all classes and social backgrounds in every subject at every academic level from kindergarten to postgraduate (Petty, 2006). This is learning that appears to supplement the instruction of an educator by providing students with opportunities to discuss or practice abilities that were first taught by the educator (Slavin, 2014). Meyers and Jones (1993) highlight one key benefit of cooperative learning in that it can generate a more pleasant learning environment than traditional systems where students are often competing for good scores. For students who lack self-confidence, a competitive environment in traditional learning scenarios may inhibit them from learning



(Scott & Heller, 1991). Competitive environments dominate most teaching and learning environments, making it difficult for all students, especially passive students, to work together with peers.

According to Slavin (2014), academics agree that cooperative learning improves student accomplishment, but there continues to be discussion over the causes and processes by which cooperative learning affects academic performance. Additionally, it is crucial to pinpoint the particular conditions under which cooperative learning produces the desired benefits. Stevens and Slavin (1995) and Slavin, Hurley and Chamberlain (2003) investigated cooperative learning effects on achievement. In their study, motivation, social cohesiveness, cognitive growth, and elaboration were identified as the four key theoretical approaches associated with the impact of cooperative learning presented below.

First, the motivational viewpoint posits that learning is largely influenced by task motivation, while additional tasks such as planning and assisting students are driven by an individual's self-interest. In this perspective, the motivationalist generally concentrates on the goal system within which students function. Second, by contrast, the social cohesion perspective, at times referred to as the social interdependence theory, claims that the impact of cooperative learning is generally contingent upon the degree of homogeneity amongst the group. This suggests that students support one another in acquiring knowledge owing to their concern for the collective and its constituents, as well as their desire to gain personal recognition from the group (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1999). Thirdly, the other two cognitive perspectives, those of cognitive development and cognitive elaboration, centre on the interplay between student groups, asserting that such interactions contribute to learning and consequently, to academic performance. The cognitive developmentalists attribute these effects to processes outlined by scholars such as Piaget (1957) and Vygotsky (1978). Additionally, the cognitive elaboration approach maintains that for students to acquire new information, they need to participate in some form of cognitive restructuring process known as elaboration. Cooperative learning is therefore believed to aid this process. Having discussed the theoretical approaches associated with the impacts of cooperative learning, I next present key guidelines that educators may consider when employing cooperative learning groups in their teaching as outlined by the two well-known researchers on cooperative learning Johnson and Johnson (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). At this juncture, I will first present the key guidelines, and thereafter, explore the different types of

cooperative learning groups that I deem pertinent to my study. I believe these guidelines to be necessary as they guide educators on the different types of group work that can be used in their attempt to group students for learning purposes.

### **2.12.2.1 Cooperative Learning Guidelines**

#### **2.12.2.1.1. Positive Interdependence**

In this domain, students should understand that a group can only succeed if each member in the group contributes. This simply means that while students may have distinct roles and responsibilities, they must rely on one another to achieve their objectives. The educator, according to Slavin (1983), has the responsibility of reinforcing this relationship or bond by offering unambiguous group instructions and rewards.

#### **2.12.2.1.2 Individual Accountability**

In this type of group activity, the responsibility lies with individual students for their contributions to a collective endeavour under individual accountability. In this case, the teacher must explicitly define particular duties and deadlines, as well as urge individual accountability for collective efforts. Group objectives and assessment techniques, according to Slavin (1983), should be well-structured. Individuals should also be assigned roles and tasks so that they understand how important their contributions are.

#### **2.12.2.1.3 Face-to-Face Interaction**

The greatest benefit of small group contact, according to Johnson and Johnson (1990), is when students explain to each other how they approached a certain assignment or activity. The ensuing discussion, in my opinion, clarifies issues related to the task at hand. This form of contact allows group members to support and encourage one another while also holding each other accountable.

#### **2.12.2.1.4 Interpersonal and Small Group Skills**

It is critical to emphasize that students placed in groups are merely students, not collaborators. Because they have come to think of teachers as their primary source of knowledge, it takes time for students to recognize that they are crucial to the learning process. When students learn to rely on one another, they must also learn to encourage one

another to participate, listen to one another, and ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute meaningfully to the team.

#### **2.12.2.1.5 Group Processing**

Group processing entails students assessing their success and failure by learning to evaluate what they are doing well or not so well. This is also where the teacher asks some questions allowing group members to think through their contributions to the group.

As I alluded to earlier, I have now presented the key guidelines that may be considered when selecting cooperative learning groups. In the following discussion, I will present the types of cooperative learning groups.

### **2.12.2.2 Types of Cooperative Learning Groups**

#### **2.12.2.2.1 Formal Cooperative Learning**

Johnson and Johnson (2006) characterize cooperative learning as a context in which students collaborate over an extended period of time ranging from one class period to a number of weeks. The purpose of this method is for students to achieve shared learning objectives and collectively complete assigned tasks. These tasks include a number of decisions regarding the setup of the groups, such as group size, assigning students to groups, putting study materials together and setting up a suitable classroom environment for group work. Based on this background, formal cooperative learning groups should therefore be structured as follows: (a) The teacher should highlight the lesson objectives, differentiating between those that pertain to academic skills and those that pertain to social skills. (b) The teacher should describe the academic work that needs to be accomplished by the students and the criteria that the teacher will employ to assess student success. (c) The teacher should oversee how the group works together and be ready to intervene to provide the necessary social skills and the required academic support. (d) The teacher needs to have predetermined criteria to evaluate student performance and should ensure that group members effectively evaluate their teamwork (Johnson & Johnson, 2018).

#### **2.12.2.2.2 Informal Cooperative Learning**

Informal cooperative learning, as defined by Johnson and Johnson (2018), occurs when students work together in groups for a few minutes during a class session in order to achieve a shared learning goal. In this type of group, the educator creates an informal cooperative

learning group during activities such as lectures, demonstrations or films. Students are allowed three to five minutes of discussion with group members before and after direct instruction. Additionally, students are also allowed to have three- to five-minute partner talks throughout the direct instruction.

#### **2.12.2.2.3 Cooperative Base Groups**

These are diverse cooperative learning groups with consistent membership and are characterized as groups in which students support, encourage and assist one another in achieving instructional goals by being present in class, completing assigned tasks and studying prescribed content. Cooperative base groups, according to Johnson & Johnson, (2018), should be implemented in such a way that students gather on a regular basis to do cooperative learning tasks. This form of group gathering gives students the ongoing support and care they require to succeed academically and intellectually.

#### **2.12.2.2.4 Constructive Controversy**

Johnson and Johnson (2018) claim that constructive controversy includes individuals who hold opposing ideas, information, conclusions, beliefs and views. However, these individuals strive to reach an agreement based on their most thoughtful opinion. In addition, Mats and Cojander (2010) argue that constructive controversy conversations and conflicts can provide a suitable beginning point for understanding a complex subject. Students should learn to collaborate and be accountable for their individual contributions to a common objective, as this is likely to be how they will be judged in their future jobs and careers. Cooperative learning aids students in achieving academic goals. Students learn more as they interact with one another and realize the importance of student-to-student communication.

The above sections discuss the cooperative learning theory and its relevance to my study. Next, I review and present the hermeneutics theory as it underpins this study.



### **2.12.3 The Hermeneutics Theory**

In this section of my study, I discuss the lens through which the hermeneutics theory views text interpretation. The discussion focuses first on the proponents of the hermeneutics theory, how it came into existence and its role in text interpretation.

#### **2.12.3.1 The Role, Prevalence and Permeation of Hermeneutics**

Hermeneutics, according to Svenaeus (2012), is the art of interpretation or comprehension. Its etymology is said to be derived from the wing-footed Greek messenger-god, Hermes. The ancient Greeks were very interested in the interpretation of literary works such as poems, plays, and the dialogues of Socrates. To penetrate the barriers that separated the gods from the mortals, it was necessary to interpret communications in addition to transmitting them. As the study of the interpretation of what other people have said and done, which is frequently documented in writings, became more popular with mortals, they appropriated Hermes' name for their discipline and gave it the name hermeneutics (Barrett, Edward & Pearce, 2011).

Nowadays, the term hermeneutics is used to describe a methodological idea found in the humanities as opposed to natural science procedures (Svenaeus, 2012). According to Svenaeus (2012), academics in the humanities work with writings that must be analysed and understood rather than being explained by natural rules or cues from natural science models. A text attempts to transmit to us a message with a hidden meaning. However, in the natural sciences, the phenomena studied, such as molecules, diseases, or hurricanes, do not have the same meaning as in the humanities.

According to Barrett et al. (2011), a group of preachers undertook the process of reviewing ancient Greek and Hebrew for the purpose of unravelling the authentic intent of such texts. A number of people began to wonder if the passages in the Bible remained consistent no matter when or where they were read, and some people started to view the Bible as a collection that needed interpretation based not only on orthodox theology but on historical context as well (Barrett et al. 2011). In addition, hermeneutics originated with the study of biblical texts in ancient and classical civilization. However, hermeneutics as a philosophy helps us understand the process of interpretation (Barrett et al. 2011).

Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), a theologian, was the first to develop the hermeneutics theory. He felt that hermeneutics should be used to comprehend all kinds of human expression. Additionally, Schleiermacher was the initial proponent to express the notion that comprehension cannot be attained by isolating elements of a text, but instead, comprehension of a text's meaning is derived from broader contexts in which the process of interpretation is circular, involving a continuous back and forth between a text's features and the entire text. Schleiermacher also drew attention to a particular point, namely that the words and sentences reader encounters form his or her anticipation of the unfolding whole, and the reader's expectation of the expanding whole is shaped by the words and sentences the reader encounters (Barret et al., 2011).

Willem Dilthey (1833–1911), a German scholar, proposed a similar division between science and non-science. Non-science, in Dilthey's opinion, includes subjects such as ethics, art, music, and theology. He propounded the humanistic view of education, a well-considered educational framework in which understanding, and the science of understanding take centre stage for the beneficial operationalization of teaching and learning (Higgs & Smith, 2002).

According to Ghasemi, Taghinejad, Kabiri, and Imani (2011), interpretation is nothing more than imparting knowledge and understanding to someone in order for them to fully grasp speech and written communication. In addition, interpretation begins in a simplistic manner when the interpreter, who may be a student, first comprehends the meaning of the text in its entirety. Subsequently, the interpreter moves on to a more profound understanding by recognizing how the various text components relate to one another as a whole (Ghasemi et al., 2011).

The impetus behind the practice of interpreting a text in the first place was the fact that the meaning of a text may be unclear. The meaning of the text is determined by what is understood, while the meaning of the interpretation is determined by what is interpreted (Landa, 1993). In general, interpretation refers to the process of elucidating the significance of something that is opaque to the reader. When it comes to works of literature, comprehension falls on the reader while interpretation is the purview of the critic. Every critic is also a reader, and they must first grasp the meaning of the text before offering their interpretation of it. In addition, readers may encounter barriers to comprehension within a text, which calls for their own personal interpretation (Landa, 1993).

Defining hermeneutics has been difficult, according to Higgs and Smith (2002), because different people explain it differently. Some call it the science of understanding, others the process of interpretation, and yet others the science of communication. In any case, all of these definitions imply that understanding is the process of transferring meaning from one person to another.

According to George (2020), interpretative experience is often clarified in hermeneutics in terms of understanding. In this instance, understanding denotes that we have received something from our attempt at interpretation, but not understanding denotes that we have not got anywhere with our interpretation at all. George (2020) concludes that understanding might be referred to as the success of interpretation.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, a philosopher in hermeneutics, (as cited in George, 2020) describes the success of understanding in a number of ways. He links interpretive experience to education and postulates that education involves more than the acquisition of expertise, knowledge, or information. He continues to say that interpretation in education enlarges humans through formal instruction as well as through extensive and varied experiences. The following quotation illustrates how hermeneutics speaks to this study (Higgs & Smith, 2002).

One of the most important things we should realize is that, in any process of understanding, we have to start from where we are now. Such a process of understanding has to begin with the two partners accepting each other as they are and not as they think they should be. The two partners of understanding influence each other—they will each have unique life experiences and consequently, their own beliefs and prejudices, but their act of mutual communication will help both to re-interpret and re-understand themselves and their worlds. (p.22)

The study's main point of contention is students' difficulty in interpreting texts, particularly literary texts; understanding literature, by its very nature, necessitates the interpretation of what is written. Furthermore, this study proposes peer assessment as a solution to this difficulty, claiming that we learn better from self-criticism or from cooperative groups, which is a viewpoint shared by hermeneutics. "Two understanding couples affect each other..." (Higgs & Smith, 2002). When students work together, they inspire one another by accepting each other's perspectives and flaws, and eventually learning from one another.

Regardless of the aforementioned issues, some criticize hermeneutics as being overly ambiguous and subjective. It is critical to recognize that hermeneutics is concerned with a common understanding, which, in my opinion, may entail subjectivity as a conclusion is reached (Higgs & Smith, 2002).

In this section, I have outlined the theoretical and conceptual framework that inform my study. However, I will continue exploring the role of ecology and semiotics (van Lier, 2004), dialogic imagination (Bakhtin, 1981 & Vygotsky, 1978). First, I will discuss the Bakhtinian theory, and second, I will discuss the function of ecology and semiotics in language learning, and finally, I will explain the sociocultural theory.

#### **2.12.4 The Bakhtinian Dialogism Theory**

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895–1975) established a social theory and philosophy of language known as “Bakhtinian dialogism.” This philosophy holds that life is a social, dialogic experience where meaning is generated through dialogue regardless of the level at which it occurs. In other words, nothing exists devoid of meaning, everything is meaningful (Mambrol, 2018). A good example to illustrate this explanation is when we engage in texts; there is communication taking place between the reader and the text being read, and through this dialogue, meaning is being constructed. Literary texts are generally good examples of dialogues between readers and texts. Dialogic imagination, as the Bakhtinian theory is referred to, proposes that rather than being static, language evolves dynamically, and both affects and is affected by the culture that produces and uses it. In other words, our culture is greatly influenced by the language of the context. When we read literary texts, for example, we adopt the literary language used, we try to interpret the content of the text based on the language used, and as a result, the way we interpret the text is influenced by the culture of the language used in the text.

This theory is important in this study because it was developed as a literary theory (Mambrol, 2018). In his essay, “Discourse in the Novel”, as cited in Mambrol (2018), Bakhtin writes about his objection to the separation of the abstract “formal” method from the abstract “ideological” approach to the study of verbal art. In his view, verbal art comprises the language used in poetry and novels. Bakhtin believes that form and content in discourse are one and that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon. Bakhtin's



interpretation of the novel is predicated on his more comprehensive understanding of the dialogic character of language in general. According to Mambrol (2018), one must first understand the concept of heteroglossia in order to properly define the term dialogism. Heteroglossia is the condition in which what we ordinarily consider to be a single, unified language is typically made up of a variety of languages that interact with one another and frequently compete with one another in terms of their specific ideologies. In Bakhtin's view, each language is stratified into multiple others (Mambrol, 2018). However, I would refer to these "other languages" not as other languages but rather as different interpretations that we use to engage in written or spoken conversations.

The concept of dialogism refers to the idea that different languages that make up one language are constantly engaged in conversation with one another. According to Bakhtin (1981), there is no direct, unfiltered relation between a word and the thing that it refers to, and no word relates to the thing that it refers to in a singular way. It seems to me that this again has something to do with interpretation. The reader approaches a piece of literature, for instance, from their own perspective, whereas the piece of literature itself is written from the standpoint of the author. Therefore, each of these agents has a unique perspective on the meaning that the text is attempting to communicate, and the reader will not be able to develop an interpretation of written communication that makes sense of it, or at least gets them closer to the meaning that the text is trying to put across, until after they have engaged with the text. Since words are what constitute communication, whether they be spoken or written, this is also what Bakhtin would refer to as an ideological conflict, a conflict between the word's significance and meaning (Mambrol, 2018).

### **2.12.5 Ecology in Language**

Ernst Haeckel, a German biologist, is credited with coining the term "ecology" in the middle of the 19th century. Ecology can be defined as the study of the entirety of the relationships that exist between one organism and other species with which it interacts; however, ecology was first defined as the study of and management of the environment (also known as the ecosphere or biosphere) as well as particular ecosystems (van Lier, 2004).

The fundamental focus of the concept of language in these kinds of settings is on the functions of language in the conduct of social activities. This theory holds that language becomes meaningless in the absence of context. This, I believe, is because context provides opportunities for communication to take place. Let us look at this from a ‘word’ perspective. A word carries multiple meanings, depending on its contextual use. As a result, a word has no value without context. With regard to teaching a language, particularly a second or foreign language, the context in which we use the language places constraints on the vocabulary choices that can be made (Ciornei & Dina, 2014). This indicates that contextual circumstances play an important part in the formulation of meaning. By way of illustration, Van Lier (2004) gives the example of an onion; because there are layers all the way through, there is no way to peel away the layers in the hopes of getting to the ‘true’ onion underneath. In the same way, language depends on context through all its layers. In other words, the absence of context creates a communication breakdown.

Education is heavily reliant on the use of language, and the ecological view recognizes situated language as a primary focus, as well as highlighting the fact that one can take either a broad or a narrow approach to the study of ecology. The simplistic approach concentrates merely on finding solutions to existing issues without investigating the root causes of such issues. The deep method addresses the fundamental issues by conducting an in-depth critical analysis of them and pushing for significant behavioural shifts. It suggests a fresh, ‘ecocentric,’ point of view of the world. In light of this, it is important to point out that the deep approach seeks to bring about change in circumstances that are problematic (Van Lier, 2004).

Another argument that might be made in favour of the ecology view is that language cannot be reduced to grammar or meaning alone, nor can it be removed from the entirety of the ways in which humans communicate with one another and make sense of the world around them. The verbal message cannot be separated from gesture, expression or movement, and the production of meaning cannot be reduced to syntactic or lexical structures. According to McNeill (2000), Wells (1999), and McCafferty (2002), the fundamental nature of language is that it is both embodied and dialogical. This is a very significant statement since it clearly differentiates ecological linguistics from other theories. Since the beginning of linguistic study and definition, there has been considerable debate on the significance of

context in each of these areas. Meaning, purpose, and even communication are all connected to this concept in some way.

### **2.12.6 Semiotics**

Semiotics is the study of creating and utilizing signs (Van Lier, 2002). I refer to semiotics as using signs to communicate. Signs convey meaning and there must be an interpreter of that sign for comprehensible communication to take place. According to Campbell, Olteanu, and Kull (2019), the meaning of the sign can be either planned, such as when a word is conveyed with a specific meaning, or unplanned. An analogy for the unplanned scenario is when a symptom is a sign of a particular illness. According to Van Lier (2004), ecology and semiotics are inextricably linked to one another. That is to say, adopting a semiotic approach to language results in an ecological view of language learning and application, and an ecological view of language results places learning within the framework of the semiotics of space, time, action, perception, and cognition.

What exactly are signs, and why are they so important in the natural world? Although the types of signs utilized by humans are distinct from those utilized by the rest of nature, signs are not a phenomenon that is exclusive to humans. A sign is anything that can represent something to somebody although it stands for something else. The world inhabited by humans is replete with signs, some of which are natural, some of which are the product of cultural production, and others that are deliberately constructed with communication in mind. Everything that we see, hear or feel has the potential to serve as a sign (Van Lier, 2004). In this context, we are able to understand signs, and I believe that this explains what van Lier meant when he said that ecology and semiotics are intertwined; the two fields are closely related. From an ecological point of view, context is extremely important, whereas from a semiotic perspective, signs are more important. Signs cannot exist outside of their specific contexts; if they did, there would be no communication taking place because there would be no platform on which the signs could be interpreted. This is why ecology and semiotics are dependent upon each other. Another illustration provided by Van Lier is based on the noun "rain." Rain can be predicted based on various factors such as the presence of clouds, the colour of the sky, the presence of an umbrella, the sound of rain on the roof, and so on. In each of these instances, the term "means rain" evokes a different

understanding. They all "mean rain", but in various ways, or to put it another way, in different contexts (Van Lier, 2004).

In the various learning situations, it is clearly essential for teachers of languages to focus their attention on sign-making processes, also known as semiosis. A learning setting is made up of different possibilities for producing meaning in three different realms, the physical, the social, and the symbolic, and the key concept that promotes this construction of meaning is activity. Unlike instructional content involving facts, skills and behaviours taught through the processes of presentation, practice and production, an ecological-semiotic method perceives a student as an engaged individual who is guided and inspired to engage in increasingly complex levels of activity (van Lier, 2004).

### **2.12.7 The Sociocultural Theory**

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), a Russian psychologist, is credited with being the creator of the sociocultural theory. This theory is predicated on the assumption that the development of higher-order cognitive functions is the responsibility of parents, carers, peers and society at large (Cherry, 2002). Vygotsky is of the opinion that in order for there to be any form of learning, there must first be interaction between individuals. Vygotsky's primary theoretical insight, according to Lantolf (1994), is that symbolic approaches always facilitate complex forms of human mental function. In a similar vein, sociocultural theories are founded on the social constructivist paradigm, which holds that knowledge is generated socially through collaboration and is then distributed among members (Bryman, 2001). According to sociocultural theories, content acquisition and growth take place as a result of a learner's interactions with other people, objects and situations in the context of a cooperative setting (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky (1978) believed that everything was learned on two different levels simultaneously, firstly by engaging in social activity with other people, and secondly by incorporating that information into one's own brain structure. The second level incorporates the concept that the potential for improvement in cognitive development is restricted to a zone of proximal development (ZPD). According to Briner's (1999) interpretation, this zone represents the field of exploration through which the learner's mental ability is enhanced, but which cannot be fully developed without the assistance and participation of



other people. Therefore, it is impossible to disentangle the process of human cognitive development from the social, cultural, and historical circumstances out of which such development evolves (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). This social and cultural involvement is facilitated by socially produced language, resources, signs, and symbols that establish distinctively human higher-order thinking. These tools allow for interaction amongst individuals from different social and cultural backgrounds.

Vygotsky placed a strong emphasis on the importance of social interaction in humans' intellectual growth, which occurs in two stages: "first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people, and then inside the learner" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). From this standpoint, education and growth take place on two different planes: first, on the social plane, which refers to collaboration among people, and second, on the psychological level, which refers to what happens within the student. This describes a cognitive growth process that is rooted in social interaction but not limited to it (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). There has been discussion regarding Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which relate to four dimensions of human cognitive development, namely, the mind, tools, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and community of practice (Mantero, 2002; Nuthall, 1997; Palincsar, 1998; Wertsch, 1991). To begin with, there is the notion that the mind is not limited to a single person or group of people. According to Vygotsky (1978), the mind is distributed in a social context. Therefore, our cognitive patterns and processes rely on the connection and dialogue that we have with other people, which is in turn influenced by our environment, the situation in which we find ourselves, and our past (Mantero, 2002). The second facet of cognitive development is termed "tools", and these serve to facilitate the transition from the realm of social interaction to the psychological realm by assisting the development of communication and cognitive capabilities. Language, various numbering systems, algebraic symbol systems, works of art, writing, diagrams, maps and mechanical designs are all examples of such tools (Vygotsky, 1981). The third component of cognitive development is the ZPD, or "Zone of Proximal Development." According to Vygotsky's definition, this component is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978).

This section has explored the Bakhtin theory, as well as the ecological and semiotic and sociocultural theories. Of great importance in this section is the common view that these theories share regarding language learning. Key issues such as context, signs, symbolism, and social context were discussed, and it was posited that these elements depend on one another. For instance, knowledge or learning takes place in social settings through the medium of context. Signs and symbols as agents of meaning need context and social context for them to convey their meaning.

I will now conclude this chapter with an overview of my investigation of the literature.

### **2.13 Conclusion and Summary of the Chapter**

Based on the theoretical issues and insights I have thus far provided in my literature review; I conclude that the teaching of literature through peer assessment and role-play can assist students in acquiring knowledge and skills for learning English as a second language. If students are made aware of the benefits of incorporating literature in the teaching of English as a second language, and a variety of teaching approaches are used to teach reading through literature, such as using role-play as opposed to the usual traditional methods, I foresee an improvement in students' language competence and overall academic performance. In the same vein, if educators are aware of the purpose and benefits of peer assessment, then these educators will be well-informed in meeting the learning needs of the students. It is therefore against this background that my study proposes a framework for the teaching of reading through literature to enhance students' comprehension of literary texts, and ultimately, their academic performance in English as a second language.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the literature review, this study presented evidence supporting the notion of learning language through literature, and the potential benefits of peer assessment in the context of student learning. This necessitated embracing the pragmatist paradigm regarding how problems should be viewed. Every research study is viewed through the lenses of various underlying philosophical assumptions as to what constitutes truthful/verifiable research and which research approaches are appropriate for the purpose of proposing and expanding knowledge in that study. Therefore, in this chapter, I explore the philosophical assumptions about what constitutes valid research and examine research methodologies appropriate to the development of epistemology in the context of my study. In addition, I explain the significance of both qualitative and quantitative methods in addressing the research objectives. I further provide justification for the particular methodologies I have used in each phase of the study and present a description of the population, sample, study setting and research instruments. I further explain the ethical considerations of the study.

The data I collected were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively in order to address the following research objectives:

1. Explore the factors that make literary texts difficult for EAC students to understand.
2. Assess the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.
3. Assess whether a beneficial relationship exists between literature and the academic performance of students in English.
4. Assess the students' and lecturers' attitudes toward the teaching and learning of literary texts.
5. Propose a framework to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts.

Similarly, in order to achieve the aim of my study and fulfil the research objectives listed above, my research aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What difficulties do EAC students have in reading literary texts?

2. What are the students' and lecturers' attitudes toward peer assessment during literature instruction?
3. What is the effect of peer assessment on the overall academic performance of the EAC students?
4. What type of framework could be employed to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts?

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

In this section, I define the term paradigm and what it entails as explained by different scholars. I further discuss the research paradigm that underpins my study and present my justification for the selection of that specific research paradigm, as well as the advantages and disadvantages associated with the paradigm.

Every research study is conducted on the basis of underlying philosophical beliefs, and it is imperative that my study be situated in a particular research paradigm commensurate with my epistemic stance along with its value systems. A paradigm is defined as including “a set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists and how problems should be understood and addressed” (Kuhn, 1970, pp. 43–51). Kuhn (1962) was the first philosopher to use the term paradigm to refer to a conceptual framework that scholars share and that provides them with a functional model for analysing problems and finding answers. My understanding of a research paradigm is that it is a tool that a researcher can use to better understand the phenomenon under study. Understanding research paradigms is necessary because they serve as guides for the researcher in terms of what they know about the problem (its ontology/reality), how they know what they claim to know about the problem (its epistemology), and how they discover answers to the problem (its methodology).

My study adheres to the pragmatic theoretical orientation because it incorporates both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. To be specific, my study employs a mixed-method research design. Within this framework, the pragmatist design is divided into two dimensions, where the qualitative design follows the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, and the quantitative design follows the positivist paradigm. Those who follow the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm express subjective views regarding their



understanding of reality. Their views become subjective because every individual interprets reality differently. In a constructivist epistemology, learning is understood as a process of developing one's own unique meanings within the context of a social setting, as stated by Sivasubramaniam (2004). Thus, meanings that a student acquires might eventually become part of the student's own construct, particularly when experienced on both the intellectual and emotional level (Sivasubramaniam, 2004). This demonstrates how the constructivist paradigm can create emotional sentiments in a person which support that person in expressing how they feel about the issue being studied.

In the positivist paradigm, researchers elicit numerical, exact findings that can be generalized, as well as findings that are subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. The employment of both qualitative and quantitative methods, rather than only one or the other, helps to strengthen the weaknesses that are normally associated with conducting research using either the qualitative method or the quantitative method. The strength of the qualitative method is that the researcher can probe for information from the participants, which is a weakness of the quantitative method because quantitative researchers do not ask for explanations from participants. However, the fact that the qualitative method uses a smaller sample to collect data restricts the generalizability of the findings of the qualitative method. I contend, however, that generalizability should not be viewed as an ultimate goal in research, especially in a study such as the one I have undertaken.

The quantitative method uses surveys whose sample size is predicted by the formula provided by Yamane (1967) for a representative sample that can be generalized. Among the disadvantages of the qualitative method is that the findings cannot be subjected to inferential statistics, cannot be generalized, and are too subjective. This suggests that the authenticity of the findings is based on the questioning skills of the researcher. However, according to Guba (1981), there are strategies that can validate the outcomes of the qualitative method. I will discuss the matter of validity at a later stage in this chapter.

When information becomes subjective, it is a thought, and does not necessarily represent the opinions of all people. This is the component that makes the subjective view of the qualitative method less powerful. The advantage of using the qualitative method, on the other hand, is that it allows one to have a general overview of a number of people as they perceive a particular idea. The views emanating from the qualitative findings bring a

broader understanding of the issue under study in contrast to the findings of the quantitative method, which views the problem as an event and asks only yes or no questions. In addition, the findings obtained using the quantitative method cannot be justified in the same way as in using the qualitative method. Similarly, the quantitative data analysis can sometimes be somewhat cumbersome or difficult to understand.

In light of the discussions I have presented above, the use of two different philosophies (positivist and interpretivist/constructivist) and two different research approaches (qualitative and quantitative) in my study indicates that there are strategies through which these tools can be strengthened. Both the philosophies and the research methods are made stronger because weaknesses posed by one philosophy, or one research approach will be mitigated by the other philosophy or research approach. Thus, the utilization of the two sets of tools in my study not only strengthens the research methods but is also aimed at strengthening the findings of the study.

Pragmatism is described as a worldview predicated on the application of multiple philosophies that either complement each other or strike a balance between two positions in order to produce the desired findings (Shikalepo, 2021; Adeyelele, 2017). It holds that the reality or truth of the past must be accurately experienced in the here and now as well as in the future. To state it another way, there is no such thing as an unchangeable and unchanging truth because all truths shift and change based on the time, location, and context in which they are viewed (Rai & Lama, 2020). Based on this perspective, I believe that there may be multiple meanings related to the way people interpret the truth, and thus there can never be a solution to a problem that is universally applicable to all situations. Therefore, two assumptions underpin the research problem in this study regarding students' poor performance in learning language through literature. As pointed out earlier, my choice of the pragmatist paradigm rests in the fact that it incorporates the qualitative (interpretivist/constructivist) and quantitative (positivist) research methodologies. The utilization of the pragmatist paradigm strengthens the study because each of the two different research philosophies which make up this paradigm (the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm and the positivist paradigm) has its own advantages and disadvantages which help to strike a balance between subjectivity (qualitative) and objectivity (quantitative) throughout the research process.

Having discussed the overall theoretical assumptions that underpin my study, in the following section, I present the sub-paradigms of the theoretical assumption.

### **3.2.1 The Positivist Paradigm**

Positivism is a research ideology that is anchored in the empirical approach, in which claims about knowledge are founded directly on experience, facts and observable causes of behaviours in a social environment (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). This paradigm implies that truth is objectively offered and is evaluated using attributes that are detached from the research instruments (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). It is a philosophical approach to the discovery of knowledge using evidence derived from scientific measurements and observations, independent of human influence (Shikalepo, 2021).

This ideology contends that the significance of assertion is determined by whether or not it can be substantiated. Positivism, in Crotty's view, refers to things that, apart from consciousness and experience, remain meaningful realities that hold truth and significance as objects (Crotty, 1998). There is a distinct difference between the study investigator and the person being investigated. The researcher takes on the role of an observer and treats the social world as if it were the natural world. This essentially precludes values and other biases and confounding variables from impacting the study findings through prediction, control, and careful methodological measures (Guba, 1990). This is one of the aspects of the positivist paradigm that does not value a subjective view. In the interest of demonstrating that the findings of the study are attributed to data gained from scientific measurements and not to anything else, I view their objective position as a means to avoid being swayed by the phenomenon that is the subject of the investigation. However, because these scientific measurements are carried out by humans and humans can be influenced by their own individual assumptions, the possibility of human error and biases cannot be ruled out in the positivist finding. This is because no research can ever be a hundred percent accurate (Murray, 2013).

Another view which necessitated the choice of the positivist paradigm in my study is that research approaches can be experimental and consequential (Adeyele, 2017). In order for me to comprehend events through their underlying causal links, the focus of my research was on conducting experiments. More specifically, I was interested in determining how the

treatment impacted the experimental group's overall performance in literature. The hypothesis of experimental research is that experiments are the only valid way to determine the truth; nonetheless, I am obligated to point out that no conclusion can ever be absolutely accurate.

### **3.2.2 The Interpretivist/Constructivist Paradigm**

This school of thought opposes the positivist notion that reality is distinct, objective and can be comprehended through the application of scientific methods (Lynch & Bogen, 1997). For the constructivist, people's perceptions of things and events are different in that individuals have their own unique ways of seeing things and events (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

For the purposes of my research, the interpretivist and constructivist paradigms will be merged into a single category. This is primarily due to the fact that interpretivism is a build-up paradigm of constructivism. Interpretivism can be defined as the philosophy of creating meaning from the knowledge constructed in constructivism so as to ensure that the knowledge constructed is correctly understood and contextualized in relation to the topic that is being researched (Shikalepo, 2021). Overall, constructivism and interpretivism are similar in the sense that they both include belief in the collective construction of knowledge and the plurality of realities as represented by various participants in research projects, particularly qualitative ones (Shikalepo, 2021). Hermeneutics, which is a philosophical approach to human comprehension, serves as the foundational basis for interpretivism (Shikalepo, 2021). It is important to emphasize that hermeneutics serves as the philosophical platform for interpretivism. The interpretivist paradigm equally emphasizes that social science research is largely concerned with the subjective interpretations that individuals ascribe to their own experiences. This belief, however, does not presuppose that social behaviours can be objectively identified. According to Boas (1995), the interpretivist paradigm assumes that in studying people's cultures, one may gain insight into their perceptions, ideas, reasoning, and the meanings that hold significance to them. As a consequence of this assumption, the methods that are employed in understanding human and social sciences are not comparable with those used in physical sciences, as humans interpret their environment and behave in accordance with that perception (Hammersley, 2013). The interpretivist approach aims to comprehend the examined phenomenon from the standpoint of the people concerned, and this has led to it embracing a number of



different interpretations (Elshafie, 2013). In accordance with the constructivist paradigm, social constructs such as language, consciousness and shared meanings are the means by which an individual may have access to reality, whether given or socially generated (Myers, 2009).

Since my study investigates the role peer assessment may play in the process of language acquisition through literature, it explores social, psychological, cultural and language factors affecting readers and texts. Considering that the above elements are not readily or objectively observable or assessable, there is even greater justification for me to use an interpretivist approach in this research. These aspects require the participants in the study to interpret the social environments in which they were placed. To be more specific, the participants in my study were students who role-played and assessed each other. These activities can only take place in social environments in which the participants use both internal and external factors, including cultural, linguistic, and social beliefs, to influence how they carry out the role-play and the peer assessment observation. Because these behaviours occur on impulse or when triggered, it is impossible to measure them. Interpretivist scholars refer to this process as exploring interviewees' beliefs, morals, presumptions, viewpoints, and emotions (Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). These student participants' roles in the role-play and the remarks offered for peer assessment were based on how each assessor observed and comprehended the role-play according to how they saw it fit. Peer assessment was based on the students' interactions with their peers. In essence, one would not expect any objectivity in events such as these.

Interpretivist scholars are able to use their varied perspectives on phenomena not only to characterize objects, individuals, or events, but also to profoundly appreciate them in their cultural setting as they believe that they have shared ideologies in the communities in which they reside. This is another one of the benefits of this paradigm (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022).

On the other hand, the goal of my research was to analyse language instruction and learning through literary texts as well as the function that peer assessment plays in both of these processes. Students gain knowledge from one another through the process of observation, and in some instances, note-taking, when the teaching and learning strategy known as peer assessment is applied. Students are likely to have a new learning experience as a result of this sort of instruction, one that they would not have received from the instructor had they

participated in the traditional teaching context. The pragmatist perspective acknowledges the value of experiences like these due to their capacity to foster learning. In a similar vein, the educational method of role-play was utilized in the research that I conducted in the hope of facilitating students' comprehension of literary texts. Students had learning opportunities owing to the adaptability of the two methods discussed here, namely, peer assessment and role-play. According to the pragmatic paradigm, the brains of individual students are distinctly different; hence, it is impossible for them to learn through a consistent method of instruction based on the presumption that it can be helpful (Rai & Lama, 2020) to all students in all circumstances.

As a result of the inclusion of focus group interviews in my research, the view presented by Elshafie (2013) is also pertinent to this investigation. This view provides support for the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, which states that interpretivists seek to explain the subject of inquiry from the viewpoint of the individuals concerned. Ryan (2006), who shares the same notion, argues that "truth is formed through conversation; valid knowledge claims develop as different interpretations and action alternatives are discussed and negotiated among the member community" (p.20). Instead of trying to determine whether or not a certain premise is true, researchers try to make sense of the issues that come up during interviews, as well as the responses that participants give. This participatory method involving participants allows for the exchange of ideas, as opposed to the simple affirmation or rejection of the researcher's own ideas (Murray, 2013).

Although the interpretivist paradigm has advantages, it also has flaws. Interpretivists strive to acquire a deeper comprehension and appreciation of phenomena within their intricate social context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). However, this may raise concerns as to the validity and dependability of the data findings, implying that since interpretivism is subjective rather than objective, the data findings may not be reliable (Lawrence, 2015).

It is this theoretical background that guided the selection of methodology that is presented in the following section.

### 3.3 Research design

In this section, I will first discuss the background of the research approaches used, the rationale for the research methods, the setting and context of the problem, and finally, ethical considerations. At this juncture, I must highlight, however, that the criticisms levelled against various study approaches do not preclude me from understanding their relevance to this study from a mixed methods perspective. A research design can be defined as an in-depth plan of action to answer research questions and objectives and address challenges encountered throughout the investigation process (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2011). Following a mixed-methods approach, my study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. A mixed-methods design is one that employs more than one research strategy in a single investigation to explore the research questions and objectives from several viewpoints (Davies & Hughes, 2014; Kumar, 2014). It is a method of acquiring information that takes into consideration a diverse range of points of view, perspectives, stances, and standpoints based on qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This approach is also beneficial in acquiring a comprehensive understanding of trends and patterns, devising new measurements, analysing a variety of perspectives, and comprehending the link between the variables being studied (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009).

It is likely that the combined use of various data collection techniques in a single study would enhance the reliability of the findings. Additionally, in the mixed-method technique, the methods can synergistically complement one another, thereby minimizing the drawbacks that may arise from either research method (Mouton, 2009). According to Patton (2002), research studies that employ a single research methodology, whether qualitative or quantitative, are more susceptible to oversights associated with that particular approach. On the other hand, studies that employ numerous approaches have the advantage of collecting diverse forms of data which may validate each other, minimizing the likelihood of mistakes. It is for these reasons that a mixed-method approach has the potential to address both what and why questions, thereby yielding a more comprehensive understanding of the study topic than would be achieved through the exclusive use of qualitative or quantitative methods (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009).

My research is also of an exploratory nature, with the goal of determining how we assign meanings to our behaviours and what kinds of things are important to us (Schutt, 2019). One of the questions I have posed in my research is intended to determine the perspectives of the student participants regarding the implementation of peer assessment within the framework of literature instruction. My hope is that in this context, the student participants will explore the many points of view that they hold with regard to the topic of peer assessment and literature.

### **3.3.1 Rationale for Qualitative Methodology**

The use of qualitative research methodologies makes it possible to conduct in-depth investigations in the pursuit of a deeper, profound knowledge of multifaceted concerns. This is accomplished by collecting and analyzing information from a variety of points of view (Grix, 2004; Ryan, 2006). Researchers are better able to appreciate the participants' opinions and account for those views when using the qualitative research approach, which provides a more definitive understanding of the phenomena being studied within a given context (Shikalepo, 2021). In my research, I used both focus group interviews and observations to collect information about the perspectives of student participants regarding the usefulness of peer assessment in the context of literature instruction. Despite the difficulties associated with qualitative methods, which I discussed in subsection 3.2, I decided to use this method because it is particularistic. This allowed me to gain a deeper understanding as well as a more detailed characterization of the target population of the study. In-depth research was carried out by means of focus-group interviews, during which participants were asked about their perception and understanding of the role-play as well as the peer evaluation activity in which they took part.

I decided to utilize this methodology as the qualitative data that accrued from these discussions would yield insights that were informative regarding the challenges that relate to reading literary texts. Furthermore, it is a useful approach in research that aims to acquire a better knowledge of phenomena from the perspectives of people who are participating in a social setting in which the research is conducted. Lastly, I chose this approach because it allowed for research findings to be obtained through engagement between myself, as the researcher, and the participants. These individuals had first-hand experience of the issue that was being researched, and they were able to convey their thoughts about it subjectively.



### 3.3.2 Rationale for Quantitative Methodology

The quantitative research technique is a natural science approach since it seeks to examine things in their natural contexts. It is also premised on the notion that knowledge is obtained by the observation and measurement of realities that exist apart from human intervention (Shikalepo, 2021). In addition, Dickinson and Neuman (2006) defines the quantitative approach as the gathering and examination of numerical data with the goal of describing, explaining, predicting or controlling events of interest. Quantitative methods are helpful in that they offer a perspective that is free of context and is detached, and they make use of standardized instruments (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). I decided to employ quantitative methodology in my study in order to demonstrate that the issue of literary text comprehension is numerically significant, and because the quantitative data could be the starting point for the qualitative method in my study. The fact that the quantitative approach investigates the behaviours of variables under controlled and uncontrolled situations was another factor that influenced my decision to use this method. The applicability of the quantitative method in my research is demonstrated in that it served to determine whether or not there is a significant connection between the control group as the independent variable and the experimental group as the dependent variable. The purpose of the pre- and posttest in my research was to establish whether there was likely to be a statistically significant difference in test performance on literary text comprehension before and after the intervention. The qualitative component of this research was built upon the foundation of the quantitative data that was acquired using these methods.

The rationale for using quantitative methods may also be applied to the questionnaire that was utilized in my research. Statistical and descriptive data obtained from the study participants was gathered by means of a questionnaire, and this information was then analysed to produce statistical data with regard to their biographical information, their prior knowledge about literary texts, and their cooperative learning capability, which was depicted through peer assessment.

Based on the points I have raised above, I found it beneficial to combine qualitative and quantitative research methodologies into my study because the narratives obtained from

interviews and observation notes, as well as all other qualitative methods, helped to validate quantified data obtained from questionnaires, pre- and posttests, and other quantitative measures. In the following section, I will discuss the setting as well as the context of the problem being researched.

### **3.4 Setting and Context of the Problem**

Research settings are locations where research investigations happen. In other words, it is the location where the data are gathered for analysis. My research was conducted in a natural environment, mostly through pre- and posttests, observations, peer assessment, and interviews to explore the participants' views, as well as the causes and effects of the issue being researched. At this juncture, I must remind my readership that I have already presented the actual setting of my study in Chapter One, Section 1.3. Therefore, before I describe specific details regarding the population, sample, instruments, and data collection procedures, I will explain the background that served as the foundation for these aspects of my research methodology as a whole.

During the time in which the data was collected, there were two distinct groups of students enrolled in the EAC programme. During the literature lesson, which is a component of the programme's curriculum, each student was required to read a story book or a play before being assigned randomly to either the experimental or control group. The student participants read the story using what I would refer to as the traditional method, which involves taking turns reading a scene from the book entitled "The Oracle of Cidino" (Nyathi, 2003). The extracts from the play will appear in the appendix (Appendix 18) at the end of the thesis. The same students were given a pretest when the reading of the book was completed with the goal of determining how well the experimental participants performed in the role-play before the intervention. After the preliminary test, I used the Yamane formula (1967) to select the samples for the experimental and control groups. In order for the groups assigned to the role-play to be able to prepare for it, I further randomly assigned scenes that were depicted in the book to the members of the experimental group.

While one group was enacting a role-play scene, the other groups watched and evaluated that group's performance, a process which I refer to as peer assessment. This evaluation was carried out in accordance with the peer assessment guidance tool that I provided, and

this is presented at the conclusion of this section under the heading of qualitative research instruments. In my capacity as a non-participant observer, I, too, evaluated the performance of each group by observing and taking notes of their performances. My observation guide will also appear in the section on qualitative research instruments. After the completion of the role-play, all student participants, including those in the control and experimental groups, were given a posttest to determine whether or not this approach to teaching literature through peer assessment with the assistance of role-play would improve their overall academic achievement in the subject of English, and specifically, the achievement of the experimental group in the area of literature.

### **3.5 Population and Sampling Procedures**

My study participants included both the lecturers teaching the English Access Course (EAC) in the Language and Development Department of the Oshakati Campus of the University of Namibia and the students who were enrolled in the course at the time the data was collected. There were three lecturers in the Language and Development Department, although only two of them taught the EAC course. One of the classes had 57 students, while the other had 58 students. Therefore, the total number of students was 105. The lecturers held classes with their students four times per week, with a one-hour instruction time allocated to each session. The lecturers all had a Master's degree in either language or a language teaching-related field. All of the students had completed their secondary school education and had earned the minimal number of points necessary for admission to the University of Namibia but had been unable to get the needed grade C or above in English as a subject.

I selected members of the study population using the convenience sampling method, which is also sometimes referred to as the availability sampling method (Schutt, 2019). Convenience sampling was a suitable method for my research since it requires the researcher to select participants based on whether they are willing to participate in data collection. This made the population more accessible, which was the primary objective of my investigation (Schutt, 2019). In the end, I could choose only those lecturers and student participants who showed willingness to take part in my investigation and whom I was able to contact without much difficulty. As a consequence of this, only two of the three lecturers

who were teaching at the Language and Development Department took part in my study. Similarly, I selected 105 students willing to be participants in the study.

The sample of the student population that participated in the study was determined by the following Yamane (1967) formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{N}{1 + \alpha^2 N} \\
 &= \frac{105}{1 + 0.05^2 \times 105} \\
 &= 83
 \end{aligned}$$

In this formula,  $n$  is the sample size,  $N$  is the population size and  $\alpha$  is the level of significance, i.e., 95%. Based on this formula, my study population was 83. A random sampling procedure that utilized computer-generated numbers was used in order to identify the sample that would be allocated to the control and experimental groups. The control group comprised 42 student participants, and the experimental group comprised 41 student participants. For the sake of fair participation, every student who participated in the role-play was given a chance to take part in any of the role-play scenes, as the different role-play scenarios were randomly assigned to the students. The experimental group was tasked with performing five distinct roles depicted in the play. Therefore, the assignment of the 41 participants to take part in the five scenes was done randomly using computer-generated random numbers depending on the number of participants needed. As a result, there were eight participants or actors in four of the scenes, while there were nine participants or actors in the remaining scenes, as illustrated in Table 1.

*Table 1: Allocation of number of actors to the acts/scenes*

<b>ACT NUMBER</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ACTORS</b>
Act 1	8
Act 2	8
Act 3	8
Act 4	9
Act 5	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>



In order to conduct the focus group interview for this study, I needed to have a representative number of student participants taking part. I therefore employed a purposeful sampling method to select eight students for the interview. The qualitative sampling method known as purposeful sampling involves researchers deliberately selecting individuals and locations to learn about or gain a clear insight into the primary phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). I chose this method of sampling because it focuses on the investigation and interpretation of experiences and perceptions. To be more specific, I chose this method because it allowed me to select participants who I anticipated would express themselves explicitly during the focus group interview in relation to their performance in the role-play.

In the following section, I will present the data collection tools used in my study. First, the qualitative instruments are discussed, and thereafter, the quantitative instruments.

### **3.6 Qualitative Research Instruments**

For the qualitative research component of the study, I used the following research instruments to gather data.

#### **3.6.1 Focus Group Interview**

A focus group interview was one of the qualitative data-gathering tools that I employed. “A focus group interview is used to collect shared understanding from several individuals where the interview is likely to yield the best information” (Creswell, 2008, p. 226). I chose this technique because it permitted me to collect data which I might not obtain through observation alone. My decision also stemmed from the nature of research question 2, which refers to the attitudes of students toward peer assessment. Because the questions were primarily open-ended and the interview was conducted using a structured format, I could obtain the same information from each of the respondents.

Using an open-ended questionnaire enabled me to evoke more thorough responses from the students during the interview. The interview was conducted with the students who participated in the role-play in order to discover their thoughts on the activity, including what portions of it they liked or did not like, what they had learned, and how they felt about learning from their peers. One of the advantages of employing a qualitative technique is that qualitative data are

helpful in providing explanations that can be used to better comprehend the processes and events that have been observed. The same explanations were utilized in order to strengthen the numerical outcomes of quantitative data.

Before the interview commenced, I made it clear to the respondents that they were not going to be tested in any way, but rather that I was interested in hearing their opinions concerning the role-play as well as peer assessment as methods of learning. This was done to defuse any potential tension and to encourage participation. Every question was open-ended, which encouraged participants to provide detailed comments. During the participants' responses to the questions, I took notes. Present below is the focus group interview guide.



### 3.6.1.1 The interview guide

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Topic:** Dramatization of the play

1. Tell us about the character you played in the story?
2. What was the most important thing about your character or characters?
3. What have you learnt from this story?
4. What did you like about the role-play?
5. What did you dislike about the role-play?
6. Would you say at this particular moment after this play, you now have a clear understanding of the book? Why do you feel this way?
7. Do you call this new understanding learning?  
If yes, what is learning?  
If no, what is this new understanding?  
Do you have other comments?
8. Would you say at this moment after dramatizing the play, you will answer the questions better in the test or examination about this book?
9. How do you feel about the comments given by your fellow students regarding your performance in the play?
10. Would you recommend roleplay to be used by lecturers to teach plays or novels?
11. How do you feel about your fellow students assessing you?
12. What were some of the difficulties you experienced when you were preparing for the role-play?
13. What did you do to overcome those difficulties?
14. What did you enjoy the most during this group work?
15. What are your views regarding group work?
16. What did you like best from this role-play?
17. What is your view regarding the teaching and learning of literature especially plays and novels?
18. How else do you think literature lessons can be made easy and enjoyable?

### 3.6.2 Observation

I chose observation as a data collection method because the results obtained from observation are captured as they are exhibited by the participants without the researcher's influence. Observation is an effective approach to use when the questions to be addressed revolve around the how and what parts of the research, and furthermore, it allows the researcher to engage with participants by studying behaviours that are of interest to the research (Shikalepo, 2021).

I designed an observation/peer assessment guide as a tool for the student participants in the experimental group for the purpose of peer assessment during each group's role-play. I also observed the student participants' role-plays, but as a non-participant observer. Being a non-participant requires that I, as the researcher, watch and record the activities of the participants, but do not engage in any of the day-to-day tasks that take place in the context of the investigation (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). The observation guide is the same as the peer assessment tool guide and it is for this reason that it will be presented under subsection 3.6.3, which discusses the peer assessment tool guide.

I believed that using this method would assist me in learning more about the participants in the context of their natural surroundings. As a non-participant observer, I took notes on what I saw and heard regarding the role-play in action, as well as the remarks made by the students who were taking part. My observation was designed as a supplementary measure to the activity of peer assessment that the student participants were engaged in with the aim of fulfilling the objectives of my research. Presented next is the observation guide I used as a non-participant observer.



### 3.6.2.1 The researcher observation guide

Group no: \_\_\_\_\_

Act / Scene performed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

CRITERIA	Performance	Observations	
		Individual Student	Group performance
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	1. Recall and narrate events as in text  2. Evidence of depth understanding of text  3. Evidence of understanding of character roles		
<b>Interpretation</b>	1. Performance well organized  2. Performance related to theme of act  3. Performance related to learning objective  4. Performance convincingly executed		
<b>Proficiency</b>	1. Good flow of performance		

	2. Minor flaws have no effect on performance  3. Performance attracts attention of audience		
<b>Communication</b>	1. Character shows enthusiasm and desire to convince  2. Depiction of feelings and attitudes well demonstrated		

To evaluate the performance of the student participants during their role-plays, I decided to use the observation methodology. The documentation of the observation that I carried out was in the form of field notes; however, the documentation of the observation that the student participants performed was in the form of responses on the above observation guide. These materials, the field notes and the observation guide, comprised detailed information regarding what the students (peer assessors) and I observed and heard during the role-play.

A potential drawback of observation is that a limited amount of data is obtained. In comparison with other approaches, such as interviews, the information gleaned from observation can sometimes be inadequate (Chirimhana, 2014). Because limited data means that fewer data are accessible for analysis, it is possible that the study will thus not yield explicit results that address the research questions in a manner that is both comprehensive and satisfying. I believed, however, that these restrictions could be circumvented by employing an alternative way of data collection. This would make it possible to collect more comprehensive information, which would allow for a more thorough analysis, and ultimately, the solution to the research issue (Shikalepo, 2021). To minimize this potential disadvantage, I combined several data-gathering approaches such as an interview, a questionnaire and a pre- and posttest.

### 3.6.3 Peer Assessment Guide

The student participants were given directions on how to evaluate the role-play through the peer assessment guide/observation guide. The guide had questions that directed student participants in exploring what kind of comments to offer and what kind of components of student performance during the role-play to examine. The following is the peer student/peer assessment guide that the student participants used.

#### 3.6.2.1 Student Observation Assessment Guide

Group no: \_\_\_\_\_ Act /Scene performed: \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Observations
How did the characters respond to the text?	
How did the group perform?	
Is the theme well portrayed?	
Any impressive performance noticed?	

### **3.6.4 Piloting of Qualitative Instruments**

In preparation for the interview with the focus group, I conducted a pilot study in which five students from a different department of the university took part. The concern that they raised was that the interview guide contained too many questions. I therefore reduced the number of questions, making the sentences clearer and briefer.

### **3.6.5 Administration of Qualitative Instruments**

After all the student participants in both the experimental and control groups had written the pretest, they carried out the role-play. It was during the role-play that the first qualitative instrument was administered, namely, the peer assessment guide. Thereafter both groups wrote the posttest. The second qualitative instrument was the focus group interview which took place after the posttest.

All these processes happened only after all student participants had signed the consent forms and read the study information sheet, and after I had briefed them on the issue of confidentiality and anonymity. In the final section of this chapter, I will present a comprehensive explanation of the ethical considerations.

### **3.6.6 Qualitative Data Analysis**

Following the data collection process, I proceeded to analyse the qualitative data that I had gathered through observation, focus group interviews, and the open-ended sections of the questionnaires by employing a technique called thematic analysis. I began by going through the notes and analysing what the student and lecturer participants had communicated. By focusing on the elements of the data set that occurred more than once, I was able to categorize it into various identified themes. I categorized the thoughts, views and opinions expressed by the participants according to the research questions. Since the answers to open-ended questions could not be subjected to statistical analysis because of the qualitative characteristics of the responses, I personally reviewed the responses to look for recurring themes and classifications that were connected to the study's questions.

In the preceding part of this chapter, I presented the qualitative research instruments employed in the study. In the following section, I will discuss the quantitative data collection instruments.



### **3.7 Quantitative Research Instruments**

For the quantitative approach, I employed the following research instruments.

#### **3.7.1 Pretest and Posttest**

Experimental research conducted by sociologists, social psychologists, and other social scientists since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century has made significant advances regarding our knowledge of the social world (Schutt, 2019). In my attempt to determine the impacts of the proposed teaching approach on the performance of the student participants, I decided to utilize an experimental design for this study. For this experiment, a pretest-posttest strategy was used. A pretest determines the magnitude of the variable being investigated before carrying out the test (Schutt, 2019). The results of a pretest provide for an immediate measurement of the degree to which the experimental group and the comparison group improve over the course of the study. A pretest also enables the researcher to verify that the randomization process was carried out correctly. Furthermore, a pretest provides a comprehensive overview of the circumstances under which the intervention was effective or ineffective by calculating the subjects' baseline scores on the dependent variable (Mohr, 1992). Notwithstanding the above, the randomization that takes place in real studies serves to make the control group in real experiments an effective instrument to determine the impacts of the treatment. According to Schutt (2019, p. 242), the following features should thus be included in authentic experiments in order to satisfy the requirements:

- Having two distinct groups: the comparison group and the treatment group
- Taking into account the change in the treatment group subsequent to considering the change in the comparison group
- Random assignment to one of the two groups being compared.

The combined effect of these variables affords a far greater level of certainty pertaining to the accuracy of the causal findings compared to other research methodologies. Two or more qualities strengthen the trust one has in the reliability of the outcomes of an experiment (Chirimbana, 2014; Shikalepo, 2021; Schutt, 2019).

The utilization of a control group allows for the establishment of a benchmark for assessing the intervention's effects (Tiwari, 2008). The existence of the comparison group in this study thus gave me the confidence to deduce that the primary reasons for the substantial discrepancies in the performance between the treatment group and the comparison group were mostly attributable to the intervention. Although the pretest-posttest approach is meant to facilitate causal inferences, in this research, the intricate nature of the real-life setting prevented me from controlling all other pertinent variables. On the basis of this, the validity of the experiment may continue to be questioned by other external variables, some of which might be outside of my control.

Maturation poses a potential challenge to the internal validity of the control group. Subjects in the treatment group or experimental group may acquire expertise and skills as a result of the lengthy treatment. In my case, after the pretest, role-play and peer assessment were done by the experimental group, and these activities may have contributed to the changes exhibited by the experimental group in the posttest. This may be explained by the notion that the design features necessary for a true experiment, which reduce challenges to causal validity, also make it harder to attain sample and population generalization.

Schutt (2019) points out that “experimental researchers are seeking to learn about general processes, hence we have to consider ways to improve the generalizability of the results” (p. 242). However, in my study, internal validity was ensured because the individuals assigned to the control and the treatment groups were randomly selected for those two groups. Schutt (2019), argues that the process of randomly assigning study participants to both the experimental and control groups prevents systematic prejudice in the assignment of those participants into these groups.

Pre-posttests were administered to assess the overall performance of the student population in literature. The pretest was given to all student participants, those in the control and experimental groups before the intervention, and the posttest was given to the same student participants at the end, following the intervention. The test included short questions which asked about the general features of the story, true/false questions, multiple-choice questions, questions about figurative expressions, and comprehension questions. I compared the results of the pretest and the posttest scores to determine whether the method

of instruction had a substantial impact on the disparities in score that existed between the two groups.

In an experiment with a pretest-posttest design, several variables should be taken into consideration since they pose threats to internal validity. These include the history of an individual's experiences; the maturity of the participants; attrition, which is when an individual leaves the study before a posttest is taken; regression to the mean, which indicates that individuals who score extremely high or low on some measurement, have a tendency to score close to the average the next time; and selection bias, which refers to the non-compatibility between individuals in the comparison and treatment groups. I minimized this threat by selecting study participants at random. I ensured that every student participant had a fair opportunity of being selected for any group or role-play.

Additionally, I employed a random number generator to assign student participants to the experimental group, control group and the role-play scenes. I would also like to point out that the pretest I administered to the control (comparison group) and experimental (treatment group) before the intervention was exactly the same as the posttest that I gave them after the intervention. My decision was guided by Lodico et al. (2006) and Creswell & Creswell (2017) who postulate that the diagnostic test (pretest) and achievement test (posttest) can be the same in an effort to measure accurately participants' progress before the intervention and after the intervention. The pretest/posttest is presented below.



## PRE-TEST POST TEST

Department of Language and Development

University of Namibia

Literature

20 April 2022

Duration: 1Hour

Marks: 35

### QUESTION 1: Short Questions

- 1.1 Who is the author of “The Oracle of Cidino”?/1
- 1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?/1
- 1.3 What genre is “The Oracle of Cidino”?/1
- 1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature? /1
- 1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices./1

### QUESTION 2: True or False

State whether the following statements are **True** or **False** by filling in the blanks.

- 2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers’ removal from their land. /1
- 2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha. /1
- 2.3 The King’s ally is Muyatwa. /1
- 2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature. /1
- 2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria.

### QUESTION 3: Literary Devices

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?

- a. ambiguity
- b. simile
- c. metaphor
- d. foreshadowing
- e. irony



3.1 Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1). /1

3.2 Town Clerk: ... "Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1) /1

3.3 Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2). /1

3.4 Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4. Scene 1). /1

3.5 Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1). /1

#### **QUESTION 4: Figurative language**

What do the following figurative expressions mean?

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects". /2

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons". /2

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river". /2

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly". /2

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake". /2

#### **QUESTION 5: Comprehension**

5.1 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction./5

5.2. What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer? /5

A questionnaire is a written collection of self-report questions to be completed by a selected group of participants (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). Both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires that I created were distributed to lecturer participants and student participants in order to elicit their responses regarding peer assessment and literature instruction. One of the benefits of collecting data with a questionnaire is that it allowed me to collect a large amount of information in a brief period of time. Through questionnaires, I solicited more detailed responses than those I would obtain from closed-ended questions (Chirimbana, 2014).

Both of the questionnaires contained three different sections. With regard to the lecturers, these were used to collect biographical information in order to learn about their career profiles in the teaching profession and to determine whether or not they had previously taught literature. In a similar vein, the biographical information for students provided information on their profiles in order to determine whether they had studied literature at secondary school or whether they were studying it for the first time at the university.

The purpose of the components on literature and peer assessment that were included in both questionnaires was to learn about the lecturers' and the students' perspectives on literature and its influence on teaching and learning, as well as how their perspectives on peer assessment influenced their views on cooperative learning, and whether it ultimately assisted in the acquisition or transformation of knowledge. In my opinion, self-administered questionnaires eliminate the possibility of bias on the part of the researcher because the researcher is not directly participating in the process. However, questionnaires may also allow for deceit on the part of the respondents because they can offer information that is not true. I minimized this threat to internal validity when I piloted the two questionnaires.

## Student Participant Questionnaire

### Instructions:

- Do not write your name on the questionnaire.
- Mark your choice with an **X** where a choice is required.

### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age group: [19 – 21 \_\_\_\_\_]; [22 – 24 \_\_\_\_\_]; [25 – 27 \_\_\_\_\_]; [28 -30 \_\_\_\_\_]; [31 + \_\_\_\_\_]

### SECTION B: Literature

1. Have you been taught literature before?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, where were you taught literature?

Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/>
University	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. If you had studied literature before, which subject was it?

English as a Second Language	
Oshikwanyama 1 <sup>st</sup> Language	
Oshindonga 1 <sup>st</sup> Language	
Afrikaans	
Otjiherero 1 <sup>st</sup> Language	
Other	

2.1 If you had studied literature before, was it your decision or did someone tell you to study literature?

(a) It was my choice, why?

(b) Someone told me to study literature, why?

3. If you had studied literature before, how was it taught?

4. Do you enjoy reading literary texts such as novels or plays?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

5. Do you think there are students who do not understand literary texts such as a play, novel or poem?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_



6. Do you think literature should be taught at secondary level or university or college?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

7. Do you think there are some students who understand literary texts well?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

8. Do you think once you understand a literary text such as a play or novel you will perform well in the English?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

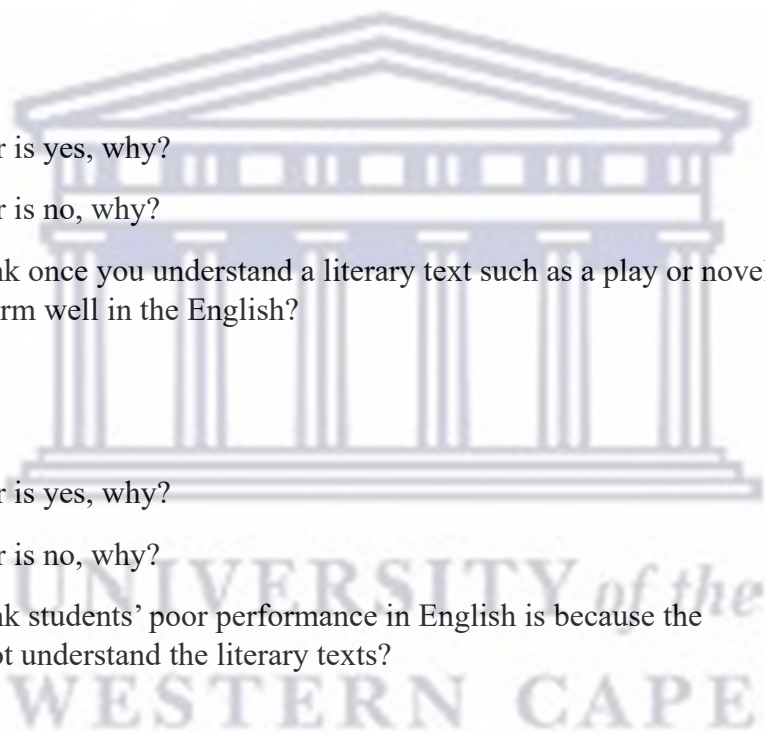
9. Do you think students' poor performance in English is because the students do not understand the literary texts?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?



10. What do you think is the biggest challenge when reading literary texts?

**SECTION C: Peer Assessment**

1. Peer assessment involves students judging themselves during or after they have performed a task.

(a) Do you think this kind of assessment is good?

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

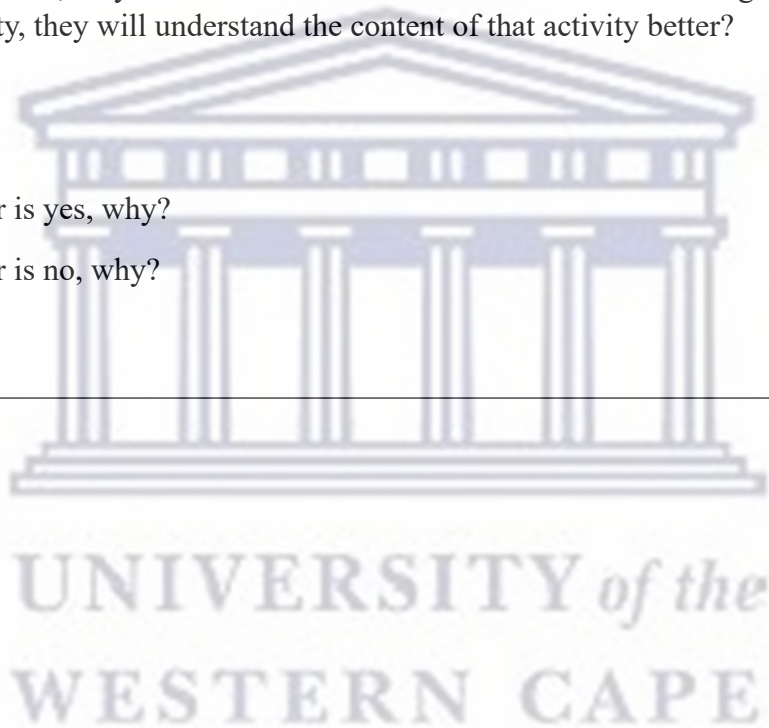
2. In your opinion, do you think when students assess themselves during or after an activity, they will understand the content of that activity better?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?



## Lecturer Participant Questionnaire

### Instructions:

- Do not write your name on the questionnaire.
- Mark your choice with an X where a choice is required.

### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

#### 1. Gender

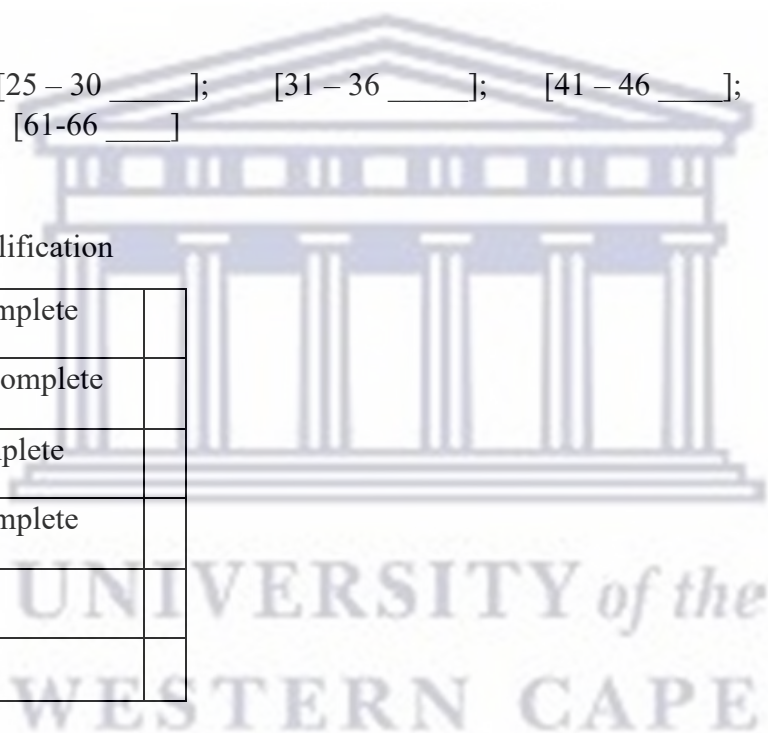
Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age group: [25 – 30 \_\_\_\_\_]; [31 – 36 \_\_\_\_\_]; [41 – 46 \_\_\_\_\_];  
[51-56 \_\_\_\_\_]; [61-66 \_\_\_\_\_]

#### 3. Highest qualification

Doctorate complete	
Doctorate incomplete	
Master's complete	
Masters incomplete	
B.Ed.	
BETD	



4. What is your major?

Education	
Linguistics	
Applied Linguistics	
Literature Studies	
Other (please specify)	

5. Number of years of teaching English

Less than 5 years	
5 years	
10 years	
15 years	
20 years	
More than 20 years	

6. Number of years of teaching literature

Less than 5 years	
5 years	
10 years	
15 years	
20 years	
More than 20 years	



7. Have you taught English at Secondary or primary level?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, which grade/s?

.....

If your answer is yes, for how many years?

.....

8. Have you taught literature at Secondary level?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, which grade/s? .....

If your answer is yes, for how many years? .....

9. Are you a permanently employed by the university?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

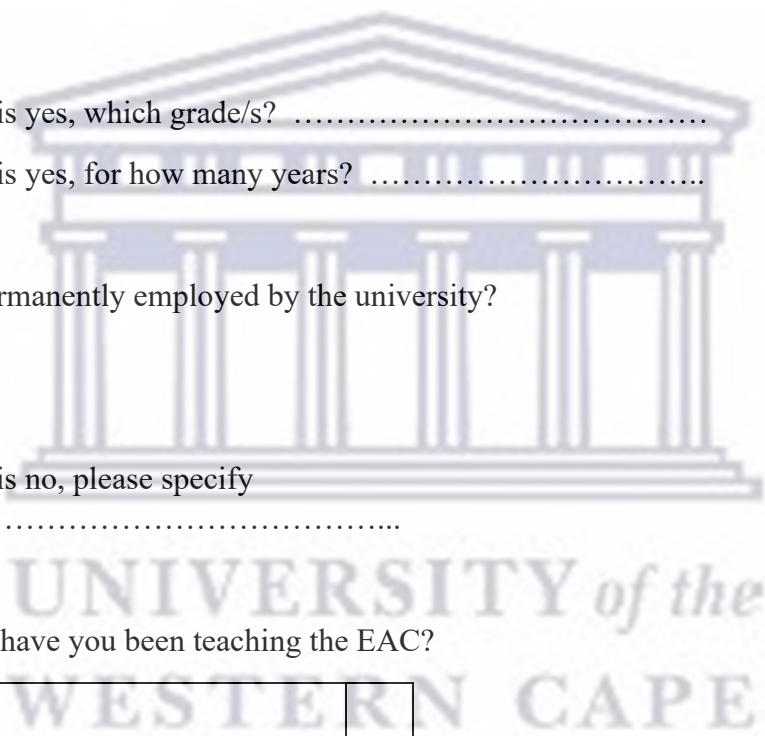
No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is no, please specify

.....

10. How long have you been teaching the EAC?

Less than 5	
5 years	
10 years	
15 years	
20 years	
Other (please specify)	



**SECTION B: Literature**

1. Do you think literature should be part of the EAC curriculum?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, please elaborate why?

If your answer is no, please elaborate why?

2. What challenges do EAC students face reading literary texts?

3. What advise do you give your students to overcome those challenges?

4. What are your views regarding the literature genres prescribed to the EAC?

5. Do you think there is a correlation between students' performance in literature and the overall academic performance in English?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, please elaborate why?

If your answer is no, please elaborate why?

6. What methods of teaching do you use to teach literary texts? (Prose / Drama)

7. Which of those methods do you find the most effective and why?

8. Which of those methods do you find the least effective and why?

9. Besides literature, grammar, speaking, reading, and writing; what other content do you recommend to be part of the curriculum of the EAC?

10. Other content, elaborate why?

11. No other content, elaborate why?

12. What extent do you feel knowledgeable and skilled in teaching literary texts?

Excellent	
Very good	
Good	
Other (Please specify)	

13. Explain your choice in (7)

14. Do you think you need some kind of assistance regarding the teaching of literary texts?

Yes \_\_\_

No \_\_\_

If your answer is yes, what kind of assistance do you need and why?

If your answer is no, why don't you need assistance?

### SECTION C: Peer Assessment

1. How do you understand peer assessment?
2. What are your views regarding peer assessment in a teaching and learning environment?
3. What are the benefits of peer assessment?
4. What are the disadvantages of peer assessment?
5. Have you ever employed peer assessment in your lesson?

Yes \_\_\_

No \_\_\_

If your answer is yes, elaborate why?

If your answer is no, elaborate why?

6. Do you think if peer assessment is used as an instructional method in the literature classroom, it may have an effect on the students' performance in literature; either test or examination.

Ye \_\_\_

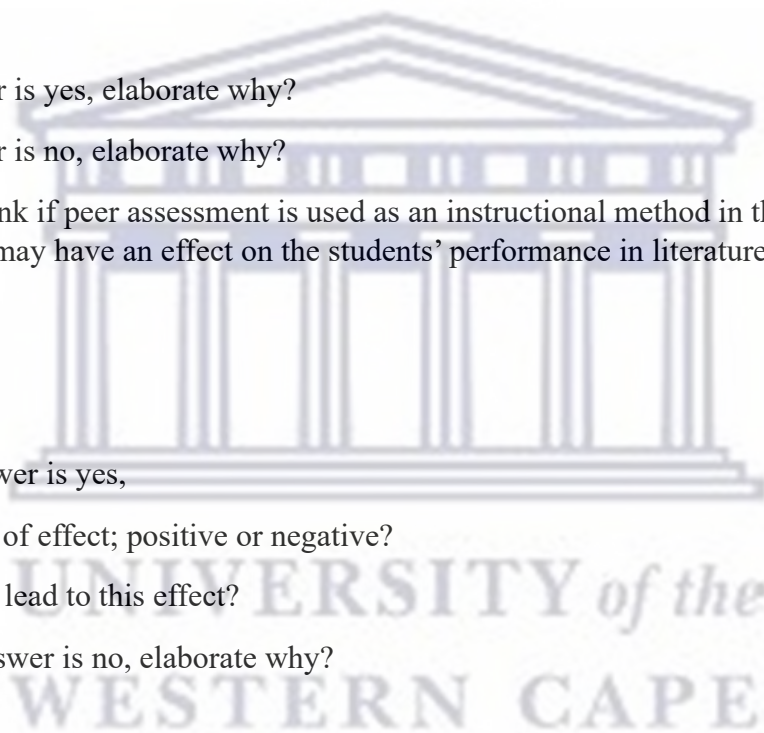
No \_\_\_

7. If your answer is yes,

(a) What type of effect; positive or negative?

(b) What may lead to this effect?

- 6.2 If your answer is no, elaborate why?





### **3.7.2 Piloting of Quantitative Instruments**

The primary purpose of the pilot investigation is to uncover any potential flaws within the measurement procedures, as well as any items that are formulated in a way that is unclear or ambiguous, and to provide the investigator with a chance to observe any body language exhibited by participants that may indicate that they are uncomfortable with the content or the wording of the questions (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005). In light of this, I decided to evaluate the effectiveness of both the lecturer and student questionnaires by conducting a pilot study.

The student participant questionnaire was given to ten students who were not members of the EAC but were enrolled in the Science Foundation Programme at the University of Namibia. Similarly, I gave the lecturer questionnaire for piloting to one lecturer who taught in a different department on the Oshakati Campus of the University of Namibia. The pilot investigation participants were informed that they were going to take part in a pilot project, and they were given information regarding the scope of the investigation as well as the reason for completing the questionnaire. I made it clear that I wanted them to comment on any questions they had trouble understanding.

The results of the pilot investigation indicated that there was no need for any substantial alterations. With the help of the feedback provided by those who took part in this investigation, I modified the wording of certain questions and deleted two that were repetitive. This resulted in a questionnaire that was simpler, clearer, and less ambiguous to interpret. After this, the revised version of the questionnaire was used as one of the research instruments in this research. The questionnaires are shown in Subsection 3.7.2 under 'Questionnaire'.

### **3.7.3 Administration of Quantitative Instruments**

The experimental group gathered in a class and the questionnaires were handed to them. To protect the participants' anonymity, I assigned codes on the questionnaires. Additionally, with regard to confidentiality, the respondents received assurance that whatever details they revealed would not be shared with anyone else. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, both the treatment and comparison groups wrote identical pretests and posttests. The test was based on a story in the form of a play, and comprised multiple choice

questions, true/false questions, questions on figurative language, and comprehension questions. The test lasted one hour and was rated out of 35.

Although a pretest is administered to assess the prior knowledge of participants towards the phenomenon under study (Chirimbana, 2014), for the purpose of this study, it was not practically possible for the student participants to write about something they did not know about. The respondents were new students enrolled in the EAC bridging course which is a year course that cannot be repeated. The literature component of their curriculum entails their reading a literary text, in this case, a play. Thus, for the purpose of this research, both the experimental (treatment) and control (comparison) groups first had to read the play, and thereafter write the pretest. This was followed by participation in the role-play, student peer assessment, the posttest, the focus group interview, and lastly, completion of the questionnaire. Allowing these two groups an opportunity to read the play provided prior knowledge to these participants and served as a starting point for the pretest-posttest experiment.

#### **3.7.4 Quantitative Data Analysis**

After completing the process of collecting the information, I continued with the data analysis. I employed the methods of quantitative data analysis to examine the quantitative data. Analyses using descriptive, inferential, and correlational statistics were performed on the quantitative data that were obtained through the pretests and posttests. According to Creswell (2008), descriptive statistics provide data which assists investigators by allowing them to characterize respondents' answers to individual questions in a database and identify general patterns and data distribution. Additionally, descriptive statistics provide information that assists the investigator in assessing the distribution of data (Creswell, 2008).

#### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

After obtaining ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape and the University of Namibia, I started collecting information. I began by using convenience sampling to select the lecturer and student respondents. I conducted an explanatory session with the participants to explain to them the purpose of my study and their expected inputs and duties throughout the research. During the explanatory session, I handed them the

information document which they were required to read independently, and they signed consent forms. I conducted my research investigation at a time when COVID-19 was subsiding but not entirely eradicated; therefore, during data collection, the participants and I complied with the COVID-19 safety measures.

I now present the information sheet and the consent form, as well as the COVID-19 protocol.

### **Information Sheet**

Faculty of Education

Private bag X17 Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Leader Hilongwa. At present, I am pursuing my studies as a doctoral candidate in the field of Language and Literacy at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. I have taught English as a Second Language at the secondary and tertiary levels for a number of years. As a consequence, I have developed a strong interest in exploring different approaches to literature instruction.

I cordially ask respondents of this study to acquaint themselves with the information provided and to openly inquire about anything for clarity. Participation in research is entirely voluntary and participants have the right to discontinue their involvement in the study at any time. The data obtained from the participants will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. The data will only be used for the purpose of accomplishing the research thesis. The final report conclusion will not be attributed to the individual participants, of the Language and Development Department, or the University of Namibia. The research poses no risk of physical harm and will not result in any social, mental, or emotional harm to participants or any other constituent of the university community.

Research Title: *An Investigation of a Literature-Based Approach to Reading: Promoting Peer Assessment in the English Access Course at the University of Namibia*

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. explore the effectiveness of peer assessment during literature instruction.
2. assess the students and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.
3. explore the factors that make literary texts difficult to be understood by EAC students., propose a framework to assist the teaching of literary texts.
4. assess whether a relationship exists between literature and academic performance of students in English.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 safety measures which include the use of masks, sanitization and maintaining social distance will be observed during gathering of data.

My hope is for this research to improve the teaching of literature through peer assessment, and ultimately, the overall academic performance of the EAC students in English. Furthermore, this study aims to enhance my professional skills as a language educator.

Your voluntary participation in this study will be highly appreciated.



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

## **Informed Consent**

Faculty of Education

Private bag X17 Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650

Your voluntary participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

I, the undersigned, certify that I have thoroughly read the information sheet and I am aware of my role as a participant in this investigation.

I confirm that I was given the opportunity to ask questions concerning the study and that the questions were addressed correctly and satisfactorily.

I confirm that no pressure was used to obtain my consent, and that my participation in this study is entirely free and voluntary. I have also been informed that I maintain the right to withdraw from this investigation at any given time without any obligation.

I also confirm that all COVID-19 safety protocols have been explained to me and I was given an opportunity to ask questions. My consent to take part in this study during the COVID-19 pandemic is given freely and voluntarily.

Participant's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Faculty of Education

Private bag X17 Bellville 7535, South Africa

Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650

I also confirm that all COVID-19 safety protocols have been explained to me and I was given an opportunity to ask questions. My consent to take part in this study during the COVID-19 pandemic is given freely and voluntarily.

### **COVID-19 Measures for Consideration**

COVID-19 caused loss of lives worldwide and affected our normal way of living. It has since affected many social and physical phenomena, particularly in the health and education sectors. Education must nonetheless continue, but we recognize the need to be careful in how we proceed at all levels of education. My study entails role play, peer assessment, a focus group interview, a pretest, and a posttest, as well as completion of questionnaires by participants. All these activities involve direct contact between the researcher and participants and between participants. Face-to-face interaction is necessary because role-play, and peer assessment need to be done physically in order to yield the intended results.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have started to adapt to the so-called new normal which has engendered new ways of living, and education is no exception. However, since COVID-19 is still prevalent, permission must be sought from the Language Centre and Oshakati Campus in order for the face-to-face research to be conducted.

It is against this background that the following COVID-19 measures will be considered during face-to-face contact lessons and data collection:

1. The literature lesson will take place three times a week for two hours to avoid unnecessary movement of students on the campus. It is anticipated that 132 students will participate in the study, and this number will be divided into two groups of 66 students to avoid overcrowding of students in one class.
3. Lessons will be offered in a lecture hall where there is enough space to allow for social distancing between students.

4. Lessons will be offered for literature only, and once data collection is complete, students will continue with online lessons for other language components.
5. Before lessons commence, students will be sanitized, and their temperatures will be recorded.
6. Any student participant or lecturer participant who does not feel well will be allowed to leave the study freely.
7. The role-play will be done in the amphitheatre in order to allow for social distancing between participants.
8. For the same reason, role-play rehearsals will also be conducted in the amphitheatre.
9. Throughout the contact lessons and role-play, all participants, including the researcher, will wear masks.
10. The researcher will make sure that all participants adhere to the appropriate COVID-19 measures.
11. The researcher will also inform the participants of their right to take part in the study and will offer the assurance that if they wish to withdraw during the process, they will be free to do so.

Before the random allocation of the student participants into the control and experimental groups, I taught them literature in the traditional way in which each student was given a chance to read part of the story (a play) aloud, while the other students and I listened attentively. After the completion of the story, all students wrote the pretest. This is the test administered before the treatment was given.

After the pretest, the student participants were assigned to the control and the experimental groups, following the Yamane formula (1976). There are five acts in the play entitled “The Oracle of Cidino” (Nyathi, 2003), so five groups of student participants in the experimental group were randomly assigned role-play scenes from the story so that they could prepare for the role-play. The role-play took place in the university’s amphitheatre because of the open space, as we were complying with the COVID-19 safety measures. During the role-play, as a non-participant observer, I observed how the students carried out their roles and took notes based on the observation guide which I had developed. My observation was not strictly limited to the stipulated guidelines as I also noted any other element that I found interesting and valuable to my study. The student participants who watched others

performing their roles likewise assessed each group's performance by completing the observation guide.

The initial idea was for the focus group interview to take place immediately after the role-play; however, the pilot study done on the focus group interview revealed that the questions in the focus group interview guide were too long. Moreover, the role-plays lasted longer than anticipated. The focus group interview therefore took place the following day. Three days after the focus group interview, both the comparison group and the treatment group wrote the posttest. Lastly, the student and lecturer participants completed the questionnaires.

The student focus group consisted of myself, the interviewer and eight student participants who were part of the experimental group as interviewees. The manner in which the student participants answered the questions was guided by the interview guidelines that I had created. However, students who wished to deviate from addressing the questions posed were allowed to do so for the purpose of gathering as much rich information about the issue under investigation as possible. This was because the main issue was not how many students commented on a specific phenomenon, but rather, what they said about the phenomena under study. The presentation of the analysis of this focus group data was done in textual form as there was no need for pictorial data.

The interview for the focus group was conducted in the classroom in order for the student participants to feel comfortable, as it is their natural setting and there was not much noise or disturbance. I took notes as the respondents replied to the questions. I opted for note-taking despite it being time-consuming, rather than using an audio recorder, because this would make respondents feel less stressed. Students tend to express themselves more freely and openly and ask for clarification if there are no audio recorders. Before and during the interview, I ensured that a conducive environment was created where student participants felt no rush to express themselves freely and willingly. I also maintained a calm but natural tempo to avoid creating a rigid, serious atmosphere, and I respected the autonomy of the student participants.

In the preceding section, I presented the data collection process. In the sub-section that follows, I will discuss the issues of reliability and validity.

### **3.9 Reliability and Validity**

According to Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2011), validity can be defined as the level of accuracy to which a proposition accurately reflects the truth or untruth of something. In their opinion, there are two forms of validity, namely, internal validity and external validity. External validity is the extent to which the assumed cause-and-effect relationship can be extended or implemented to the target population under investigation, whereas internal validity is the degree to which a researcher can make assumptions that a meaningful relationship between two variables exists (Christensen et. al, 2011). Through the process of piloting both the questionnaires and the focus group interview guide that were utilized in my research, I was able to assess the trustworthiness of the instruments. The problem of replicability was solved by providing a comprehensive and detailed description of the procedures for obtaining information and the instruments that were utilized to acquire the data. With the use of this extensive information, other researchers would be able to conduct other research while adhering to the same methodologies that were utilized in this study.

In terms of the issue of transferability (external validity) of information, generalizability could not be reached because the number of respondents who were tested and interviewed, as well as those who took part in the role-play, was inadequate in comparison to the population of the study. However, because the study portrayed the issues that arise when learning a language through literature, which I believe is a problem affecting most educational institutions, regardless of whether they are secondary or tertiary, I think that the results of this investigation have the potential to provide valuable insight into the challenges faced by Namibian readers, particularly those who are affected by the issue of learning a language through literature.

The features of verifiability are discussed when I present the interpretations of the data so that readers of my research should be able to oppose, affirm, or modify the initial findings. I provided a comprehensive description of the research methodology, setting and conditions so as to allow other scholars to impartially assess the applicability of the interpretations to a familiar context. This was done with the goal of increasing replicability and transferability of the findings. The credibility issue was addressed when the literature, together with a detailed description of the research process in this study, verified the definitions, input from participants, and application of the research materials.



### 3.10 Ethical Considerations

In this last section of this chapter, I will discuss the ethical considerations that I followed before the commencement and throughout the data collection of my study.

According to Kang and Hwang (2021), researchers are afforded a number of key advantages and freedoms which are crucial in preserving the independence of the higher education research community. These privileges consist of the right to enquire as well as the right to disseminate the findings of the research. However, Anderson (2017) emphasizes that researchers and institutions need to recognize that such independence comes with essential responsibilities. These responsibilities include the need to ensure that the research involving human participants satisfies high ethical and scientific standards. Therefore, those involved in research ought to behave ethically and fulfil their tasks by adhering to the principles of honesty, integrity, accountability, openness, and the application of professional standards (Ramos, 1989). In addition, researchers are obligated to follow ethical practices in order to preserve and protect the welfare of participants, as well as to minimize the risk of any potential harm, mental or bodily discomfort, social harm, danger, and the possibility of claims of negligence (Kang & Hwang, 2021).

Schutt's (2019) views summarize the reasons for the existence of ethical principles, which I believe should be acknowledged by researchers who plan to carry out research or are currently engaged therein:

Commitment to achieving valid results is the necessary starting point for ethical research practice. Simply put, we have no business asking people to answer questions, submit to observations, or participate in experimental procedures if we are simply seeking to verify our pre-existing prejudices or convince others to take action on behalf of our personal interests. The pursuit of objective knowledge about human behaviour—the goal of validity—motivates and justifies our investigations and gives us some claim to the right to influence others to participate in our research. Knowledge is the foundation of human progress as well as the basis for our expectation that we, as social scientists, can help people achieve a brighter future. If we approach our research projects objectively, setting aside our personal predilections in the service of learning a bit more about human behaviour, we can honestly represent our actions as potentially contributing to the advancement of knowledge. (p. 72)



The following section outlines the ethical considerations of academic integrity, research ethics, and respect for human dignity that my study faithfully maintained before, during and after the data collection process.

I ensured that the individuals who took part in my research remained anonymous by excluding their identities in my final research report. In addition, I adhered to confidentiality standards when handling the material that was submitted by the participants. The information was under no circumstances linked to the individuals who took part in the study, nor was it utilized for any objective other than this research project.

In order for the participants to understand what they might expect to experience, I explained the objectives of the study and the methods that would be employed to gather the required information. I also provided participants with relevant details about the research methodology process.

Before I began collecting data, I wrote a letter to the Director of Hifikepunye Pohamba and Oshakati Campuses requesting permission to carry out research in the Language and Development Department. Likewise, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape where I am currently enrolled as a PhD student. My procedures for gathering information did not get underway until I had received all of the prerequisite permissions.

In order for the participants to take part in my research, I made a participant consent form available to them. They were requested to sign this form if they accepted the terms and conditions of the data collection process. I reassured the participants that their participation was voluntary, and that they were free to leave the study at any point without any retribution.

The procedure I used to collect data did not cause any disruptions to the regular flow of work in the Language and Development Department. The study collection process adhered to the established COVID-19 protocols. In addition, the schedules of the participants (both lecturers and students) were not disrupted by this research. The lecturer participants were the last to finish completing the questionnaire because they first had to finish their work

and then find the free time to complete it. As a researcher, I was prepared to abide by the code of conduct established by both the University of Namibia and the University of the Western Cape.

My study included no interventions with animals in captivity or medical treatments. There was thus neither need nor opportunity for any evaluation of the risk.

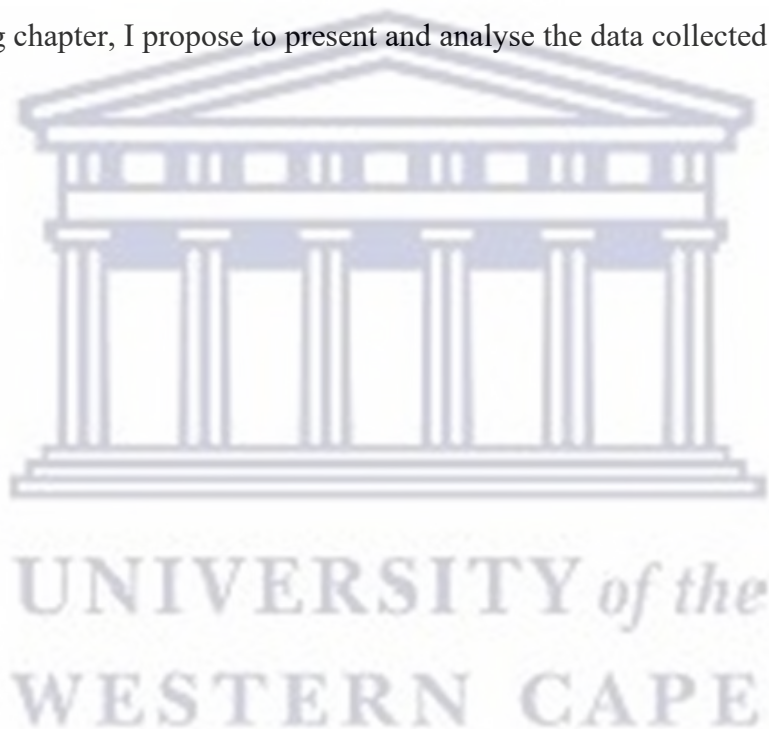
In my study, as I strove to adhere to the ethical guidelines, I ensured the following before the commencement of the study:

- The participation in this study was based on the participants' independent assent, which they gave by completing, signing, and submitting the consent form.
- No participant nor any other member of the university community was harmed physically, socially, psychologically, or emotionally as a result of my research.
- The participants were guaranteed anonymity; in this report, their identities and any pertinent information that could compromise their anonymity are under no circumstances revealed.
- I guaranteed the participants the right to withdraw from my study at any stage without any penalties. The results of their assessment will not be made public.
- I ensured that each participant was treated with respect, dignity, and equality. I considered their intentions, choices, opinions, and points of view in an objective manner. My research did not put the participants' reputations at risk.
- The data from the research were safely stored on both my own computer and a back-up drive, both of which have password protection, and I was the only person who knew both of these passwords. The collected data will be kept for a duration of five years. After a period of five years, all information that has been saved on my personal computer in digital form will be erased, and any hard copies will be destroyed.
- The final, approved copy of the doctoral thesis will be submitted to the University of the Western Cape, and an additional copy of the thesis will be sent to the University of Namibia.

In the following section of this chapter, I will provide a concise summary of all the processes that I followed in the Methodology Chapter.

### **3.11 Conclusion and Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, I have so far discussed the philosophical paradigm that underpinned my study. I also presented the research design as well as the justification of that research design. Furthermore, I presented the population and sampling procedures, as well as the study setting, including the context of the problem. I presented the different data collection instruments used in the study. In addition, I described the different data analysis processes for each research approach. The chapter concluded with the ethical considerations that I took into consideration before, during and after the study. In the following chapter, I propose to present and analyse the data collected in my study.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Presentation and Analysis of Data

#### 4.1 Introduction

My primary goal in this research was to investigate the efficacy of a literature-based approach to reading instruction combined with peer assessment with a view to enhancing reading instruction in the EAC. The EAC was developed to improve the English language skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening of students at the University of Namibia. Given this, the study focuses on the use of peer assessment to improve students' peer learning. Peer learning entails students evaluating and providing feedback on their fellow students' work, allowing for collaborative learning as well as the development of critical thinking and analytical skills.

I employed a mixed-methods approach to collect data, which entailed my using both quantitative and qualitative instruments. My qualitative data presentation does not encompass the entirety of the data obtained for this study. Rather, the presentation comprises a carefully chosen data strands that offer insights and reinforces the themes that have arisen from the analysis of the data, a selection that is commensurate with the views of Taylor and Bogdan (1998) who argue that:

There are no guidelines in qualitative research for determining how many instances are necessary to support a conclusion or interpretation. This is always a judgement call. (p. 156)

In light of the above-cited view, the following research questions assume particular primacy in my study:

1. What difficulties do EAC students have in reading literary texts?
2. What are the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction?
3. What is the effect of peer assessment on the overall academic performance of the EAC students?
4. What are the students' and lecturers' attitudes toward the teaching and learning of literary texts?

5. What type of framework could be employed to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts?

In this chapter, I present and analyse both the quantitative and qualitative data collected from English Access Course (EAC) students and lectures. The quantitative data consists of the results of the pre- and posttests, while the qualitative data consists of the focus group interview results, the student observation, which I refer to as peer assessment, the lecturer observation notes, and the student and lecturer questionnaire results. The data from my investigation are presented in a structured, systematic, and logical fashion. First, I describe the demographic information of the student participants, including their age and gender. I then present and analyse the quantitative data, which consist of the pre- and posttest results. I chose to present the quantitative data first due to the fact that it constitutes numerical data that informs the narrative nature of my qualitative data. I analyse quantitative data using inferential statistics. Second, I present the qualitative data of my study, including the results of the focus group interviews, the student observation, and my observation as a non-participant observer, followed by the student and lecturer questionnaires. I used the thematic method to analyse qualitative data, deriving main themes from my research questions. I therefore propose to present the qualitative data under the following themes:

1. Difficulties English Access Course students have in reading literary texts.
2. The students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.
3. The effect of peer assessment on the students' academic performance.
4. Students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts.

I administered the pre- and posttests to the EAC students in order to compare the overall performance of the students in literature. I administered the pretest to all EAC students prior to the intervention to establish a baseline and collect data on the students' prior knowledge of the literary text. The aim of this was to ascertain the effect that role-play, and peer assessment had on the overall performance of the students in literature. This allowed me to evaluate the performance of the student participants against their post-intervention test results. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, a pretest provides a comprehensive overview of the conditions under which the treatment either had or



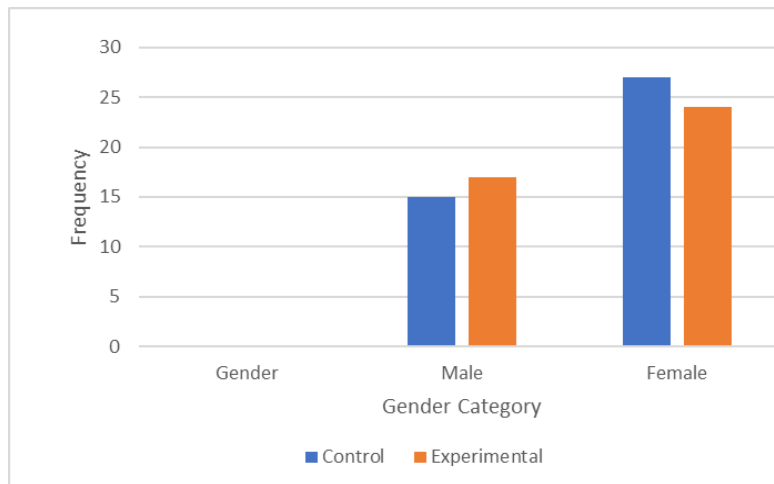
did not have an impact (Mohr, 1992, cited in Schutt, 2019). The purpose of the pre- and posttests in my research was to determine if there was likely to be a statistically significant difference in literary text comprehension test performance after the intervention. The pretest was administered to the entire student population before the intervention, and the posttest was administered to the same student population after the intervention. The pre- and posttests were identical because it is generally recommended that the pre- and posttests be identical or very similar in order to accurately measure participants' progress or learning gains. This viewpoint is supported by Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2006), who contend that a pretest-posttest design is frequently used to determine what learning has occurred, with the same test or instrument administered both before and after an instructional programme is implemented. Likewise, Creswell and Creswell (2017) assert that a pretest-posttest design entails administering a pretest before the treatment and a posttest afterwards, using the same or equivalent tests or measurements.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned points, I wish to present the demographic information of the student participants.

## **4.2 Quantitative Data Analysis**

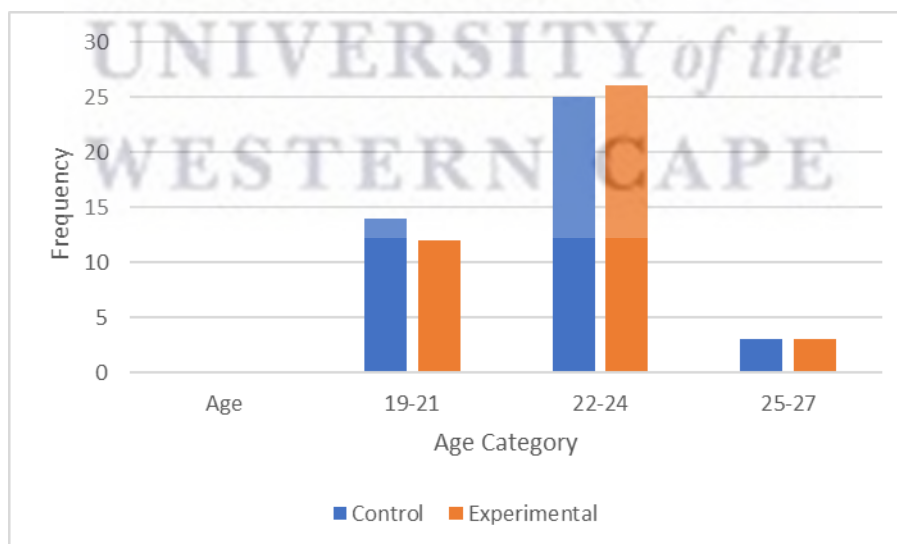
### **4.2.1 Demographic Information of the Student Participants**

In this section, I present the biographical profiling of the participants, which includes age and gender. As already indicated in the methodology chapter, the population of my study consisted of 83 student participants. All 83 student participants wrote the pre- and posttests. Figure 1 shows the gender distribution of the control and experimental groups.



*Figure 1: Gender distribution of the control and experimental group*

The data provided represents the distribution of participants in the control and experimental groups, categorized by gender. In the control group, there were 15 males and 27 females, while in the experimental group, there were 17 males and 24 females. This data shows that the number of participants in the control group is slightly higher for females compared to males, whereas in the experimental group, there are slightly more females than males. Figure 2 shows the age distribution of the control and experimental groups.



*Figure 2: Age distribution of the control and experimental groups*

The data provided show the number of participants in the control and experimental groups across three different age groups: 19-21, 22-24 and 25-27. In the age group 19-21, there were 14 participants in the control group and 12 participants in the experimental group. For the age group 22-24, there were 25 participants in the control group and 26 participants in the experimental group. In the age group 25-27, there were three participants in the control group and three participants in the experimental group.

### 4.3 Analysis of the Pretest Results of the Control and Experimental Groups

#### 4.3.1 Control Group' Performance in the Pretest

The control group and experimental group wrote a pretest which was aimed at determining participants' entry knowledge within and between the groups to benchmark the effect of the peer assessment approach. As presented in the methodology chapter, the pre- and posttests comprised questions based on students' understanding of the following domains: content information as domain 1 (D1), factual recall as domain 2 (D2), text comprehension as domain 3 (D3), interpretation of hidden meaning as domain 4 (D4), and analytical thinking as domain 5 (D5). The pretest was marked out of 35. Table 2 presents a summary of the pretest results for the control group. The pretest was marked out of 35. Table 2 presents a summary of the pretest results for the control group.

*Table 2: Control group's performance in the pretest*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Learning domain</b>	<b>Domain Total Marks</b>	<b>%Weight</b>	<b>Total marks obtained by 42 students</b>	<b>Total possible marks obtained by 42 students</b>	<b>Pretest % for the control group</b>
<b>D1</b>	Content information (short questions)	5	14	72	210	34.2

<b>D2</b>	Factual information (true/false)	5	14	198	210	94.2
<b>D3</b>	Text comprehension (literary devices)	5	14	68	210	32.3
<b>D4</b>	Interpretation of hidden meaning (figurative language)	10	29	42	420	10.0
<b>D5</b>	Analytical thinking (inference)	10	29	108	420	25.7
<b>Total</b>		35	100	488	1470	33.1

Table 2 shows the following results in the pretest: for D1, which accounted for 14% of the items, the control group had an overall pass rate of 34.2%; for D2, which accounted 14% of the items, the control group had an overall pass rate of 94.2%; for D3, which accounted for 14% of the items, the control group had a pass rate of 32.3%; for D4, which accounted for 29% of the items, the control group had a pass rate of 10.0%; and for D5, which accounted for 29% of the items, the control group had an overall pass rate of 25.7%. This indicates that the control group participants performed best in D2, factual information, and worst in D4, interpreting hidden meaning. The overall performance of the control group in the pretest stands at 33.1%.

The analysis presented above describes the performance of the control group in the pretest. In the next section, I wish to present samples of the control group's responses in the pretest. For each question or domain, I present two samples, representing a range of answers that the control group gave.



### 4.3.2 Control Group Pretest Samples

#### 4.3.2.1 Control Group Pretest D1 Sample

- 
- 1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"? C13  
..... ~~Francis Nyathi Sifiso~~ Francis Sifiso Nyathi..... /1
- 1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?  
It was set during the rain season in Capricorn/Zambezi region..... /1
- 1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"?  
drama book..... /1
- 1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature? (2)  
To improve their grammar.....  
To get some info relevant informations..... /1
- 1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.  
~~Character in Prose~~ Character.....  
~~Character in Poetry~~ leadership..... /2

- 
- 1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"? C27  
..... Francis Sifiso Nyathi..... /1
- 1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?  
Land issue in development of..... /1
- 1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"? (3)  
Drama..... /1
- 1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature?  
It help them understand and know the languages used in to construct novels, story or books..... /1
- 1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.  
Prose Plot → it shows the sequence of events in a story  
Theme: The main message or idea conveyed in a story. /2



D1, which asked about content information, was answered only slightly well. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the pretest.

#### 4.3.2.2 Control Group Pretest D2 Sample

State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks. c11

- 2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land  
 ..... False x ..... /1
- 2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha.  
 ..... True ✓ ..... /1
- 2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa... false ✓ ..... /1
- 2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature... True ✓ ..... /1
- 2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria... True ✓ ..... /1

State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks. c6

- 2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land  
 ..... false ✓ ..... /1
- 2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha.  
 ..... true ✓ ..... (3) /1
- 2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa... true ✓ ..... /1
- 2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature... true ✓ ..... /1
- 2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria... true ✓ ..... /1

D2, which asked about factual recall, was one of the questions that was answered well. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the pretest.

### 4.3.2.3 Control Group Pretest D3 sample

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?	
a. ambiguity	CR
b. simile	
c. metaphor	
d. foreshadowing	
e. irony	
3.1 Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).	
..Metaphor.....	/1
3.2 Town Clerk: ..." Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)	
..Foreshadowing.....	/1
3.3 Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).	
..Simile.....	/1
3.4 Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4. Scene 1).	
..irony.....	/1
3.5 Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).	
..ambiguity.....	/1

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Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?

a. ambiguity

b. simile

c. metaphor

d. foreshadowing

e. irony

C17

3.1 Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).

..... *metaphor* ✓ ..... /1

3.2 Town Clerk: ... "Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)

..... *irony* ✓ ..... /1

3.3 Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).

..... *simile* ✓ ..... /1

3.4 Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4, Scene 1).

..... *foreshadowing* ✓ ..... /1

3.5 Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).

..... *ambiguity* ✓ ..... /1

D3, which asked about text comprehension, was answered well in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group in the pretest.



#### 4.3.2.4 Control Group Pretest D4 Sample

What do the following figurative expressions mean?

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".

It means when the king dies the fool will become the next king and he will bring peace in the village. (3) 12

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".

The king will not allow that meeting to continue with insulting. 12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river".

The pula people they are the one who brought rain so that the Kwsna people could catch fish and swim in the water. (2) 12

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly".

If a person did a mistake but not punished he/she will do the same mistake in the future. 12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".

Enemy's friend. The friend to the enemies he/she is enemy. 12

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What do the following figurative expressions mean?

CB

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".

When you die one day it is those lesser people that will be the leaders.

12

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".

I cannot allow all your sayings with comments to destroy my commands.

12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river".

The Pula people are believed to know how to pray for rain and we are just ordinary people that rely on them.

12

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly".

Repeating the same mistake you have done in the past.

12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".

A child of a bad person or parent bears the same character or he/she is also bad.

12

D4, which asked about figurative language, was not well answered in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group in the pretest.

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#### 4.3.2.5 Control Group Pretest D5 Sample

52 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction.

- He let the son to destroy their ancestor's land ✓

~~- He punished Mbeha's daughter for no reason.~~

- Made the fool to explain why he appeared in his dream ✓

- He instructed the messenger to beat the fool. <sup>meant</sup> (3)

- He ask advices from the friend Neo instead ✓

of the ancestor's. - He claimed the fool instead of Taonkheko. 15



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52 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

The fool becoming the next king  
The fool impersonate Town Clerk and crowned as a King. Town Clerk was very disappointed he end up shooting his mother instead of the fool. The king collapse and die because of the queen's death and the news of the biological father of Town Clerk.

51 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction.

The king goes against his ancestor for the love of modernity. King Le wanika ignore signs from his ancestor on trouble brewing in his village. The king ignore prophetic behaviour of the fool (the fool of the tribe punished the king). The king test his sight (become blind). The king crowned the fool by mistake and at the end the king dies on the pain that Town Clerk is not his biological son.

52 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

The fool steals John's throne by impersonating him and become the next king of Kwena. People John taking his pistol to shoot the fool and end up shooting his mother. The queen kills every one that Bo Mhaha is the biological father of Town Clerk. The king dies upon hearing the bad news and Town Clerk and Neo were arrested.

D5, which asked about analytical thinking, was answered moderately well in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group in the pretest.

In the next section, I present the pretest results of the experimental group.

Table 3: Experimental group' performance in the pretest

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Learning domain</b>	<b>Domain Total Marks</b>	<b>%Weight</b>	<b>Total marks obtained by 41 students</b>	<b>Total possible marks obtained by 41 students</b>	<b>Pretest % for the experimental group</b>
<b>D1</b>	Content information (short questions)	5	14	81	205	39.5
<b>D2</b>	Factual information (true/false)	5	14	192	205	93.6
<b>D3</b>	Text comprehension (literary devices)	5	14	70	205	34.1
<b>D4</b>	Interpretation of hidden meaning (figurative language)	10	29	42	410	10.2
<b>D5</b>	Analytical thinking (inference)	10	29	114	410	27.8
<b>Total</b>		35	100	499	1435	34.7

Table 3 shows the following results in the pretest: D1, which accounted for 14% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 39.5%; D2, which accounted for 14% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 93.6%; D3, which accounted for 14% of the items, had a



pass rate of 34.1%; D4, which accounted for 29% of the items, had a pass rate of 10.2%; and finally, D5 which accounted for 29% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 27.8%. The experimental group participants performed best in D2, factual information, and worst in D4, interpreting hidden meaning. The overall performance of the experimental group in the pretest stands at 34.7%.

In the next section, I wish to present samples of the experimental group's performance in the pretest. For each question or domain, I present two samples representing a range of answers that the experimental group gave.

### 4.3.3 Experimental Group Samples

#### 4.3.3.1 Experimental Group's Pretest D1 Sample

#### QUESTION 1: Short Questions

E 5

1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"?

Francis Sifiso Nyathi ..... /1

1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?

Is at River town, Zambezi, Caprivi region ..... /1

1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"?

Is the open space of bushes and trees here and there. 3 /1

1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature?

They will get experience of reading and ✓ /  
Some they will be starting to write their own books ✓ /1

1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.

- Theme X .....  
- Character X ..... /2

1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"?

E16

Francis Sibus Nyauke ..... /1

1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?

It is set for east in Zambezi region in 1930s ..... /1

1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"?

Drama ..... 3 ..... /1

1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature?

This will help to improve their reading vocabulary and improves their reading ..... /1

1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.

The meaning of the book ..... X  
What is the book all about ..... /2

D1, which asked about content information, was answered slightly well. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the experimental group participants in the pretest.

#### 4.3.3.2 Experimental Group Pretest D2 Sample

D2, which asked about factual recall, was one of the questions that was answered well. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the experimental group participants in the pretest.

State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks.

E4

2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land

True ..... /1

2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha.

False ..... /1

2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa ..... False ..... /1

2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature ..... True ..... /1

2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria ..... TRUE ..... /1

4



State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks. E8

2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land

..... True ✓ ..... /1

2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha.

..... True ✓ ..... /1

2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa... True ✓ ..... /1

2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature... False ✓ ..... /1

2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria... True ✓ ..... /1

3

#### 4.3.3.3 Experimental Group Pretest D3 Sample

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?

a. ambiguity

b. simile

c. metaphor

d. foreshadowing

e. irony

E18

3.1 Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).

..... Metaphor ✓ ..... /1

3.2 Town Clerk: "... Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)

..... foreshadowing ✓ ..... /1

3.3 Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).

..... Simile ✓ ..... /1

3.4 Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4, Scene 1).

..... irony ✓ ..... /1

3.5 Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).

..... ambiguity ✓ ..... /1

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?

a. ambiguity

E 26

b. simile

c. metaphor

d. foreshadowing

e. irony

3.1 Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).

~~Simile~~ c. ✓ ..... /1

3.2 Town Clerk: ... "Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)

e ..... /1

3.3 Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).

b ..... ✓ ..... /1

3.4 Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4. Scene 1).

d ..... /1

3.5 Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).

a ..... /1

D3, which asked about text comprehension, was answered well in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the experimental group in the pretest.

#### 4.3.3.4 Experimental Group Pretest D4 sample

What do the following figurative expressions mean?

E 16

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".

When you are dead the fool will rule and bring peace to the people. ✓ 12

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".

The king shall not will not allow unreasonable reasons to dis-stop him from what he is doing. 12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river".

They are inter dependence, they depend on each other. (25)

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly".

A fool will always repeat his mistakes over and over. 12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".

A boy child born by a stupid person is also a stupid person. ✓ 12

2

✓ What do the following figurative expressions mean?

Ezz

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth, an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".

A fool will bring problems to the palace.

12

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".

The king shall not allow to be insulted by Mbeka and the fool.

12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river".

People are living in an interdependent way to survive whereby crocodiles need water from the river to live.

12

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly".

A fool will still do the wrong things he does everytime.

12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".

If parents are bad, the child will also be bad.

12

D4, which asked about figurative language, was not answered well in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the experimental group in the pretest

#### 4.3.3.5 Experimental Group Pretest D5 Sample

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5.1 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction.

E 23

The king ignores the prophetic word of the fool  
Mwiyi's content and Neo's clue ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> ignored by the king  
Granary catches fire?

The king ignores obvious signs from his ancestors  
He traded his authority for the taste of modernity  
He violated the spirit of his subject

15

5.2 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

blindness - The king was blinded by his ancestor  
and crown the fool as the next king of Kwena  
people

The fool impersonate <sup>as</sup> town clerk and become the next  
king of the Kwena people. Town Clerk takes out

his gun to shoot the fool for taking out his throne  
but he ended up shooting his mother. I end with the

liberation of the secret Mbeka being the biological father  
of town clerk. The king collapse and his wife after  
hearing the secret

5.1 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction.

E 37

~~The actions lead him to his~~ His subjects were  
~~to~~ stating to hate him for trading his mandate for  
~~with~~ modernity, he started having night mare  
by seeing his fool talking to him in his dreams and it stole  
his peace, he was also cursed by the oracles for  
surrendering his power to his heir, for he was the first <sup>15</sup> one to  
do it, he become blind, and ~~he~~ died lost his kingship and chief.

5.2 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

When the fool becomes a king, he was  
a king's fool who meant to ~~not~~ entertain  
the king and at the end he was  
the chosen one by the oracles (ancestors)  
to lead the Kwena people

D5, which asked about analytical thinking, was not answered well in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the experimental group in the pretest.

In the next section, I present the posttest results of the control group.



#### 4.4 Analysis of the Posttest Results of the Control and Experimental Groups

Table 4: Control group performance in the posttest

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Learning domain</b>	<b>Domain Total Marks</b>	<b>%Weight</b>	<b>Total marks obtained by 42 students</b>	<b>Total possible marks obtained by 42 students</b>	<b>Posttest % for the control group</b>
<b>D1</b>	Content information (short questions)	5	14	83	210	39.5
<b>D2</b>	Factual information (true/false)	5	14	200	210	95.2
<b>D3</b>	Text comprehension (literary devices)	5	14	70	210	33.3
<b>D4</b>	Interpretation of hidden meaning (figurative language)	10	29	46	420	10.9
<b>D5</b>	Analytical thinking (inference)	10	29	114	420	27.1
<b>Total</b>		35	100	513	1470	34.8

Table 4 shows the following results in the posttest: D1, which accounted for 14% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 39.5%; D2, which accounted for 14% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 95.2%; D3, which accounted for 14% of the items, had an

overall pass rate of 33.3%; D4, which accounted for 29% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 10.9%; and finally, D5, which accounted for 29% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 27.1%. The control group participants performed best in D2, factual information, and worst in D4, interpreting hidden meaning. The overall performance of the control group in the posttest stands at 34.8%.

The analysis presented above describes the performance of the control group in the posttest. In the next section, I wish to present samples of the control group's performance in the posttest. For each question or domain, I present two samples representing the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.

## **1.4.2 Control Group Posttest Samples**

### **4.4.2.1 Control Group Posttest D1 Sample**



- 1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"? C12  
 Francis Sifiso Nyathi ✓ ..... /1
- 1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?  
 King's palace ✓ ..... /1
- 1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"? 3  
 historical X ..... /1
- 1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature?  
 So that they can improve their reading skills  
 and language understanding ..... /1
- 1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.  
 to learn new words through ideas X  
 to learn how to summarize long writings ..... /2

- 1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"? C28  
 Francis Sifiso Nyathi ✓ ..... /1
- 1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?  
 At the Zambezi Caprivi region near the river town ..... /1
- 1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"?  
 Play ✓ ..... /1
- 1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature? 3  
 To acknowledge their understandings ..... /1
- 1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.  
 For easier understanding ✓ ..... /2

In D1, which asked about content information, the control group performed better in comparison to their performance in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.

#### 4.4.2.2 Control Group Posttest D2 Sample

---

State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks. **C1**

2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land ...True✓.....	/1
2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha. ...False X.....	4 /1
2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa....False✓.....	/1
2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature....True✓.....	/1
2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria....True.....	4 /1

---

State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks. **C6**

2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land ...True✓.....	/1
2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha. ...True✓.....	/1
2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa....False✓.....	5 /1
2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature....True✓.....	/1
2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria....True✓.....	/1

My analysis of the control group's performance in D2 which asked about factual recall is that D2 was well answered in the posttest. The answers provided here represent the ranges of answers that the control group participants wrote in the posttest.

#### 4.4.2.3 Control Group Posttest D3 Sample

---

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?

- a. ambiguity
- b. simile
- c. metaphor
- d. foreshadowing
- e. irony

**C10**



- 31 Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).  
 .....metaphor..... /1
- 32 Town Clerk: ..." Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)  
 .....irony ambiguity..... /1
- 33 Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).  
 .....simile..... 3..... /1
- 34 Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4. Scene 1).  
 .....irony foreshadowing..... /1
- 35 Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).  
 .....irony..... X..... /1

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?

- a. ambiguity  
 b. simile  
 c. metaphor  
 d. foreshadowing

C2

- 31 Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).  
 .....metaphor..... /1
- 32 Town Clerk: ..." Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)  
 .....irony..... /1
- 33 Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).  
 .....simile..... 5..... /1
- 34 Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4. Scene 1).  
 .....foreshadowing..... /1
- 35 Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).  
 .....ambiguity..... /1

In D3, which asked about text comprehension, the control group's performance improved slightly as compared to how they performed in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.

#### 4.4.2.4 Control Group Posttest D4 Sample

What do the following figurative expressions mean? 223

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".  
 When you die, the fool will take over the kingship. ✓ 12

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".  
 Will not allow people to stop what is already done. 12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river". (5)  
 The Pula people and the Kwena people need each other. No one will survive without the other. ✓ 12

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly".  
 Nothing will change you, you will remain who you are. 12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".  
 Like father like daughter, you do what your parents do. ✓ 12

---

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".  
 When you die all fools shall rule. ✓ 12 38

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river".  
 It express the connection between rain and river and crocodiles. If there is no rain they will be no water in the river for crocodiles to survive. 12

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly". (3)  
 Fools are stubborn and is hard for them to understand. 12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".  
 When a child can inherit the character of his parent and can behave like his/her parent. 12

In D4, which asked about figurative language, the control group's performance improved in comparison to how they performed in the pretest. The answers provided

here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.





#### 4.4.2.5 Control Group Posttest D5 Sample

5.1 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction. C17

The King has been ignoring the Fool's prophetic behavior and all the clues that have been happening in the village. He later abandoned his responsibility for the taste of modernity. He even started blaming <sup>and accusing</sup> his ~~ancestors~~ rather than seeking help from them. The Lords of the tribe cursed him with blindness. (4) 15

5.2 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

The moment where the King started facing more challenges started when he visited the Oracle of Cidina. The Lord of the tribe told him that he was not ruling his people the way he ~~is~~ in a good way. They cursed him with blindness, and because of his condition he even crowned the Fool, ~~although~~ although all along he wanted to pass his mantle to his heir Town Clerk. (4) 15

5.1 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction. C18

The King was interested more in modernity. This made his status more high than ordinary King. His ignorant of ancestors's signs. Seeking for the advice and information from his friend, <sup>insteadly from the ancestors</sup> ~~insteadly~~ ~~Alca~~. Seek protection from Chumps. Passing unfair judgement to some people like Mbheba's daughter. (4) 15

5.2 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

Town Clerk shot his mother. In this book Oracle of Cidina ~~was~~ <sup>we were</sup> not expecting the town clerk to shot her mother, but this happened when the King ~~became~~ <sup>became</sup> blind in the day he was passing mantle to his successor, the town clerk. But the fool manage to deserve the King by ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> pretending like he was a town clerk. The King blessed the fool and call the ancestors, and the fool became the next King. When the town clerk see fool fully crowned he was very angry and he was trying to shot the fool with <sup>his</sup> pistol, but all the sudden he shot his mother. (3) 15



In D5, which asked about analytical thinking, the control group's performance improved well in comparison as to how they performed in the pretest. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest. In the next section, I wish to present samples of the experimental group's performance in the posttest. For each question or domain, I present two samples representing a range of answers given by the experimental group in the posttest.

*Table 5: Experimental group's performance in the posttest*

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Learning domain</b>	<b>Domain Total Marks</b>	<b>%Weight</b>	<b>Total marks obtained by 41 students</b>	<b>Total possible marks obtained by 41 students</b>	<b>Posttest % for the experimental group</b>
<b>D1</b>	Content information (short questions)	5	14	90	205	43.9
<b>D2</b>	Factual information (true/false)	5	14	201	205	98.0
<b>D3</b>	Text comprehension (literary devices)	5	14	85	205	41.4
<b>D4</b>	Interpretation of hidden meaning (figurative language)	10	29	50	410	12.1

<b>D5</b>	Analytical thinking (inference)	10	29	128	410	31.2
<b>Total</b>		35	100	554	1435	38.6

Table 5 shows the following results in the posttest: D1, which accounted for 14% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 43.9%; D2, which accounted for 14% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 98.0%; D3 which accounted for 14% of the items, had a pass rate of 41.4%; D4 which accounted for 29% of the items, had a pass rate of 12.1%; and D5, which accounted for 29% of the items, had an overall pass rate of 31.2%. The experimental group participants performed best in D2, factual information, and worst in D4, interpreting hidden meaning. The overall performance of the experimental group in the posttest results stands at 38.6%.

Having presented the analysis of the experimental group's performance in the posttest, I now wish to present samples of the experimental group's performance in the posttest. For each question or domain, two samples representing the ranges of answers given by the experimental group participants in the posttest are presented.

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#### 4.4.3 Experimental Group Posttest Samples

##### 4.4.3.1 Experimental Group Posttest D1 Sample

1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"?

E8

Francis Sifiso Nyathi ✓ ..... /1

1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?

It takes place during rainy season in Caprivi Zambezi region /1  
near the river in rural area

1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"?

Drama ✓ ..... /1

1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature?

(4)

To improve the vocabulary of the students ..... /1

1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.

To provide an opportunity for creative reading and writing  
the students

It helps to integrate the language skill ..... /2

1.1 Who is the author of "The Oracle of Cidino"?

E9

Francis Sifiso Nyathi ✓ ..... /1

1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?

Zambezi region, Namibia ✓ ..... /1

1.3 What genre is "The Oracle of Cidino"?

(5)

..... /1

1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature?

To learn more about different ~~or~~ things in literature  
To improve their reading skills as literature focuses  
more on reading ..... /1

1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.

- make readers to understand the story/play  
- give more meaning of what is happening  
the story ..... /2

In D1, which asked about content information, the performance of the experimental group improved in comparison to their pretest performance. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.

#### 4.4.3.2 Experimental Group Posttest D2 Sample

State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks. E19

- 2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land  
 ...True✓..... /1
- 2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha.  
 ...True✓..... /1
- 2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa.....False True✓..... /1
- 2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature....True✓..... /1
- 2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria....True✓..... /1

State whether the following statements are True or False by filling in the blanks. E27

- 2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers' removal from their land  
 ...True✓..... /1
- 2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha.  
 ...True✓..... /1
- 2.3 The King's ally is Muyatwa.....False✓..... /1
- 2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature....True✓..... /1
- 2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria....True✓..... /1

In D2, which asked about factual recall, the performance of the experimental group improved in comparison to their pretest performance. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.



### 4.4.3.3 Experimental Group Posttest D3 Sample

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?		E9
a. ambiguity		
b. simile		
c. metaphor		
d. foreshadowing		
e. irony		
<b>3.1</b> Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).		
..... <u>metaphor</u> .....	/1	
<b>3.2</b> Town Clerk: "... Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)		
..... <u>irony</u> .....	/1	
<b>3.3</b> Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).		
..... <u>simile</u> .....	/1	(5)
<b>3.4</b> Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4. Scene 1).		
..... <u>foreshadowing</u> .....	/1	
<b>3.5</b> Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).		
..... <u>foreshadowing</u> <u>ambiguity</u> .....	/1	

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from		E27
a. ambiguity		
b. simile		
c. metaphor		
d. foreshadowing		
e. irony		
<b>3.1</b> Neo: "Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang" (Act 1, Scene 1).		
..... <u>Metaphor</u> .....	/1	
<b>3.2</b> Town Clerk: "... Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people" (Act 4, Scene 1)		
..... <u>foreshadowing</u> .....	/1	
<b>3.3</b> Thelma: ... "Your eyes are like doves behind your veil..." (Act 1, Scene 2).		
..... <u>simile</u> .....	/1	(3)
<b>3.4</b> Mbeha: ... "If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away" (Act 4. Scene 1).		
..... <u>irony</u> .....	/1	
<b>3.5</b> Queen: "Some of them are your children, Father of the children" (Act 5, Scene 1).		
..... <u>from ambiguity</u> .....	/1	

In D3, which asked about text comprehension, the performance of the experimental group improved in comparison to their pretest performance. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.

#### 4.4.3.4 Experimental Group Posttest D4 Sample

What do the following figurative expressions mean?

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".

when it means when you die some one will take over and continue to lead. 12

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".

It means I will not allow this discussion to be disturbed by useless people. 12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river".

It's a metaphor interplay and interdependence between water and crocodiles for the survival. 12

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly".

It means when someone has done something wrong obviously he will do it again or there's a possibility to repeat it. 12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".

It means the way the parents behave, their children will behave in the same way. 12

What do the following figurative expressions mean?

4.1 "When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects".

When you die, the fool will rule and bring back peace to your people. 12

4.2 "I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons".

I can not allow this important meeting to be ruined by your silly arguments. 12

4.3 "The Pula people are the gods of rain and we are the crocodiles of the river".

We all need each other the one can not survive without the help of the others. 12

4.4 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly".

to repeat the same mistake several times. 12

4.5 "A child of a snake is a snake".

childrens do what their parents do. 12

In D4, which asked about interpretation of hidden meaning, the performance of the experimental group improved well in comparison to their pretest performance. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.



#### 4.4.3.5 Experimental Group Posttest D5 Sample

5.2 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction.

The king tested the ancestors with <sup>an act of</sup> a murder E2  
 - he ignored what was said by the fool ✓  
 - He don't know the time to feed the ancestors with the brew  
 - passing on his mantle to the heir while he is alive ✓  
 - The king ignored the signs of the ancestors ✓ 15

5.2 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

It started when the king was <sup>curse</sup> punished by the ancestors with blindness. The king end up crowning the fool instead of his son Fawn Clerk. Town Clerk when he saw the fool crowned he wanted to shoot him but the messenger turned the gun and Town Clerk end up shooting his mother. ~~The~~ a while the mother was in pain she revealed the secret of ~~the~~ her being a biological father of town clerk which made the king collapse and die. 15

5.2 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction.

The King has traded his authority for the test E25  
 of mortality. King Lewonika have ~~been~~ violated the ~~spirit~~ <sup>spirit</sup> of his subjects. He also do not know ~~how~~ to the ~~spiritual~~ of making and extinguishing the ritual fire. King Lewonika also ignored the ~~the~~ prophetic of the fool. He resigned to fulfill his son's wishes of bringing <sup>15</sup> mortality on the ancestral land.

5.2 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer.

The climax start when the king violated the Oracle of Cichao. The king was punished by the lords to ~~be~~ become blind. It then continues with the king crowning the fool. Then the Town Clerk shooting his mother <sup>5</sup> accidentally. It ended with the Queen revelation of the secret, John's biological father being Mbehq, the the sudden collapse of the king upon <sup>15</sup> bearing the news.

In D4, which asked about critical thinking, the performance of the experimental group improved significantly in comparison to their pretest performance. The answers provided here represent the range of answers given by the control group participants in the posttest.

In the preceding section, I first presented the analysis of the control and experimental groups' pre- and posttest results. I then presented samples of the control and experimental groups' pre-and posttest responses. At this juncture, I wish to present the statistical test analysis which determines whether there is a significant difference between the means of the two independent groups, the control group and the experimental group, assuming unequal variance.

#### 4.5 Comparison of the Scores of the Control and Experimental Group Pre- and Posttests.

I conducted an independent t-test to compare the experimental group's and control group's performance in literature without the intervention. The mean of the experimental group was 68.82 and the standard deviation (SD) was 8.75. Similarly, the mean for the control group was 65.73 and the SD was 10.91. Where the t-test finding is  $t(81) = 1.421$  and the p-value is 0.159, since 0.159 is greater than the commonly used significance level of 0.05, this indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of the experimental group and that of the control group in the pretest.

Table 6: Mean and SD for the experimental and control groups in the pretest

	Pretest		
	n	Mean	SD
<b>Experimental</b>	41	68.82	8.75
<b>Control</b>	42	65.73	10.91

Table 7: T-test results of pretest for the experimental and control groups

	t-test	d(f)	P-value
<b>Pretest</b>	1.42	81	0.159



#### 4.6 Comparison of Scores of the Control and Experimental Group in the Post-Posttest

I conducted an independent t-test to compare the experimental group's and control group's performance in literature after the interventions of role-play and peer assessment. The mean of the experimental group was 57.63 and the SD was 14.08. Similarly, the mean for the control group was 46.69 and the SD was 12.75. Where the t-test finding is  $t(81) = 3.721$  and the p-value  $< 0.001$ , which is less than 0.05 therefore indicating statistical significance, this means that there is a statistically significant difference in the scores between of the experimental group and that of the control group in the pretest; the experimental group performed better in the posttest in comparison to the control group's performance. The interventions of role-play and peer assessment appear to have had a positive impact on the experimental group's performance regarding literature.

Table 8: Mean scores of experimental and control groups in the posttests

	Posttest		
	n	Mean	SD
<b>Experimental</b>	41	57.63	14.08
<b>Control</b>	42	46.69	12.75

Table 9: T-test results of posttest for the experimental and control groups

	t-test	d(f)	P-value
<b>Pretest</b>	3.72	81	$< 0.001$

In the preceding section, I presented the quantitative data analysis of my study. In the following section, I wish to present the qualitative analysis, starting with the biographical data of the focus group interviewees. I interviewed eight experimental group student participants who took part in the role-play and peer assessment activities.

#### 4.7 Qualitative Data Analysis

Table 10: Biographical data of the focus group interview participants

Participants	Designation	Gender	Age
1	Student	Male	19
2	Student	Male	23
3	Student	Female	22
4	Student	Male	24
5	Student	Female	22
6	Student	Male	19
7	Student	Female	19
8	Student	Female	20

Table 10 shows the biographical information of the eight student participants in the experimental group who took part in the focus group interview. The age of the participants ranges from 19 to 24 years old. I purposefully included both males and females to allow for a balanced representation of gender in my study.

#### 4.8 Presentation and Analysis of Data from the Student Focus Group Interview

At this juncture, I present the raw data that I collected through the student focus group interviews. Since the focus group interview is a qualitative method of data collection, the data presented below is analysed thematically. This interview, as mentioned in my methodology chapter, involved eight experimental group participants, and myself, as the interviewer. The focus group interview focused on whether the approach of teaching literature through peer assessment and role-play would improve the overall academic performance in the subject of English, and specifically, the performance of the experimental group in the area of literature. For the purpose of anonymity, I have not used the student participants' names, but rather used a key to identify them.

**E3** = Experimental student participant 1

**E8** = Experimental student participant 2

**E11** = Experimental student participant 3

**E13** = Experimental student participant 4

**E17** = Experimental student participant 5

**E21** = Experimental student participant 6

**E35** = Experimental student participant 7

**E40** = Experimental student participant 8

In the following section, I present an analysis of the data from the focus group interview, based on themes and sub-themes.

### **Theme 1: Factors That Make Literary Texts Difficult for EAC Students**

To address this theme, I asked the experimental student participants to share their views on the difficulties they encountered as they were preparing for the role-play performance. For this question, I expected these participants to comment on the overall play, or in other words, the literature genre and the preparation process. The following sub-themes emerged from the students' responses:

#### **Sub-theme 1.1: Teamwork**

According to the interview participants, teamwork was an important element in enhancing learning. My analysis is that the students' focused on the importance of teamwork because they had experienced it during their role-play preparations and during the actual performance. Since some of the student players were absent, this absenteeism affected the performances of the other students. There was no longer teamwork, and the students realized that for any collaborative work to be achieved, they needed to act as a team. This is illustrated in the following excerpts:

**E3** *“Some group members were not present when we were preparing and we find it difficult to represent them as characters. We were also not having some materials to make the play more unique and interesting.”*

**E8** *“we did not achieve that because some people were also too quiet.”*

**E13** *“Yaa, working together is good because we discuss what to say and what not to say as a group.”*

**E17** *“As we did the drama in groups of 8-12 people, some students were absent during the preparation. This affects our performance.”*

**E21** *“We could also not learn from each other because we were not all there.”*

**E40** *“Working together is good because you become friends.”*

### **Sub-theme 1.2: Vocabulary**

Participants revealed that they had encountered difficult words in the play as they were preparing for the role-play. I believe inadequate vocabulary poses a challenge in reading literary texts that contain complex and unfamiliar words. Students may struggle to comprehend the meaning and context of these words, which impacts their overall understanding of the text, as expressed by the following excerpts:

**E3** " *The book has too many difficult words and sometimes we don't even know what we are saying.* "

**E11** " *When we were preparing, we didn't have dictionaries so it was even difficult to pronounce those new words.* "

**E13** " *And you know I forgot some words and everyone was looking at me because I did not even know the other word to replace the word I forgot.* "

**E21** " *Oh, the writers use difficult words.* "

**E35** " *It is hard work because you read the difficult words and say them in the play and you do not understand them.* "

**E40** " *Difficult words complicate things.* "

### **Sub-theme 1.3: Figurative Language**

These participants acknowledged lack of understanding of figurative language as a difficulty. I believe that for literature to be understood, the language should be equally understood. Figurative language has proven to be problematic to students because of the hidden meanings it carries. Many students are often unable to interpret hidden meaning in figurative expressions, as expressed by the following excerpts:

**E3** " *But they can affect your test or exam if you do not know what they mean.* "

**E8** " *You know although we did not understand them, I think they did not affect our play because we just memorized and spoke.* "

**E11** " *Figurative sentences are too long also and we already don't understand them.* "

**E13** " *I like talking about things that I know, for example, some of the figurative language used is just difficult. We are just acting for the sake of acting.* "

**E17** " *We don't know how to read between the lines and idioms are like that.* "

**E35** " *During the preparation we tried to explain to each other what the figurative sentences meant and there were those we did not know.* "



## **Theme 2: Students' Attitudes Towards Peer Assessment**

To address the theme of students' attitudes towards peer assessment, I asked the experimental group participants to indicate how they felt about the comments their peers gave them during the role-play. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

### **Sub-theme 2.1: Negative Feedback**

The participants revealed certain negative attitudes towards peer assessment because some peers negatively criticize others. Peers who are negatively criticized develop a dislike for peer assessment and end up not seeing the value peer that assessment offers. In the same vein, some participants have negative attitudes towards peer assessment because of the exaggerated comments on good performance or bad performance. I believe that for any feedback to be effective, it should be constructive, as indicated by the following excerpts:

**E3** " *Sometimes students just give comments for the sake of giving comments. They do not really care.* "

**E8** " *Some comments are not good. They discourage you.* "

**E11** " *I hate it when friends mark each other. It is not fair because they give marks for free.* "

**E17** " *Some comments are not honest because they give any comment. You don't know if you really did good or not because the person is not honest.* "

**E21** " *I think sometimes students give comments to please others and they don't mean what they say.* "

#### **A follow-up answer from participant E35**

**E35** " *Yes, and you don't learn anything because your friends don't assess you well.* "

**E40** " *Some people exaggerate the comments because you are friends. Like that, you will not know if you really performed well or not.* "

### **Sub-theme 2.2: Positive Feedback**

The participants' responses also revealed some positive attitude towards peer assessment, especially when the comments encouraged them to work harder and when the comments were accompanied by explanations. Students would like to know what they did wrong; therefore, feedback that points out what is wrong promotes learning because students tend not to repeat similar mistakes when the problem has been rectified. Positive feedback also motivates students to learn more, as can be inferred from the following excerpts:

**E8** " *like it because we learn from each other and we know ourselves where we need to improve.* "

**E11** *“I like it because I get comfortable when another student marks me because teachers can be too serious.”*

**E13** *“I like them especially when they encourage you like, good or you can do it and they can correct me where I did wrong.”*

**E17** *“You hardly repeat the same mistake when judged by a peer.”*

**E21** *“It helps us to study hard.”*

**E21** *“I like them especially when they encourage you like, good or you can do it and they can correct me where I did wrong.”*

**E40** *“We find out where we went wrong.”*

### **Theme 3: Students’ Attitudes Towards Learning Language Through Literary Texts**

To address this theme, I asked the experimental group participants about their views on the teaching and learning of literature such as plays and novels. The following sub-themes emerged:

#### **Sub-theme 3.1: Medium of Learning**

The participants seemed to be aware of the many benefits associated with the teaching and learning of literary texts. They acknowledged that it is through reading literary texts that the reader gets to understand the points of view of not only the author but also the characters. They also acknowledged that it is through reading literary texts that the reader learns about cultural differences, moral lessons, language skills, and how to interpret hidden meanings, and most importantly, they learn new words, as indicated in the following excerpts:

**E3** *“Literature helps us to know things in the world. It also helps us to learn vocabulary words and improve our reading and writing skills.”*

**E3** *“Literature teaches us overcome challenges in life.”*

**E8** *“I learnt to respect culture and what the elders tell you because if you don’t, you may suffer the consequences just like the King.”*

**E8** *“Teaching literature is good because it improves students’ vocabulary and writing skills. You can also learn about different cultures, customs, beliefs and learn moral lessons.”*

**E11** *“Teaching literature help student to enhance their vocabulary and also help them to get moral lessons from the book they read.”*

**E17** *“I learnt about different types of relationships in life.”*

**E21** *“I experience life through another person’s eyes.”*

**E40** *“Literature helps us to understand life in a better way.”*

### **Sub-theme 3.2: Role-Play**

My analysis of this sub-theme is that participants were aware and felt positive about the teaching and learning of literary texts and felt that if role-play is used as a means to deliver literary content, students will better master the texts. According to the participants, role-play is even more effective, especially for students who dislike reading. The following excerpts illustrate this perception:

**E3** *“The lectures need to teach literature on screens because we need to see the characters playing. It is fun and we won’t forget.”*

**E8** *“You hardly forget what you have seen for example on TV.”*

**E13** *“They must be taught in a drama form because it will be easier for students to understand it well. They should also introduce it through TV channels whereby students will watch how the characters act during their roles.”*

**E21** *“Reading a novel or play in the class can be very time consuming. It can also cause student who are not into reading to lose interest. I think role-play is easy way to teach literature.”*

**E35** *“Plays and novels should be taught in a role-play form so that all students can be aware of what the play is all about because once they fail to get the theme, it will be a problem to catch the whole content.”*

**E40** *“Oh yes, we need to do more role-plays so that we do not forget what the books are about.”*

### **Theme 4: Strategies to be used to assist the teaching and learning of literary texts**

To address this theme, I asked the experimental group participants to share their views regarding what they thought were solutions to the difficulties associated with the teaching and learning of literary texts. The following sub-themes emerged:

#### **Sub-theme 4.1: Role-play**

Some participants felt that understanding literary texts was made easier through role-play, since role-play encourages active engagement and participation, and students who engage in role-play immerse themselves in the actions depicted in the book. Further, they become interested and motivated to act as accurately as possible to show how well they have acquired the content to be learnt. Similarly, students involved in role-plays are less likely to forget the content because they have had first-hand experience. The following excerpts point to this:

**E3** *“It is only through role-plays and presentations that we can learn literature well”*

**E8** *“I enjoy presenting what I have read especially literature.”*

**E11** *“Students must be allowed to act out their interesting parts after they read the book as a whole class.”*

**E13** *“Literature will be more enjoyable if people read it and play it.”*

**E40** *“Sometimes during role-play you can make the presentation fun if you act really well”*

**A follow-up answer from E17**

**E17** *“Yes, others will believe you especially when you even cry. They will never forget and in that way, they will understand that part of the book.”*

### **Sub-theme 4.2 Peer Learning**

These participants felt that if students are allowed to take charge of the teaching and learning of literary texts, they will learn well from each other. They suggested that peer learning is synonymous with collaborative learning, and students who can engage in peer learning in group activities learn better. Peer learning enhances knowledge acquisition because students learn better and faster from each other. These views are illustrated in the following excerpts:

**E3** *“Some students show you exactly where you went, and you will never forget that.”*

**E8** *“I believe so too because students show you how to learn better.”*

**E11** *“Learning from other students helps us to work harder and we hardly forget what we learn from our friends.”*

**E17** *“Assign the students to be the teacher for the day.”*

**E35** *“We need to be given group work more often to learn from one another.”*

**E40** *“Students are good teacher. They explain better than the teacher.”*

### **Sub-theme 4.3 Media**

According to the participants, literary plays or novels should be delivered through TV serials, movies or shows, as students would like to see visual representation of the actions taking place in the books. In their view, media provides real-world content by bringing real experiences into the learning environment. Students can observe real action and get to understand real-life situations. This kind of exposure helps students to appreciate and be motivated to read literary texts more. The following excerpts illustrate this point:

**E8** *“I remember most of the movies I have watched so, if we can be allowed to watch the stories on TV then we will understand the literature books better.”*

**E11** *“You know that sometimes you may not really understand what the book is saying but as soon as you watch that part on TV, you will end up understanding the book.”*



**E13** *“We want to understand the books and we can only do that when we watch movies on the books we read.”*

**E17** *“For example, I watched Animal Farm on TV and I still know and understand what it is about.”*

**E35** *“I think lecturers can use movies as another form of teaching literature.”*

**E40** *“Literature can be made easier by connecting it to other media like the use of film to supplement written texts has the potential to improve student interactions with texts and also promote knowledge transference.”*

In the preceding section, I presented the focus group interview data analysis according to the themes derived from my research objectives. In the next sections of this chapter, I will first present the experimental group’s observation on the role-play, which I refer to as peer assessment. Second, I will present an analysis based on my own observation as a non-participant observer of the role-play that took place.

#### **4.9 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Peer Observation of the Role-Play**

I used an observation protocol to solicit reactions from the experimental group student participants who took part in the peer assessment. Students assessed each other’s performances in the role-play in order to determine whether the themes in the play had been accurately demonstrated or understood. I must, however, indicate here that the data gathered from the student observation is intended to supplement the data gathered from my observation as a non-participant observer.

Before analysing data from the student observation, I would like to provide a background as to how this observation was carried out.

I tasked the experimental group with performing distinct roles depicted in the play. The play consisted of five acts or scenes, and every member of the experimental group had to take part in the performance. The five acts were randomly assigned to the 41 experimental group participants. There were eight participants or actors in four of the scenes, while there were nine participants or actors in the remaining scene. I allocated all group members to their respective groups and provided an observation protocol that they should use to assess each other. Each member of the group assessed every group that took part in the performance. I used the criteria

for assessment given in the observation protocol as themes on which I could base the data that the student participants collected.

Now that I have described how the student observation was carried out, I wish to present the data that arose from the student observation. I will present each group's comments on an act or scene that was performed. There were five groups that observed and assessed each other's performances on the five acts/scenes that the students performed. However, all comments from all groups for each act/scene theme and sub-themes are combined and analysed together because they are assessing the same performance.

The major themes that emerged from the student observation are presented as follows:

**Theme 1:** Players' response to the text

**Theme 2:** Group performance

**Theme 3:** Themes in the play

**Theme 4:** Lessons learned

*Table 11: Student observation for Act/Scene 1*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b> Players' responses to the text	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Players responded partially to the text
<b>Theme 2:</b> Group performance	<b>Sub-theme 2.1</b> Lack of confidence <b>Sub-theme 2.2</b> Use of Costumes <b>Sub-theme 2.3</b> Preparedness
<b>Theme 3:</b> Themes of the play	<b>Sub-theme 3.1</b> Partially performed
<b>Theme 4:</b> Lessons learned	<b>Sub-theme 4.1</b> Respect elders <b>Sub-theme 4.2</b> Judge people fairly

The peer observation for Act/Scene 1 indicated that the participants covered only some of the content of the scene and omitted the rest. Some group participants displayed confidence in their performance and made the performance appealing by wearing costumes. It is interesting to note here that although the players omitted some content, they seemed well-prepared. Regarding overall performance, participants judged that the characters had demonstrated the moral lessons as depicted in the play.

Table 12: All groups' raw data from student observation for Act/Scene2

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>Theme 1.</b> Players' responses to the text	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Players responded to the text accordingly
<b>Theme 2</b> Group performance	<b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Players not confident
<b>Theme 4</b> Themes of the play	<b>Sub-theme 1.3</b> Theme not well demonstrated
<b>Theme 5</b> Lessons learned	<b>Sub-theme 1.5</b> Respect your elders <b>Sub-theme 1.6</b> Cultural differences

According to the peer observation for Act/Scene 2, some of the players responded appropriately to the text, but some players did not seem to be ready. My analysis is that lack of readiness could be attributed to the participants not preparing for the play. It is interesting to note here that although some players lacked confidence and did not supplement their performance with costumes, the intended lesson of the act/scene was, to some extent, demonstrated.

Table 13: Student observation for Act/Scene 3

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>Theme 1:</b> Players' responses to the text	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Flaws in players' roles
<b>Theme 2:</b> Group performance	<b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Some performance out of context.
<b>Theme 3:</b> Themes of the play	<b>Sub-theme 1.3</b> Theme not well covered.
<b>Theme 4:</b> Lessons learned	<b>Sub-theme 1.4</b> Learn to listen to your parents

The participants' peer observation for Act/Scene 3 indicates that the performance was not carried out well due to the participants' poor interpretation of the theme. Some participants forgot their roles, and this affected their role-play. Most of the content in this act/scene was not performed, and what was performed did not last long. The players did, however, demonstrate the intended lesson represented in the act/scene.

Table 14: Student observation for Act/Scene 4

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1.</b> Players' responses to the text	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Well performed
<b>Theme 2:</b> Group performance	<b>Sub-theme1.2</b> Use of costumes
<b>Theme 3:</b> Themes of the play	<b>Sub-theme3.1</b> Theme well demonstrated.
<b>Theme.4</b> Lessons learned	<b>Sub-theme 4.1</b> Cultural differences. <b>Sub-theme4.2</b> Types of relationships

The participants' peer observation for Act/Scene 4 indicated that the performance was well done. Most of the players knew their roles well, the theme was well demonstrated, and the lesson of the act/scene was well interpreted. The use of costumes made the play interesting.

Table 15: Student observation for Act/Scene 5

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1.</b> Players' responses to the text	<b>Sub-theme1.1</b> Flaws in players' roles
<b>Theme 2.</b> Group performance	<b>Sub-theme1.1</b> Partially organized
<b>Theme 3:</b> Themes of the play	<b>Sub-theme3.1</b> Theme not well demonstrated
<b>Theme 3:</b> Lesson learned	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Women are not honest <b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Truth always comes out

According to the participants' peer observation for Act/Scene 5, this was done poorly because only a few players turned up for the performance. Most of the players did not speak loudly loud enough for the audience to hear, and they seemed unprepared for the performance. However, the participants demonstrated some understanding of the intended lessons of the act/scene.

My overall analysis of the activity is that the experimental group participants revealed a lot about the players who took part in the role-play. There were players who were not prepared and some who were absent, shy, or forgot their lines, while others wore costumes to depict what was portrayed in the play. It is important to note here that none of the groups displayed all the qualities needed for the play. I must indicate, however, that despite the absence of one or more of these elements, all performances were successful, and each group's performance demonstrated and interpreted the intended message of the play. I believe that the fact that the intended message of the play was demonstrated indicates that the experimental group participants understood the literary text.



Now that I have analysed the observation findings the experimental group participants produced for the purposes of peer assessment, in the following section, I will present my observation as a non-participant observer. I observed all five groups that took part in the play and analysed the data that I collected based on the following themes:

**Theme 1:** Knowledge and understanding

**Theme 2:** Interpretation

**Theme 3:** Proficiency

**Theme 4:** Communication

#### 4.10 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Myself, as a Non-Participant Observer

*Table 16: My observation as a non-participant observer for Act/Scene 1*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b> Literary text knowledge and understanding	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Understanding of the play and players' roles demonstrated.
<b>Theme 2:</b> Literary text interpretation	<b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Difficulty interpreting literary text
<b>Theme 3:</b> Proficiency	<b>Sub-theme 1.3</b> Minor flaws have no effect
<b>Theme 4:</b> Communication	<b>Sub-theme 1.4</b> Mistakes do not hamper comprehension

My observation of the experimental group's performance for Act/Scene 1 is that the players satisfactorily interpreted the theme of the act. Although some of them forgot their lines, this did not affect the group's performance nor their interpretation of the intended lessons in the play.

*Table 17: My observation as a non-participant observer for Act/Scene 2*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b> Literary text knowledge and understanding	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Events well recalled.
<b>Theme 2:</b> Literary text interpretation	<b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Realia effect
<b>Theme 3:</b> Proficiency	<b>Sub-theme 1.3</b> Good flow of performance
<b>Theme 4:</b> Communication	<b>Sub-theme 1.4</b> Shyness did not affect the performance.

My observation of the experimental group's performance for Act/Scene 2 is that the theme was well demonstrated. The use of costumes created the realia effect. Minor flaws such as the shyness displayed by some players did not affect the overall performance of the group. The players demonstrated an understanding of the play's message.

*Table 18: My observation as a non-participant observer for Act/Scene 3*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b> Literary text knowledge and understanding	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Events not all well recalled.
<b>Theme 2:</b> Literary text interpretation	<b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Performance was not convincingly executed.
<b>Theme 3:</b> Proficiency	<b>Sub-theme 1.3</b> Memorization hampered flow of performance.
<b>Theme 4:</b> Communication	<b>Sub-theme 1.4</b> Passive players

My observation of the experimental group's performance for Act/Scene 3 is that most of the players forgot their lines during the role-play and this affected their performance. As a result, the intended message of the act/scene was not accurately demonstrated, and the players failed to demonstrate that they had understood the message of the play.

*Table 19: My observation as a non-participant observer for Act/Scene 4*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b> Literary text knowledge and understanding	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Well done.
<b>Theme 2:</b> Literary text interpretation	<b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Performance convincingly executed
<b>Theme 3:</b> Proficiency	<b>Sub-theme 1.3</b> Performance attracted the attention of the audience
<b>Theme 4:</b> Communication	<b>Sub-theme 1.4</b> Players showed enthusiasm and desire to convince the audience.

My observation of the experimental group's performance for Act/Scene 4 indicates that this group displayed teamwork and interpreted the theme very well. Their performances included

emotions as depicted in the play. This group thus demonstrated a good level of comprehension of the book.

*Table 20: My observation as a non-participant observer for Act/Scene 5*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Theme 1:</b> Literary text knowledge and understanding	<b>Sub-theme 1.1</b> Events not well recalled.
<b>Theme 2:</b> Literary text interpretation	<b>Sub-theme 1.2</b> Characters are not well portrayed.
<b>Theme 3:</b> Proficiency	<b>Sub-theme 1.3</b> Flaws in the performance affected the play.
<b>Theme 4:</b> Communication	<b>Sub-theme 1.4</b> Some players non-audible.

My observation of the experimental group's performance for Act/Scene 5 indicates that the group members did not perform to the best of their abilities as some of the players were absent, and the group thus lacked teamwork. Flaws in the performance affected the overall interpretation of the theme of the act/scene.

My overall impression of the role-play for all the groups was that performance was satisfactory. Most of the groups performed well except the group that role-played Act/Scene 3. The inclusion of costumes and the effect of realia contributed to the good performances. The main aim of the role-play was to find out if the experimental group could interpret the themes in the play, which ultimately indicates an understanding of what the literary text is about. I believe the aim was accomplished.

I have so far presented my analysis of the observation data for the experimental group participants based on the role-play that they performed. I now wish to present the qualitative data collected through the questionnaires. First, I present the data I collected from both the experimental group participants and the control group participants. Then I present the data collected from the lecturer participants.

It is important to note here that the responses from the control group student participants are labelled as CG and the responses from the experimental group participants are labelled as EG.

#### **4.11 Presentation and Analysis of the Questionnaire Data for the Control and Experimental Groups**

At this juncture, I will present and analyse the qualitative data based on the themes that emerged from both the control and experimental groups' responses in the questionnaire. The themes are as follows:

1. Students' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts
2. Difficulties that English Access Course students have in understanding literary texts
3. Effects of literary texts on students' academic performance
4. Students' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction
5. The effect of peer assessment on students' academic performance

##### **Theme 1: Students attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts**

To address this theme, I asked the control and experimental groups to indicate whether they enjoyed reading literary texts or not. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

##### **Sub-theme 1.1: Vocabulary acquisition**

The student participants stated that they enjoyed reading literary texts such texts improved their vocabulary. Vocabulary is a crucial aspect of reading comprehension, especially when it comes to understanding and analysing literary texts because if students struggle to understand words while reading, this lack of understanding ultimately affects their overall comprehension of the texts, as illustrated by the following excerpts:

**CG** *"It makes me learn new words."*

**EG** *"I learn unfamiliar words."*

**CG** *"Reading helps me to improve my vocabulary"*

**EG** *"Makes me learn new words."*

**CG** *"I learn new words."*

**EG** *"They are very interesting and teach vocabulary."*

**CG** *"My vocabulary improves."*

**EG** *"I learn new things and unfamiliar vocabulary."*

**CG** *"I learn new words all the time."*



### **Sub-theme 1.2: Pleasure**

The participants indicated that they enjoyed reading literary texts because the texts made them happy and improved their mood. In their view, reading literary texts was enjoyable, as expressed by the following excerpts:

**CG** *“It is a pleasure to meet characters and live in their world, to experience their joy and sorrows.”*

**CG** *“Reading novels makes you happy even when you were not in the mood.”*

**EG** *“A good book provides enjoyment.”*

**CG** *“Some books are enjoyable.”*

**EG** *“Takes away boredom.”*

**CG** *“A good book relaxes me.”*

**EG** *“It increases my interest in reading.”*

**CG** *“Plays are very interesting.”*

### **Sub-theme 1.3: Cultural awareness**

Cultural awareness was also identified by the experimental group participants as one of the reasons students enjoy reading literary texts. Cultural awareness enables students to appreciate different ways of life. It also enhances cooperative learning because students share ideas and learn to consider the norms and beliefs of people other than themselves. The following excerpts indicate this view.

**EG** *“In reading novels and plays, I learn many things that people of different cultures do traditionally.”*

**EG** *“Reading literary texts expand my knowledge on life and culture.”*

### **Sub-theme 1.4: Life experience**

The experimental group participants believed that if they read literary texts, they learnt more about life and the lessons that life teaches. According to the participants, in almost every literary genre, there is some underlying message about life and it is usually up to the reader to figure it out. This is well illustrated in the following excerpts:

**EG** *“I learn how to solve life problems.”*

**EG** *“Some books are non-fiction, they educate me on how to shape my behaviour as well as how to deal with certain issue between friends, family members or tribes.”*

**EG** *“Helps me develop perspective on issues that one might not have faced or not understood completely.”*

The overall response to this question is that literary texts are enjoyable to read because they not only provide pleasure or improve knowledge acquisition, but also teach students new

words. It is however important to note here that only the experimental group participants mentioned cultural awareness and life experiences that lessons literary texts can provide, whereas pleasure was mentioned by both the control and experimental group participants.

## **Theme 2: Difficulties that English Access Course students have in understanding literary texts**

To address this theme, I asked the control and experimental group participants to explain what factors make it difficult for some EAC students to understand literary texts. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

### **Sub-theme 2.1 Lack of early exposure to literature**

The participants indicated that some students do not understand literary texts because it is the first time, they have studied such texts. According to these participants, literary texts have specific language techniques which students need to be familiar with. Students who are studying literature for the first time often find literary language difficult and intimidating, and in most cases, the majority struggle to grasp it. It is important to note here that only four participants mentioned non-exposure to literary texts as one of the contributing factors to students performing poorly in literary texts. The following excerpts illustrate this issue:

**EG** *“Some students have never done literature before.”*

**CG** *“Because some students it’s their first time being taught literature and plays; novels and poetry have specific techniques that are used in writing that one needs to know for him/her to understand that specific play better.”*

**CG** *“Because some students are doing it for the first time, and it will take them time to learn the literary devices and understand them.”*

**EG** *“Lack of prior literature knowledge.”*

### **Sub-theme 2.2 Literary devices**

The participants indicated that failure of the EAC students to identify or understand the literary devices used in literary texts affects their ability to fully comprehend such texts. The following excerpts express this view.

**EG** *“You will find a student who cannot even identify different literary devices in the book. The student is not even able to write the theme, setting or the plot of the book.”*

**CG** *“We don’t understand literary devices.”*

**EG** *“Some students don’t know the difference between themes, and they don’t understand the literary devices.”*

**CG** *“Students do not know how to identify and understand literary elements such as simile or personification.”*

**EG** *“When students are unable to describe literary elements such as character and plot.”*

**CG** *“I think most of them did not study literary devices.”*

Since literary devices are techniques that an author uses to convey meanings to the reader, readers need to be able to identify and analyse aspects such as themes or plots in the literary texts. Therefore, if students do not understand these devices, their comprehension of literary texts will obviously be compromised.

### **Sub-theme 2.3 Vocabulary**

The participants indicated that new and unfamiliar vocabulary prevented them from understanding literary texts, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

**CG** *“Some students end up not understanding the play, novel and poem because the words used in the play, novel or poem are difficult to understand.”*

**EG** *“Some of the literary texts have very difficult words, bombastic which makes it difficult for the students to understand the content of the text.”*

**CG** *“Because in text there is more words that are difficult to you, and you end up failing a test or exam.”*

**EG** *“The author of the novel in many cases use difficult words and it is always difficult for a student to understand what he/she really means.”*

**CG** *“They struggle to understand words used in the text.”*

**EG** *“The writers use bombastic words that you never heard before.”*

**CG** *“Some literary books have difficult words which you cannot even understand and pronounce.”*

**EG** *“Because of the difficult words used in literary texts.”*

**CG** *“Some novels or plays use bombastic words that are difficult to understand.”*

**EG** *“Tough words.”*

**CG** *“Sometimes literary texts contain a lot of vocabulary words, and this makes it difficult for the student to understand the text.”*

Of all factors that hinder EAC students’ ability to understand literary texts, vocabulary is the most widely recognized. Most participants felt that literary texts contain too many new words that are also difficult to understand, which makes the texts less comprehensible.

#### **Sub-theme 2.4 Figurative language**

To understand and interpret figurative expressions, the student needs to make connections and infer meaning. Cultural references, idioms, and historical settings are frequently used in figurative language, and students who are unfamiliar with the cultural or contextual background linked to the figurative expression may have difficulty comprehending the literary text, as expressed in the following excerpts:

CG *“They also use idioms, which students find difficult to understand.”*

EG *“There are those who don’t understand proverbs and how to explain them.”*

CG *“It is difficult for some students to understand the text because of the proverbs used.”*

EG *“Some texts have proverbs or idioms that we are not familiar with.”*

CG *“Some authors use figurative language.”*

EG *“It might be difficult for students that are used to simple languages without proverbs.”*

#### **Sub-theme 2.5 Reading skills**

The participants indicated that the reading process is a concern among EAC students. The ability to read and use reading strategies were factors that the student participants highlighted as contributing to students’ lack of understanding of literary texts. The following excerpts point to that:

EG *“Some students don’t use intensive reading; they only memorize which is difficult for them to understand what the book mean generally.”*

CG *“Some students do not know how to read between the lines in order to understand the words used in context.”*

CG *“This is because students do not read with a purpose of understanding the thing, they only read to have or just of the sake of friends and parents.”*

EG *“There are students struggling with reading.”*

CG *“Some students read them for examination purposes.”*

EG *“Some students do not understand literary texts because they fail to understand the purpose of literature and the purpose of the author.”*

CG *“Lack of reading skills.”*

The reading problem emphasized by the student participants stems also from the fact that some students struggle to read aloud. In other words, they find it difficult to articulate words. I have witnessed this in almost every read-aloud lesson I have had with my students. It becomes difficult for a student who cannot read aloud to understand what they are trying to read.

There is also an issue of liking to read. Some students do not enjoy reading literary texts. For anybody to read, there must be some kind of motivation. My concern here is that the teaching



of literary texts is assessed formatively or summatively. If these students do not see these types of assessment as motivation to at least try to read and understand the text, we, as educators have a lot to change in terms of literature content delivery. The student participants argued that literary texts carry a lot of hidden meanings, and a reader is expected to read between the lines in order to grasp the author's intended meaning. Not all students possess this skill. It is important to note here that some students even suggested teaching literary texts through movies so that they are able to see the action brought to life, as pointed out by a participant here:

*"... not everybody enjoys reading written plays, novels or poem and I guess they will opt for live plays such as movies and so on."*

### **Sub-theme 2.6 The teacher**

Some student participants believed that the problem of students failing to understand literary texts is the fault of the teacher, as expressed in the following excerpts:

**CG** *"Some teachers do not put more effort when teaching literary texts. All they do is give the learner or students the book to study on their own causing the lazy ones not to study at all."*

**EG** *"Difficult words that students don't understand because of lack of exposure to reading materials."*

According to the student participants, teachers do not go out of their way to make sure that students understand literary texts. Similarly, the participants argued that teachers do not provide reading resources to encourage students to read to improve their vocabulary knowledge.

I wish to clarify here that in the context of this study, the word "teacher" refers to both schoolteachers and lecturers. I have noticed that most students that I teach at university do not differentiate between teacher and lecturer during conversations.

### **Sub-theme 2.7 The student**

Student attitudes were also mentioned as a factor that contributes to some EAC students not being able to understand literary texts. The excerpts given below support this observation.

**EG** *"some think it is so difficult that only smart students can do."*

**CG** *"If they don't do role-play, they might not understand the literary texts better."*

**EG** *"Sometimes students do not understand the questions."*

**CG** *"The student can read what is written in the book but seriously he/she just do not have a clue or image of what is said in the text."*

**EG** *"Some students do not just like reading plays or novels."*

**CG** *"Because some have a belief that literature is difficult, or some don't like the book."*

**EG** *"Lack of student awareness of the importance of learning literature."*

**CG** *“Because not all people enjoy reading books.”*

According to the participants, some students have negative attitudes towards literary texts and believe that only clever students understand such texts. When someone has a negative attitude towards something, they are unlikely to try to improve the situation. Other students believe that a literary text can be understood if it is role-played. In addition, a common view articulated was that literature, by its nature, is simply difficult to understand.

### **Theme 3: Effects of literary texts on students’ academic performance**

I asked the control and experimental groups to indicate if understanding of literary texts such as plays or novels would improve their performance in English as a subject. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

#### **Sub-theme 3.1 Vocabulary acquisition**

According to the participants, understanding literary texts helps one improve vocabulary knowledge, as expressed in the following excerpts.

**CG** *“Literary texts expand students’ vocabulary.”*

**EG** *“Because vocabulary knowledge will be improved.”*

**CG** *“Learning different words that I can use in my exam or test.”*

**EG** *“Literary texts help students in building good vocabulary which improves communication skills.”*

**CG** *“Students learn new words and correct sentence patterns.”*

**EG** *“promote word recognition.”*

**CG** *“Students to learn new words.”*

**EG** *“Because vocabulary knowledge will be improved.”*

**CG** *“Enriched vocabulary.”*

**EG** *“You will access a lot of vocabulary.”*

The participants believed that vocabulary development is one of the benefits of reading literary texts, as increased knowledge of new words helps students communicate well in all English language skills.

#### **Sub-theme 3.2 EAC curriculum**

According to the participants, although understanding of literary texts may improve language skills, the EAC does not only deal with literature. Therefore, for a student to perform well in English, all the other language skills should be mastered, as expressed in the following excerpts:

**CG** *“There is also grammar and if you don’t pass it well it affects your performance in English.”*

**EG** *“Not always that when you understand the text you will perform well in English, when you can’t answer the questions is a problem and English has many parts to answer such as grammar. You can try in literature but won’t get anything in grammar.”*

**CG** *“English is not only about literature, but there is also grammar. So even though students may understand literature this may not increase their ability performing well in the subject.”*

**EG** *“EAC is not only about literature but there is grammar part too. A student can fail literature and do well in grammar.”*

**CG** *“Grammar questions can also be difficult sometimes.”*

According to the participants, if a student has passed an assessment only in literature and no other language areas such as grammar, writing and speaking, the student’s performance in English will be low. A student needs to perform well in all language areas in the EAC. However, in my view, understanding of literary texts may lead to improvement in grammar, writing and speaking, which ultimately improves the overall performance of the student in English.

### **Sub-theme 3.3 Improved language skills**

Correct language usage also surfaced as one of the skills that students felt they would develop from comprehending literary texts in addition to improvement in reading and writing skills, as expressed in the following excerpts:

**CG** *“Literary texts help students in building good vocabulary which improves communication skills.”*

**EG** *“Literature helps you to become knowledgeable in how to craft your thoughts.”*

**CG** *“Yes, reading speed is improved and it will be easy to skim and scan a text.”*

**EG** *“Reading skills will be improved.”*

**CG** *“It make you use the perfect idiom instead of writing one that will not fit in what you are writing.”*

**CG** *“Understanding literary texts will help you to understand the texts in English exams. It will be easier for us to answer questions.”*

**EG** *“Literature helps you to become knowledgeable in how to craft your thoughts.”*

**CG** *“They will be able to write correct English.”*

**EG** *“Helps people to think and use their imagination.”*

Understanding of literary texts develops students’ vocabulary knowledge, which in turn improves their communication skills because they can express themselves more effectively.

Exposure to and understanding of literary texts enable students to develop critical thinking ability, reading skills and writing skills.

### **Sub-theme 3.4 Tests and examinations**

The participants indicated that understanding literary text enhances students' performance in tests or examinations, as expressed in the following excerpts:

**CG** *"You are capable of answering the questions very well."*

**EG** *"learning different words that I can use in my exam or test and helps people to think and use their imagination."*

**EG** *"Because your understanding is enhanced, and you are able to answer any question."*

In the context of my study, only the student participants quoted here argued that once one understands literary texts, one can answer questions better because one's imagination and thinking abilities improve. However, a student may understand the literary texts but not understand the questions asked in the test or examination. Thus, there might not be any improvement in the student's performance in English.

### **Sub-theme 3.5 Conditions of performance**

According to participants, if a student understands the literary texts, it does not necessarily mean that that student's performance in English is improved.

**CG** *"It depends on the questions that came in the test or examination."*

**EG** *"Only if I score better in literature component."*

**CG** *"They just try their best to study hard."*

In the context of my study, only student participants quoted here believed that what matters are the questions that are asked in the test or examination. They believed that no matter how much one knows and understands about the literary texts, if one is unable to answer the questions asked, one's performance in the subject will be affected. Similarly, a student's performance in English may improve if that student has done well in the literature component of the subject. In the same vein, they felt that a student needs to study hard in order to pass English without the influence of literary texts.

## **Theme 4: Students' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction**

I asked the control and experimental group participants to indicate how they felt about peer assessment during literature instruction. I must highlight here that some students supported peer assessment while others did not. Therefore, the sub-themes that emerged from the participants are presented as follows: First, I present the analysis of the responses of the



participants who were in favour of peer assessment and thereafter, I present the analysis of the responses of the participants who did not support peer assessment.

The following sub-themes emerged from responses of the control and experimental group participants who were in favour of peer assessment:

#### **Sub-theme 4.1 Peer assessment promotes peer learning**

According to the experimental group participants, peer assessment promotes peer learning, as reflected in the following excerpts.

*EG “If the memory of a student is corrected by another student, it is very difficult for that student to forget the correction.”*

*CG “You hardly repeat the same mistakes when judged by your peers.”*

*EG “Because the students will let you know where you make a mistake. Sometimes other students might understand things better and can explain way better than the lecturers.”*

*CG “We can see how other students answer questions.”*

*EG “Students motivate you and sometimes find time to help each other if they find out that his/her classmate do not understand well.”*

*CG “Yes, because you observe and note what happens during the presentation.”*

*EG “Yes, it is easy to identify mistakes done by others.”*

*CG “Yes, some peers are smarter than other so they might have good answer than us and by assessing us we will learn from them.”*

*EG “Yes it enables students to help each other where they do not understand.”*

*CG “It motivates students to work harder because they are afraid of being exposed by others when they write unnecessary things.”*

*EG “Yes, students will know themselves where they need improvement.”*

*CG “They share useful opinions related to what they have done. This helps to judge themselves and get who is right and who is wrong.”*

*EG “So that we can see how other students answer questions.”*

*CG “Yes, most of the learners write the correct answer where someone is wrong which make it easier for other to study when preparing for a test or exam.”*

*EG “Yes, I am saying this because some students are smarter than others, so this is the best way for those who do not understand in class to understand when they do assessment with others.”*

Peer learning is one of the most widely recognized benefits of peer assessment because it promotes learning from friends. Some of the student participants who took part in my study supported the idea of peer assessment in their learning because it enables them to learn from

one another through the mistakes others make. The participants also believed that a mistake highlighted by a peer is less easily forgotten, and thus learning has already taken place. The process of learning from one another helps students learn the lesson better.

#### **Sub-theme 4.2 Peer assessment promotes peer motivation**

The participants indicated that peer assessment promotes motivation among students, as illustrated by the following excerpts.

*CG “It makes students to study harder because they are afraid of being exposed by others when they write unnecessary things.”*

*EG “students motivate you and sometimes find time to help each other if they find out that his/her classmate do not understand well.”*

*CG “It makes students to study harder.”*

*EG “It encourages students to critically reflect each other’s work. Students learn more from each other.”*

*CG “Yes, it encourages your students to be reflective thinkers, students are able to talk about what is being assessed.”*

Some student participants believed that peer motivation can greatly improve student learning, as students look up to each other, and positive comments made by their peers can influence them as to how they move forward with their learning.

Now that I have presented the responses from the control and experimental group participants who supported peer assessment in their learning, in the following section, I will present the sub-themes that emerged from the responses of the control and experimental group participants who did not support peer assessment.

#### **Sub-theme 4.3 Peer assessment induces jealousy**

According to the participants who opposed the use of peer assessment in their classrooms, peer assessment promotes jealousy among students. This is reflected in the following excerpts:

*CG “some students are jealous because they will mark you the way they feel like.”*

*EG “Some students are jealous, and they will not be happy if you have scored more marks than them. And they give bad comments.”*

*EG “Our peer might have jealous about one another. They might comment something that will discourage others.”*

Some student participants believed that peer assessment can cause disruption and give rise to jealousy. According to the participants, students are sometimes not pleased about other students’ achieving excellent levels in their studies. As a result, those that do not perform well

do not assess others fairly. Answers that are correct may be marked as incorrect, and the comments that are given can sometimes be discouraging.

#### **Sub-theme 4.4 Peer assessment promotes feelings of inferiority in students**

The student participants indicated that peer assessment promotes feelings of inferiority among students, as can be inferred from the excerpts here.

*CG “It discourages the victims from part taking next and lose interest in the course because others laugh at them. It will make victimized student to feel they are inferior more especially when it comes to acting or performing something in a crowd.”*

*EG “peer can make fun of you after marking your work. They cannot even correct you where you are wrong.”*

*CG “Sometimes they do give bad comments.”*

*EG “Negative feedback is so discouraging, and it makes you feel bad about yourself.”*

*CG “Bad, some students comment badly especially if you fail something.”*

*EG “No, some may give discouraging comments just because of your characteristics.”*

My analysis of these responses is that once a student is assessed and a comment is given, especially an unfavourable one, the assessed student sees it as a demonstration of failure on his or her part. Students negatively assessed by peers feel as if they are victims. They do not see the comments as directed toward the mistakes they have made, but rather, toward themselves as individuals. There may be peer assessors who ridicule others for bad performances, with the result that the ridiculed students develop poor self-esteem, which in the long run may affect the students' personalities and academic performances.

#### **Sub-theme 4.5 Peer assessment induces favouritism**

The student participants cited favouritism as one of the negative outcomes of peer assessment, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

*CG “Some students may do favour to their friends.”*

*EG “Some students write answers for their friends.”*

*CG “If the student assessing you is your friend, he/she will give you marks where you did not deserve it.”*

*EG “If that person is your friend or just close to you, you will just favour them even if he is completely wrong.”*

*CG “They will not be honest with what others did in the activity. If you're not a friend you are marked wrongly.”*

*EG “Some students are not fair when they are marking their papers because they want their friends to pass. So, they will mark them correct.”*

Some student participants believed that some peers favour others, and that peer assessors are sometimes too lenient with their friends, do not assess them correctly, and mark answers that are almost correct as correct. I must highlight here that when students believe that there is favouritism in the assessment process, it can reduce their motivation to perform their best because they believe that their efforts are not appreciated and rewarded accordingly. This kind of discouragement for the assessed students lowers their morale and their commitment to learning.

#### **Sub-theme 4.6 Peer assessors lack assessment skills**

The participants also felt that peer assessment may not be beneficial because the students doing the assessing lack assessment skills, as pointed out in the following excerpts:

**CG** *“students are not experienced in assessing each other.”*

**CG** *“Students only know about one option of the answer not more.”*

**EG** *“some students will give you extra mark because they know you even though you are wrong.”*

**EG** *“sometimes they judge you unfairly because they don't like you.”*

**CG** *“Sometimes they give them wrong answers because they are not certain, or they do not know the answer.”*

**EG** *“They are not qualified, and they only assess to a certain extend.”*

**CG** *“The person is also learning and afraid of making correction to the other student's work.”*

It is evident from these responses that some students sometimes do not feel good about having their peers assess them. They believed that student assessors may know only one answer to a question and if a student attempts to give an alternative answer, he or she may be penalized. They also believed that some students award marks for wrong answers simply because they like someone, and vice versa. All these factors constitute negative effects of peer assessment.

### **Theme 5: The effect of peer assessment on students' academic performance**

I asked the control and experimental groups to indicate how peer assessment can improve learning. The following sub-themes emerged from the participants' responses:

#### **Sub-theme 5.1 Peer learning**

According to the participants, peer assessment promotes peer learning. The following excerpts support this:

**CG** *“By gaining knowledge from each other when checking each other's work or answers. Other will comment on what to improve which he/she will tackle when studying.”*



**CG** *“When students share useful and subject related opinions that will help them know what they didn’t know and correct each other.”*

**EG** *“Comparing their work with that of their peers to self-reflect.”*

**EG** *“Students are likely to understand and catch up fast when they are being helped by other students.”*

According to these responses, peer assessment can improve academic learning when students examine each other’s work or when the students compare their work with those of their peers. Through this observation, students identify their mistakes and learn from them. As the students alluded to in sub-theme 4.1, mistakes highlighted by peers are not easily forgotten. Thus, students reflect on their learning and decide what learning habits they will stop and what learning habits they will adopt in order to improve their academic performance.

### **Sub-theme 5.2 Feedback**

Feedback cited by participants as one of the factors that can improve learning should it be part of the peer assessment process. Here are the responses:

**CG** *“Students get faster and more feedback to each other on their work.”*

**CG** *“If you give feedback after marking activities and give motivating comments.”*

**EG** *“Students learn from each other, and more feedback can be generated by students compared to one or two teachers.”*

According to these student participants, after peer assessment has been completed, feedback should be given to indicate mistakes that students made and the type of answers they should have given. In the students’ views, feedback is important, especially if it is provided immediately after the peer assessment activity and if the feedback given is positive.

### **Sub-theme 5.3 Critical thinking skills**

In the following excerpts, two student participants argued that peer assessment can improve learning if it promotes critical thinking skills. This is because critical thinking skills allow students to critique others as well as deal effectively with questions because the students can think deeply, a skill they may have acquired through class discussions during peer assessment.

**CG** *“Peer assessment helps students to critique.”*

**EG** *“Helps students develop critical thinking skills.”*

In the preceding section, I have presented the qualitative analysis of the control and experimental groups’ questionnaire responses. In the following section, I will present the last part of my data analysis, which comprises the lecturers’ questionnaire responses.

#### **4.12 Presentation and Analysis of Lecturers' Questionnaire Responses**

As indicated in chapter 3, the other participants in my study were two lecturers who taught in the EAC during the time that the data was being collected. I distributed questionnaires to them to explore their views on the teaching and learning of language through literary texts, as well as their views on peer assessment and its effects on teaching and learning in a language classroom.

In the following section, I first give a description of the lecturer participants, which includes gender, age, qualification, number of years in the teaching/lecturing profession, and the number of years teaching in the EAC. Second, I present and analyse their responses in the questionnaire. To maintain anonymity, I used codes, namely, L1 and L2.

#### **4.13 Description of Lecturer Participants**

**L1** is a female in her early 60s who has more than twenty years of experience in the teaching of English as a second language. She has taught in the EAC for ten years. She has taught literature both at secondary level and tertiary level. She holds a Bachelor of Education degree, her major being education. and during the time of data collection, she was a full-time employee of the University of Namibia.

**L2** is a female in her early 30s who has ten years of experience in the teaching of English as a second language. She has taught literature for approximately ten years at tertiary level and for three years at secondary level. She has taught in the EAC for five years. She holds a master's degree in English language studies, her major being linguistics and applied linguistics. She is a full-time employee of the University of Namibia.

The following themes are used as the basis for this data analysis.

1. Difficulties students have in reading literary texts.
2. Lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts.
3. Lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment
4. Effect of peer assessment on students' academic performance

## **Theme 1: Difficulties EAC students have in reading literary texts**

To address this theme, I asked participants to indicate the challenges EAC students face when reading literary texts. The following sub-themes emerged:

### **Sub-theme 1.1: Language barrier**

Language barrier surfaced as one of the difficulties some EAC students might face when reading literary texts. The following excerpt below points to that:

**L1** *“Some of them have language barriers. As a result, they will not or do not understand the texts very well. Some of them do not have a reading culture.”*

### **Sub-theme 1.2 Literary devices**

The lecture participants believed that lack of understanding of literary devices by some EAC students may also contribute to their struggle to understand literary text, as indicated in the following excerpt:

**L2** *“Knowing and use of literary devices to understand a literature text is a challenge to many students.”*

According to the lecturer participants, EAC students face language barriers with regard to understanding literary texts. Language barriers include challenges with difficult vocabulary, sentence comprehension and reading. English Access Course students may struggle to navigate these structures and understand the relationships between different parts of a sentence, leading to confusion and difficulty in grasping the intended meaning. Some students face challenges with regard to understanding of literary devices. It is interesting to note that some of the same sentiments are shared by the EAC students.

## **Theme 2: Lecturers’ attitude toward the teaching and learning of literary texts**

With regard to this theme, I asked the lecturers to state the advice they give students when the students encounter challenges when reading literary texts. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

### **Sub-theme 2.1 Development of reading habits**

The development of reading habits surfaced as one piece of advice that lecturer participants give their EAC students in an attempt to improve students’ comprehension of literary texts, as can be inferred in the following excerpts:

**L2** *“They should read more and form reading groups.”*

**L1** *“They should share what they have read.”*

**L2** *“They should try to reflect on what they have read.”*

According to the lecturer participants, students need to develop good reading habits so as to expose themselves to new words. Students also need to have a platform where they share what they have read and debate about it. This type of engagement may motivate students who do not like to read.

### **Sub-theme 2.2 Understanding literary devices**

In addition to recommending developing good reading habits, the lecturer participants also advise EAC students to learn to understand literary devices so as to overcome the challenges they face when reading literary texts. Here is the response:

*L2 “They must understand the meanings of literary devices and applications for them to be able to enjoy the art of literature.”*

Based on the theme concerning lecturers’ attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts, I asked the participants to express their views regarding the literature texts prescribed for the EAC. The following sub-themes emerged from the lecturers’ responses:

### **Sub-theme 2.3 Vocabulary**

Vocabulary surfaced in the lecturers’ responses, as can be inferred in the following excerpt:

*L1 “Some books are a bit challenging. E.g. vocabulary is more advanced. Some are based on a foreign culture which is not easy to be understood by our students.”*

According to the lecturer participants, literary works that use complex word choice often make it difficult for students to understand them, which ultimately prevents students from performing to the best of their abilities in the literature component.

### **Sub-theme 2.4 Recommended genre**

According to the lecturer participants, the literature works recommended for the EAC are satisfactory, as they contain all the necessary components that can be assessed, as well as encompassing the other skills and experiences that literature can provide.

*L2 “They are ok to an extend is it captures all there is about the teaching and learning of literature.”*

The lecturer participants acknowledged the presence of challenging, unfamiliar vocabulary found in literary texts which the EAC students find difficult to understand. Students may struggle to comprehend the meaning and context of these words, thus impacting their overall understanding of the text. Additionally, participants felt that the literary texts recommended for the EAC are appropriate because the play and novel allow the students to understand the different genres that exist in literature and learn how literary devices are used in the various genres.



Regarding the theme of lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts, I asked the lecturer participants to indicate whether they thought that there was a correlation between the EAC students' performance in literature and their overall performance in English. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

### **Sub-theme 2.5: Acquisition of language skills**

Acquisition of language skills surfaced in the lecturer participants' responses, as indicated in the excerpt below:

**L1** *“Yes, in literature students learn the four-language skills e.g. they write, listen, speak, and read. This helps them to use correct grammar.”*

**L2** *“Reading is a skill that is imperative for academic performance. If students cannot read, it is impossible for them to excel at other levels.”*

The lecturer participants agreed that there may be a relationship between the students' performance in literature and their overall performance in English as they gain practice in the four language skills, namely, reading, speaking, writing and listening, during the teaching and learning of literary texts. These language skills enable students to engage in meaningful communication, comprehend information, express ideas, and navigate various social and professional contexts. Developing proficiency in all four skills is crucial for effective language use and overall language competence.

To address the theme of lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts, I asked the lecturer participants to describe the teaching method they find effective in teaching literary texts. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

### **Sub-theme 2.6 Learner-centred approach**

The learner-centred approach surfaced as one of the most common teaching approaches the lecturer participants employed in their classrooms, as indicated in the following excerpts.

**L1** *“Learner centred approach. This is because the learners are made to be part of their learning. They contribute more compared to other methods.”*

**L2** *“Individual reading helps student to grasp the content and arguments in the text.”*

According to the lecturer participants, the learner-centred approach was the preferred method for teaching literary texts because learners are involved in their own learning. Learner-centred approaches promote collaborative learning environments where learners engage in meaningful interactions with their peers and teachers. Collaborative activities promote an exchange of ideas and the development of social skills. This collaborative aspect of learning helps learners develop communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills.

This is the end of my analysis of section A of the questionnaire. In the following section, I will present the lecturer participants' responses for Section B of the questionnaire, which deals with peer assessment, and I will analyse the lecturer participants' responses regarding their views on peer assessment as a teaching approach. The analysis will be based on themes and sub-themes.

### **Theme:3 Lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction**

To address this theme, I asked participants to express their views regarding peer assessment in a teaching and learning environment.

The lecturers' responses to this question were two-fold. First, they acknowledged that peer assessment is an effective teaching and learning strategy because it enhances collaborative learning among students, and students share ideas with one another and learn their mistakes. Second, the lecturer participants argued that although there are benefits of employing peer assessment in the teaching and learning environment, some students take peer assessment activities for granted.

#### **Sub-theme 3.1 Peer assessment promotes peer learning**

The lecturer participants' responses acknowledged the benefits of peer assessment in that it promotes peer learning, as pointed out in the following excerpts:

**L1** *"I think this is one of the best methods in order to correct one another's mistakes and learn more from others. As they say, two heads are better than one."*

**L2** *"This strategy is good because students are able to learn from one another's mistakes. They are also able to learn from the strengths of their peers."*

#### **Sub-theme 3.2 Student attitude**

Other responses from the lecturer participants' responses acknowledged that peer assessment may not serve its intended purposes if students do not perceive the benefits. Furthermore, some students do not enjoy the process of peer learning, and as a result, do not take peer assessment activities seriously but rather engage in them for the sake of the teacher. These views are illustrated in the following excerpts:

**L1** *"Some students don't like this type of learning. Whatever they might do, will be for the sake of pleasing the teacher."*

**L2** *"Students may not take the exercise seriously and thus use the time to engage in other activities."*

#### **Theme 4: Effect of peer assessment on the overall performance of the EAC students**

To address this theme, I asked lecturer participants to whether they believed that if peer assessment is used to teach literary texts, there should be an improvement in the performance of the EAC students in English. The following sub-themes emerged from their responses:

##### **Sub-theme 4.1 Improved content delivery**

Improvement in content delivery emerged in the lecturer participants' responses as one of the benefits of reading literary texts, as the following excerpts point out:

**L1** *"It makes me a better teacher and my students will improve on their performance having been taught the right way."*

**L2** *"A form of formative assessment that enable both students and teacher to establish what is learned and not."*

According to the lecturer participants, peer learning not only assists student learning, but the peer assessment process also helps teachers become aware of ways to improve their content delivery. Teachers have the opportunity to observe how students learn from one another, and through this observation, they can reflect on their own teaching strategies to achieve improved content delivery.

##### **Sub-theme 4.2 Improved learning strategies**

The lecturer participants believed that the teaching and learning of literary texts help improve students' learning strategies, as reflected in the following excerpt:

**L1** *"It enables students to assess their level of knowledge and find solutions to problems."*

According to the lecturer participants, peer assessment encourages students to reflect on their learning and assess how much they know about the assessed content. It is from this self-reflection that students will develop new learning strategies geared towards improved performance.

In this chapter, I have summarised the student and lecturer participants' views on the teaching and learning of literary texts, and most importantly, on the impact of the peer assessment approach in teaching and learning.

#### 4.14 Conclusion and Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I have presented and analysed the data that I collected from both the control group students and the experimental group students, and I have presented the quantitative analysis of the pre- and posttests. I have also presented the qualitative analysis of the data which I collected through the experimental group focus group interview, peer observation, lecturer observation and student and lecturer questionnaires. My data analysis was based on the following themes: students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts, difficulties students have in reading literary texts, students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment and the effect of peer assessment on students' performance. My analysis of the pretest results indicates that the performance of the control and experimental groups did not differ after the intervention of the treatment, which was peer assessment aided by role-play. However, the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group in the overall quantitative data analysis for the pre- and posttests.

My analysis of the data further reveals that both students and lecturers are aware of the benefits as well as the difficulties associated with reading literary texts. Based on the analysis of data in this chapter, I will present the discussion of my findings in the next chapter.



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## CHAPTER FIVE

### Discussion of findings

#### 1.1 Introduction

My study investigated a literature-based approach to teaching reading in the English Access Course (EAC) at the University of Namibia. The study is multifaceted in that its main aim is to propose a framework that facilitates the teaching of literature, while it also seeks to determine the relationship between the English Access Course students' performance in literature and their overall performance in English as a subject. Further, the study assesses the effectiveness of peer assessment in literature instruction. My investigation was prompted by the fact that a majority of EAC students perform poorly in literary texts, and the literature (see Chapter 2: Section 2.4) seems to suggest that the mode of delivery of the content, in addition to other factors associated with students and the content to be learned, may be one of the factors contributing to poor performance in English language skills; hence my choice of employing a different method, namely, teaching reading through literature. I wish to reiterate here that my study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What difficulties do EAC students have in reading literary texts?
2. What are the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction?
3. What is the effect of peer assessment on the overall performance of the EAC students in English?
4. What are the students' and lecturers' attitudes toward the teaching and learning of literary texts?
5. What type of framework could be employed to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts?

In the previous chapter, I analysed the findings of the study based on the data that I collected from students and lecturers in the EAC through pre- and posttests, focus group interviews, observation, and questionnaires. My study incorporates a mixed-methods design, which is supported by scholars such as Davies and Hughes (2014), Kumar (2014), Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Ivankova and Creswell (2009), who argue that using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches is beneficial in acquiring an in-depth understanding of a diverse range of points of view, perspectives and stances, and comprehending the link

between the variables being studied, such as in this case, the control and experimental groups. My having used multiple data collection tools is also supported by Mouton (2009) and Patton (2002), who postulate that using multiple data collection instruments allows the methods as well as the findings to complement each other, which ultimately balances the shortcomings of each method.

In light of the issues that I have articulated in previous sections, my discussion focuses on the key findings obtained from the research instruments described in Chapter 4, Section 4.3, Section 5.2, Section 6, and Section 7, and relates them to theories and concepts outlined and elaborated on in the literature review. In this chapter, I will first discuss the findings from the pre- and posttests results of the control and experimental groups. Next, I will discuss the findings that emerged from the observation of the role-play in which the experimental student participants participated, and lastly, I will combine the interview and questionnaire discussions in one narrative. I will discuss my findings in relation to the following themes that emerged from the data analysis.:

1. Difficulties English Access Course students have in reading literary texts.
2. Students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.
3. The effect of peer assessment on students' performance in English.
4. Students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts.

In the following section, I will discuss the findings that emerged from the performance of the control student participants and experimental student participants in the pre- and posttests, looking at each domain as presented in the test question paper (see the annexure chapter).

## **5.2 Pretest results**

As I alluded to in the methodology chapter (see Section 3.7.1), my intention in using the pretest was to assess the level of knowledge and abilities of my English Access Course students in literature before I exposed them to the intervention. The pretest served as a baseline to compare with the posttest results to determine the impact of the intervention. Further, the pretest would reveal knowledge gaps as well as misconceptions that students may have that we, as educators, need to rectify, amend, or foster. I therefore chose the pre-posttest design in order to determine whether the intervention of teaching literature through peer assessment with the aid of role-play would have a significant impact on the students' performance in English as a subject. Both

the control and the experimental groups were exposed to the same pretest in order to determine their initial level of comprehension skills, knowledge, and abilities in interpreting the literary text before the intervention.

As indicated in Chapter 4: Section 4.3 and 4.4, the pretest and posttests consisted of questions which assessed the student participants' understanding of the following domains: content information (D1), factual recall (D2), text comprehension (D3), interpretation of hidden meaning (D4), and analytical thinking (D5). I wish to point out here that although I analysed the performance of the control and experimental groups in each domain in the pre- and posttests, that analysis is not the main focus of my investigation. However, having included the domain analysis in my study has added depth and insight to my investigation.

In this discussion, the control group's pretest and posttest performance is compared with the experimental group's pretest and posttest performance. I begin with a discussion of the findings of the pretest results of the control and experimental groups before the intervention.

The student participants from both groups performed slightly better in questions that were content-specific. In the context of my study, content information (D1) questions asked for recall of information as well as basic comprehension. I expected the participants to perform well on this question because of the nature of the questions (see Chapter 4: Section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3), and the fact that the questions tested the participants' knowledge and understanding of the literary text. Surprisingly, however, both the control and experimental student participants did not perform as expected. I observed that the students could interpret content information (What...? Who...? and Mention...) but failed to interpret specific information about their overall understanding of the literary text.

My interpretation is that some of the better performances in this domain can be attributed to the fact that the questions were straightforward, non-ambiguous and fact specific. In addition, students are typically used to answering the *What...? Who...? and Mention...* questions. This means that they know what details to give and how to give them. On the other hand, with students who did not perform well in this domain, it could be because they simply lack the necessary information needed to answer such questions. This is a test where a student is expected to study the content for that particular subject in order to answer the questions correctly. If the student has not done so, there is a likelihood that he or she would not answer the questions correctly. A further factor worth noting is that although the *What...? or Who...?*

questions are generally perceived as being easy to answer, this may not necessarily be the case, and some students may find these types of questions difficult to answer.

With regard to factual information (D2) requiring true/false responses, both the control and experimental groups performed well in this question, with the control group doing best. Studies conducted by Treser (2015) and Pappas (2015) have shown that true/false questions are easier to answer because students generally guess the answers and because these questions somehow force the student to think of what was learnt in the class. Moreover, there are only two options, and they are simple, which makes it easier for the student to answer. These types of questions rarely require critical thinking or leave room for multiple interpretations. However, I still believe that true /false questions can also pose challenges to students depending on how they are structured, especially in contexts where they appear ambiguous.

The questions (D3) which asked about students' knowledge of literary devices were fairly well answered, with the experimental group leading by just one point. What is interesting about this type of question is that I did not expect the participants to perform well, since in the interviews and the questionnaires (see Chapter 4: Section 5.2 and Section 8, sub-subsection 2.2) they had complained of how difficult literary devices are. Comprehending literary devices can be difficult for students because they are generally complex, with abstract concepts, and considering that our students are not native speakers of English, coupled with their inadequate language skills, it can be challenging for them to understand the literary devices. Furthermore, literary devices must be understood in the context in which they are used. My students come from cultural backgrounds that have little or nothing in common with what is depicted in many of the literature works that are prescribed for them. This lack of cultural background knowledge regarding the contextual meaning of literary devices poses an additional challenge. Moreover, in addition to students being expected to acquire knowledge of terms such as metaphor, flashback, imagery, personification, or alliteration, they must also develop a comprehensive understanding of these concepts within their respective contexts.

It is against this background that I now understand the rationale behind the student participants' recommendation that the teaching of literature be delivered through visual media such as television (see Chapter 4: Sub-section 3.2). I thus believe that the relatively successful performance of both the control and experimental groups in D3 may be due to the fact that



these participants studied in preparation for the pretest, since understanding and identifying literary devices is a subject area that causes considerable anxiety.

On a different note, neither the control group nor the experimental group performed well in questions that asked about the interpretation of figurative expression (D4). I can attest to this, as the students I have had in my literature classes have always complained about the challenge they experience in interpreting such expressions. In their view, the expressions are difficult to understand because of their hidden or implied meaning. According to the hermeneutics theory, the reader needs to engage deeply with the text to discover the meaning that the figurative expressions are intended to convey (Gadamer, 1975). What is not clear, however, is the reason for this difficulty in understanding, since during literature lessons, students are given explanations of what figurative expressions mean in the context of the texts they read. I am therefore inclined to believe that students memorize the figurative expressions, a pedagogical approach that I often discourage because students may forget what they have memorized, and as a result, fail to understand the intended meaning conveyed by those figurative expressions. These students end up remembering only parts of the meanings of the figurative expressions, which in most cases distorts the intended meaning. What is interesting with regard to memorization is that scholars (Kweldju, 2015; Hoque, 2018) argue that there is nothing wrong with students memorizing the content because memorization facilitates students' comprehension of the material they are required to retain, thereby enhancing the students' abilities to effectively engage in the learning process. However, Hoque (2018) cautions that it is only certain things that can be memorized. I agree with Hoque, because although I sometimes discourage my students from memorizing content such as interpretation of figurative expressions, I do encourage them to memorize the plural and singular linking verbs of the subject pronouns. In this context, I encourage my students to memorize the concept of subject-verb agreement because my primary objective is to facilitate their comprehension and proficiency in this area.

With regard to D5, which deals with analytical thinking, the questions were moderately well answered, although the experimental group performed slightly better than the control group. Analytical thinking entails the student looking beyond what is provided in the question, and in some cases, making inferences between what is provided and what the student already knows. I believe that the students performed better in this question because they were also expected to draw their own conclusions from the text and support their opinions convincingly. Based on

my experience in the language classroom, this is one of the questions students usually attempt with confidence since these questions are less factual, and the only restriction students may have in answering analytical questions is the risk of veering off the topic. Otherwise, if they can convince the teacher with relevant, accurate and relatable information, they are on the right track with the answer.

The discussion presented above confirms a slight difference in performance between the control group and the experimental group in the pretest, where the experimental group performed slightly better than the control group. However, the fact that the control group and experimental group participants were randomly assigned to those groups is an indication that some participants in the experimental group may have been intrinsically motivated to excel in the pretest or that they already possessed the ability to learn and perform better from the start. I have so far presented my discussions of the findings of the control and experimental group participants' performances in the question domains of the pretest. In the following section, I will present the discussion of the findings of the control and experimental group participants' performances in the question domains of the posttest.

### **5.3 Posttest Results**

At this juncture, I must once again point out that before the posttest was administered to the control and experimental groups, the experimental group was exposed to the intervention after writing the pretest. In the context of my study, the intervention is the treatment I gave the experimental group to determine its potential in significantly influencing their learning outcomes. The intervention entailed the experimental group participants taking part in role-play and assessing their peers while the role-play was being performed. The aim of the peer assessment exercise was to ascertain whether the students would gain knowledge and skills from the feedback provided by their peers, with the goal of influencing their academic achievements in literature and English. In the following section, I will discuss the control and experimental groups' performances in the posttest.

The posttest performance of the control and experimental group participants in D1, content information, indicates that both groups made progress, although the experimental group performed better than the control group. I would suggest that the intervention or treatment to which the experimental group was subjected had a positive impact on their performance in this

particular domain of the test. On the other hand, the improvement in performance by the control group could be due to the practice effect, which entails the control group participants having studied and prepared for the test.

In the context of factual recall (D2), both the control group and experimental group performed very well. As alluded to in the preceding section, questions on factual information not only assess the participants' abilities to recall information but also how well the participants understand and interpret the information presented in the text. This, in my view, is an indication that the participants in both groups already possessed strong foundational knowledge of how to interpret factual questions. Although both groups had high pretest scores, the experimental group improved significantly after receiving the treatment. The experimental group's scores increased from 93.6% in the pretest to 98% in the posttest. This should be seen as an indication of the effectiveness of the intervention which resulted in the experimental group's enhanced performance.

Regarding the performance of the control group and experimental group in D3, text comprehension, both the control group and experimental groups' performance improved. However, the experimental group improved more significantly. In my opinion, this improvement, especially in the experimental group, could indicate that the intervention had a substantial impact on the students' attempt to understand the literary text by improving their understanding of literary devices. This observable improvement in the performance of the experimental group implies once again that the treatment or intervention had a positive impact on their performance in D3, text comprehension, compared to the control group, which did not receive the treatment.

With regard to the performance of the control and experimental groups in D4, interpretation of figurative expression, the student participants were assessed on how well they understand and make sense of non-literal expressions in language. The findings presented in Chapter 4 confirm that both the control and experimental groups showed slight improvement in their performance. (see Chapter 4: Sections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3). The control group's performance improved from 10% in the pretest to 10.9% in the posttest, whereas the experimental group's performance improved from 10.2% in the pretest to 12.1 in the posttest. I would like to point out here that despite the fact that the changes in performance are minimal, they are still noteworthy and statistically significant in the context of my study. The control group's pretest results indicate a limited

ability to accurately comprehend the given figurative expressions. On the other hand, their performance in the posttest increased marginally to 10.9%, suggesting a moderate improvement in their ability to understand and interpret figurative expressions. The slight improvement of the experimental group in the posttest signifies a more substantial improvement in their ability to interpret figurative expressions as compared to the control group. These results therefore indicate that the intervention given to the experimental group is effective in enhancing their skill of interpreting figurative expressions. I believe that the experimental group may have read through the figurative expressions as they were preparing for the role-play but failed to discuss them in detail to discover their interpretations. With regard to the control group, my interpretation is that the preparation for the test was carried out as usual. I have discovered that when students are preparing for tests, the majority of them study in isolation and struggle on their own to grasp the content they are learning, and this type of learning does not in any way enhance content learning, especially amidst challenges.

The performance of the control and experimental groups in D5, analytical skills, both groups improved in performance, with the experimental group having done better than the control group. Questions that assess students' analytical skills require the students to think critically and analyse information. I wish to point out once more that this is one of the questions, in addition to D1, which assessed content information, and D2, which assessed factual recall, where both the control and experimental groups performed well. My belief is that the control group studied for the test as usual because they did not receive any intervention, whereas the experimental group's performance may be attributed to the intervention because the questions relate to what they had role-played. This is an indication that experimental group participants could have made a connection between what they read and what they role-played, resulting in an improvement in the way they answered D5 questions in the posttest.

In this section, I have so far presented a discussion of the performance of the control and experimental group in the pretest before the intervention and in the posttest after the intervention. I have explored the performance of each group in each question as reflected in the tests and the possible causes of the poor and good performances of these groups in the pre- and posttests. The main aim of the t-tests was to assess whether there was a significant impact on the performance of the experimental group in the literary text when an intervention was applied for the purpose of improving the learning outcomes.



Based on the results derived from the analysis of the performances of the control group and the experimental group in each question in the pre- and posttests, as discussed in Chapter 4, I believe that the intervention given to the experimental group after the pretest had a significant impact on their improved performance in the posttest. In the next section, I will present a comparison of the t-test scores of the control and experimental groups without the intervention.

#### **5.4 Comparison of the t-test Scores of the Control and Experimental Groups Without the Intervention**

In reference to the findings of the t-test provided in Chapter 4: Section 4.5 under the comparison of the scores of the control and experimental groups' performance in literature without the intervention, the mean score for the experimental group was 68.82, with a standard deviation of 8.75. On the other hand, the control group had a mean score of 65.73 and a standard deviation of 10.91. The slightly higher mean score in the experimental group suggests a potential difference in literature performance, but the t-value of 1.421 indicates the magnitude of the difference between the means of the experimental and control groups. Since the p-value of 0.159 is higher than the commonly chosen significance level of 0.05 (5%), the statistical test does not provide enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). Therefore, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis and concludes that there is no statistically significant difference in the literary text performance scores between the experimental and control groups without the intervention. In my opinion, the experimental group and control group may have similar reading and interpretation abilities regarding literary texts, or the usual teaching approach that I have previously used to teach these groups literary text is not effective enough to have a substantial impact on the performance of the experimental and control groups in literature without the intervention.

Having so far presented the comparison of the t-test scores of the experimental and control groups without the intervention, I now wish to present the t-test scores of the comparison of the control and experimental groups' performance in literature with the intervention.

### **5.5 Comparison of the t-test scores of the control and experimental groups with the intervention**

In reference to the findings of the t-test provided in Chapter 4: Section 4.6 under the comparison of the scores of the control and experimental groups' performance in literature with the intervention, where the experimental group received the intervention and the control group did not, the mean score of the experimental group was 57.63, with a standard deviation of 14.08. In contrast, the control group had a mean score of 46.69 and a standard deviation of 12.75. The higher mean score in the experimental group suggests that the intervention might have had a positive effect on the experimental group's performance in processing the literary text. The independent t-test revealed a t-value of 3.721 with 81 degrees of freedom. Additionally, the p-value obtained was less than 0.001. This low p-value indicates that the difference in text comprehension scores between the experimental and control groups is unlikely to have occurred by chance alone, but rather, the significant t-value and low p-value provide strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). This finding implies that a low p-value serves as a strong indicator that the difference in performances of the control group and experimental group in text comprehension scores is not unlikely to be a result of random chance but rather an indication that there is a substantial significant difference between the two groups which is most likely to have been caused by the intervention. In other words, incorporating peer assessment as an intervention with the aid of role-play enhanced the experimental group's comprehension of the literary text, which ultimately improved these students' performance in the posttest.

At this juncture, I wish to emphasize that since there was an observable statistically significant impact of the intervention on the performance of the experimental group in the posttest, I strongly believe that incorporating peer assessment in the teaching of learning of literary texts can improve the English Access Course students' performance in literature and English.

In the preceding section, I presented the comparison of the scores of the experimental and control groups with and without the intervention in the pre- and posttests. In the section that follows, I will first present my discussion of the observation of the role-play carried out by the student participants, as well as myself as a non-participant observer. Second, I will present the findings of my study regarding the factors that make literary texts difficult to be understood by

EAC students. Third, I will present my findings on the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts. Fourth, I will present the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction, and finally, I will present the effects of peer assessment on the students' performance in English.

### **5.6 Observation of the Role-Play**

In this section, I will begin by stating the rationale behind the incorporation of role-play and peer assessment in my study before delving further into the discussions pertaining to these two central aspects of the study.

At this juncture, I will explain the inclusion of role-play through the lenses of the theories that underpin my study. Role-play aligns with the reader-response theory because of the emotional involvement that this theory advocates. When the student participants engage in their roles, they become active participants generating their responses and interpretations of the texts (Rosenblatt, 1938).

In the same vein, the hermeneutics theory centres around text interpretation, and during the role-play, the student participants engaged actively in interpreting the roles they played and making sense of the text. Lastly, since role-play is a collaborative activity, the cooperative theory aligns well with role-play as it facilitates the sharing of ideas between the students, which ultimately leads to students acquiring skills and knowledge through the exchange of ideas (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). The experimental group participants took part in a role-play which was aimed at promoting active participation as well as facilitating acquisition of skills and knowledge. I chose to use role-play in my study because it is a medium through which peer assessment could be carried out. Similarly, the purpose of the role-play was to further investigate whether the students could accurately assess each other's performances of the play, "The Oracle of Cidino", as depicted by the author. I hoped to determine whether role-play would help to improve the teaching of reading through literature because it is through role-play that students get to understand the characters, themes and setting, as well as the overall message of the literary text.

For students, reading and understanding literary texts can sometimes feel impossible, particularly when the text concerns a culture that students are not familiar with. In cases such as these, role-play can help students engage with the story in a more vivid and lasting manner

and experience real-life scenarios in a safe environment (Johnstone & Percival, 1976). In the end, not only does role-play enhance students' appreciation and understanding of literature, but it also makes it more than just a passive reading experience. It is this engagement, according to the reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938) that encourages students to appreciate and understand literature, which can lead to students acquiring text interpretation skills. Finally, I chose role-play because it involves learning by doing, and as a learning technique, it allows students to retain information better (McCarthy & Anderson, 2004).

During the role-play, while some of the student participants immersed themselves in the performance, the remaining students were observing and assessing how the others were performing. This is the part of my study that I refer to as peer assessment, the core element of my study, because it is the intervention that I used to determine whether it would have a significant impact on the content being learned. According to Falchikov (as cited in Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Moore & Teather, 2013; Price & Cutler, 1995), peer assessment can positively influence student learning. My decision to incorporate peer assessment in my study was based on my belief in its positive impact on student learning as well as on my belief that in a learning environment where peer learning or peer assessment takes place, students learn a great deal by explaining their ideas to others and consequently learning from each other (see Chapter 4: Section 2.2.2).

Moreover, peer assessment is also rooted in the cooperative and hermeneutics theories that support my study. According to the cooperative learning theory (Johnson & Johnson 1991), peer assessment entails interactions among students to achieve a common goal, and as a result, when students share ideas with their peers and receive feedback, they contribute to each other's acquisition of knowledge. Similarly, from the hermeneutics' point of view, as students engage in the peer assessment process, they keep interpreting and reinterpreting the content for better text comprehension (Gadamer, 1975).

Now that I have provided a background for selecting role-play and peer assessment in my study, in the section that follows, I will present the discussion pertaining to the observation that the student participants and I took part in.



### 5.6.1 Student Observation

The student participants revealed that despite having experienced some obstacles during the role-play, such as student absenteeism and memorization of the content, the performance was good. Some participants were absent during the role-play, and their absence affected the overall impact of the play on the observers, the content of the play and the players themselves because there was no teamwork. Teamwork or cooperative learning is a mode of learning that has been receiving attention because of its positive impact on student learning (Van Dat Tran, 2013). In role-play, the characters often depend on each other because of the dialogue that they act out, and if players are absent or forget their lines, it can become difficult for another player to remember what to say because the preceding player, who was supposed to give a cue for what the next player would say, has forgotten the lines. This can adversely impact the players' performances, which is what transpired in my study.

Although some studies applaud students who memorize content because it facilitates the acquisition of the content to be learned (Hoque, 2018; Kweldju, 2015), I believe that students need to know that the content to be memorized must be mastered completely; otherwise, it may lead to distorted meaning of content. It is for this reason that I affirm that since memorized content is often only partly retrievable, as in the case of the students who remembered only parts of what they had learnt or who forgot their lines, this can negatively affect the rest of the content as well as the context where that content is to be used.

The student participants further stated that some players did not seem to be ready, while others were confident. Despite these minor obstacles, participants felt that players who wore costumes brought the story to life and created a vivid picture of what was mentioned in the text. In essence, costumes helped participants immerse themselves more fully in their roles, as well as enabling them to identify the roles and characters being portrayed because they could clearly see and make mental connections between what was mentioned in the text with what they could actually see. This visual element added depth to the whole process. The story portrayed in "The Oracle of Cidino" takes place in the north-eastern part of Namibia, and the majority of the student participants who took part in my study hail from the northern part of the country., and there is quite a significant cultural difference between the two regions. However, with the aid

of costumes, the role-play participants had an opportunity to understand the cultural context portrayed in the book. Another important advantage of the use of costumes is that costumes facilitate the creation of a strong bond between the group members. Some of the student participants highlighted that role-play helped them work together as a team, which is the kind of collaborative learning that I hoped students would acknowledge, since students' acknowledgement of how role-play helps them work together as a team resonates with the cooperative learning theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). This collaborative effort not only enhances students' teamwork but also confirms that learning is a social process.

With reference to the observation guide that the student participants used, they assessed each other based on the following themes: players' response to the text, group performance, play themes and lessons learned. Regarding the question that asked about the players' response to the text, the aim was to assess whether the student observers could judge how well the players demonstrated text comprehension and how well they reacted to information presented in the text. While some players demonstrated a clear understanding of the text and responded appropriately, others displayed flaws in their attempt to convey text comprehension. Viewed through the lens of the hermeneutics theory, if players showed flaws during the role-play, this is an indication that they may have not engaged deeply enough with the text in order to understand, since the act of interpreting a text is complex and subject to multiple interpretations (Gadamer, 1975). In the same vein, where players demonstrated an understanding of the text, this could be because they engaged in a deeper interpretive dialogue with the text, which may have entailed their taking into consideration the context, historical background and cultural nuances embedded in the text (Gadamer, 1975). It is interesting to note that the student characters could identify the different ways the characters in the play book responded to the text, an indication that they participated immensely in the play.

With regard to the question that asked about the overall group performance, the observers were expected to indicate how well the players performed as a team. According to student observers, some group members lacked confidence, some were partially organized, and some wore costumes. These responses indicate how diverse the groups were in terms of physical appearance and their overall conduct during the role-play. The lack of confidence displayed by some of the players could mean that they were not comfortable with the role-play. For the players who demonstrated partial commitment to role-play, this behaviour could be attributed

to the fact that they may not have mastered the content to be depicted and thus displayed differing levels of text comprehension.

Finally, the players assessed whether the moral of the story for each theme was demonstrated. In Chapter 4, raw data from student observations for Act/Scene 1–5 (see Sections 6.1–6.5) indicated that all groups were seen as having demonstrated the underlying lesson behind each theme. In my view, this indicates that the role-play served its intended purpose of assisting students in comprehending the book. I also believe that this satisfactory demonstration of the participants' comprehension of the book could be attributed to the fact that active learning such as role-play helps students absorb and retain information better (McCarthy & Anderson 2004) as indicated in the literature review chapter (Section 2.8.2).

Furthermore, regarding the student observation for the question that asked about the themes in the play, as indicated in my data analysis chapter (see Section 6, Sub-section 6.1 – 6.5), although some students stated '*Theme not well demonstrated*', my interpretation of this comment is that this perception could be attributed to the issue I alluded to earlier in this paragraph, namely that students who were absent or forgot their lines affected not only the overall performance of the role-play but also how the observers interpreted the players' performance.

I must also highlight here that my overall interpretation of the students' observation on their peers, which I refer to as peer assessment, is positive, because the participants were able to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the performances of their peers. This is an indication of how actively and enthusiastically the student participants participated in the assessment process, which is a fundamental aspect of peer assessment. It is therefore evident that the peer assessment was carried out effectively, and that the students were able to offer valuable feedback to one another.

Now that I have discussed the observation findings the experimental group participants carried out on their peers for the purposes of peer assessment, in the following section, I will present a discussion based on the observation I made of the experimental participants as a non-participant observer.

## 5.6.2 My Observation

In this section, I present a discussion of the observation that I carried out on the experimental group participants who took part in the role-play. My main aim in being a non-participant observer was to collect objective and reliable data about the student participants' interaction with each other during the role-play. Based on my data analysis as presented in Chapter 4 (see Sections 7.1–7.5) my overall interpretation of the experimental group's performance in the role-play is positive. Most of the groups performed well. The inclusion of costumes and the effect of realia contributed to the good performances. My observation regarding players who forgot their lines concurred with the students' view that these players impacted the overall performance of their group's performance (see the earlier discussion of the students' observation). The opposite is also true, as those group members who worked together gave a good performance. I also observed that some players were absent for reasons such as lack of money for transport to the venue, and some students simply opted not to attend the role-play. According to Johnson and Johnson (1991), who are proponents of the cooperative learning theory, students who did not take part in the play lacked what they refer to as positive interdependence. These students failed to understand that the group can only succeed if each member contributes, despite their distinct roles. Johnson and Johnson (1991), through their other guidelines on cooperative learning, namely interpersonal and small group skills, also warn that students placed in groups are merely students, not collaborators, because in their minds, teachers are their primary source of knowledge; therefore, it may take time for these students to recognize that they are crucial to the learning process. I find this argument interesting as it concurs with what the student participants expressed about their attitudes towards peer assessment. The students argued that students who assess others lack assessment skills. As a result, they do not trust the assessors. I therefore also conclude here that students chose to be absent and not take part in the role-play because they do not see their peers as sources of knowledge. Vygotsky (1978), in his sociocultural theory, postulates that for any form of learning to take place, there must be interaction between individuals, and based on this, I believe that with students who did not turn up for the role-play, their understanding of the literary text may have been compromised.

In the above presentation, I discussed my observation as a non-participant observer. In the following section, I will present a discussion of the factors that make literary texts difficult for EAC students to understand.



## **5.7 Factors that make literary texts difficult for EAC students to understand**

My discussion in this section considers the factors that emerged from the student interviews and the students' and lecturers' questionnaires, as well as the literature that I reviewed in Chapter 2. There are several factors that appear to contribute to difficulty in reading literary texts, and I believe that if educators were aware of these factors, their awareness would help contribute to improved delivery of content in literary texts that may benefit both the students and the educators.

### **5.7.1 Vocabulary**

Both the lecturers and student participants shared the same sentiment that difficult vocabulary is a challenge to students. Vocabulary is an essential component of reading comprehension, particularly when it comes to comprehending and analysing text, and a reader therefore needs to be familiar with as many words as possible to avoid comprehension difficulties. Readers who are less proficient in the language or who possess limited vocabulary usually experience serious challenges when it comes to text comprehension. They struggle to decipher the simplest words, and to understand the context in which a word is used, and as a result, the readers become frustrated and less motivated to read the text further. Sometimes, during the reading process, because of the presence of unfamiliar or difficult vocabulary, readers may misinterpret the author's intended message, which ultimately leads to their drawing wrong conclusions about the text. Gadamer (1975), through the lens of the hermeneutics theory, emphasizes that when the reader is confronted with difficult vocabulary, he or she needs to engage in the process of understanding the context, which can lead to multiple interpretations of the meanings of the words.

The students' responses in the focus group interview revealed that while they were preparing for the role-play, they had encountered several unfamiliar words in the book. My belief is that any reading text that contains unfamiliar words can pose a challenge for the reader to fully comprehend that text is supported by Simataa and Nyathi (2016), who argue that students need to know a wide range of vocabulary to comprehend the meaning of any work. Our EAC students come from educational backgrounds of little or no exposure to literary texts, and when faced with difficult words, they not only do they struggle to comprehend the literary texts but they also fail to retain the information contained in those texts. Students' inability to comprehend information or their failure to retain information resonates with both the

hermeneutics and the reader-response theory in that students experience these problems because of the dynamic nature of text interpretation and the role of the reader in shaping their understanding of the text. This is an indication that reading is not a passive process but a complex interaction between the reader and the text where both comprehension and retention are influenced by the reader's own perspective and experiences (Gadamer, 1975; Rosenblatt, 1938).

In reference to my data analysis in Chapter 4 (see Section 8, sub-section 2.3), the lecturer participants also expressed the view that although literary texts enhance students' vocabulary development, most literary texts contain too many difficult words that hinder students' text comprehension, which in turn affect the students' performance in the literature component, as in the context of the EAC. The lecturer participants indicated, however, that despite all the unfamiliar words, the recommended literary genre in the EAC is appropriate for the students as it has all the necessary components that can be assessed in addition to other skills and experiences that literature provides. The lecturer participants recommended that since vocabulary is one of the most frequently discussed factors affecting literary text comprehension or any text comprehension in general, students need to develop reading habits and read a variety of books so as to be exposed to different kinds of words in different contexts. This resonates with the hermeneutics notion that reading a variety of books fosters a connection between the reader's prior knowledge and the text's context (Gadamer, 1975). The constructivist theory likewise supports exposing students to a variety of reading materials as this promotes word familiarity through interaction with different texts (Vygotsky, 1978).

### **5.7.2 Figurative language**

In addition to difficult vocabulary, figurative expressions can also pose a challenge to students, and my analysis of data (see Chapter 4: Section 5.2, sub-section 1.3) affirmed that the use of figurative expressions is problematic to students because of the hidden meanings that they are designed to convey. Students like those in our EAC are already not able to express themselves fluently in the English language nor read to comprehend. As part of literary text analysis, students are expected to interpret the figurative expressions used by authors in literary texts because these help the reader to create mental images as the events and characters unfold in the book. They bring some sort of realia to the reader. However, if students encounter figurative expressions in literary texts, these expressions can further hinder their comprehension.

In the context of my study, some of my EAC students are studying literature for the first time, and some have not studied it at secondary level, which means they are not familiar with English idiomatic or figurative expressions and their meanings. These same students are also not very familiar with the cultural context of a text. Because figurative expressions are based on context, if the context does not provide the reader with sufficient background information to draw from, this lack of context will potentially affect the reader's comprehension.

Another factor associated with the challenges of interpreting figurative expressions is the fact that these do not require literal interpretation, and one mistake that most students make is in not trying to understand the expression beyond how it is presented. Students who do not read between the lines of these expressions end up misinterpreting the intended meanings that the figurative expressions are intended to convey. Furthermore, figurative expressions can allow for multiple interpretations, and in order to interpret the expression, the context should be taken into consideration. With that being said, I wish to add that the integration of figurative expressions in education is beneficial to students' development of critical thinking skills because the expressions are intended to draw the readers' interests and convey thoughts and imagery in a more enjoyable manner (Raisa, 2017). However, for the text to be understood, students need to understand the language beyond basic vocabulary and grammar. I therefore argue here that awareness of the challenges posed by figurative expressions on the part of both students and lecturers should serve as a starting point for a change in literature delivery methods.

### **5.7.3 Early Exposure to Literature**

Lack of early exposure to literature in schools was also a factor that emerged in my data analysis (see Chapter 4: Section 7, sub-section 2.1). One of the proponents of the constructivist theory, Vygotsky, emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge as it shapes an individual's cognitive development for future reflections and inferences (Vygotsky, 1978). In the student respondents' view, schools should provide compulsory literature lessons for students to get early exposure to literary texts before they enter universities. I believe that the students hold this view because of how difficult it has become for them to cope in literature classes when they have no literature background knowledge to build on. Early literary exposure to literature provides students with a solid foundation for understanding increasingly challenging literary works as they advance in their academic journey. Furthermore, this exposure facilitates crucial reading skills, expands students' perspectives, and fosters a sincere appreciation for the

aesthetic effects of language in all its literary forms. Aesthetic effects derived from reading are essential because they place emphasis on readers, encouraging them to immerse themselves in the material they are reading and to take pleasure in the act of reading (Graves, Graves & Dewitz, 2011). This, in my view, can only be appreciated by the reader if they understand the beauty of literature through early exposure.

Early exposure to literature provides a strong foundation for young learners and adults to develop strong reading comprehension skills. It is through literature that students acquire new words and learn how they are used in context. My analysis of data confirmed this (see Chapter 4: Section 7). I would also like to refer to what I stated earlier in this chapter (see Section 5.6.2), namely, that some of my EAC students are doing literature for the first time, so they have not been exposed to literature and all its components. This is therefore a clear indication of how early exposure is necessary. Another benefit of early exposure to literature is the development of language skills, including critical thinking skills, reading skills and also a love of reading (see Chapter 4: Section 3.3).

#### **5.7.4 Literary Devices**

In discussing literary devices as a contributing factor making comprehension of literary texts difficult, a distinction needs to be made between what a literary device is and what a figurative expression is. For the purposes of my study, literary devices can also mean figurative language and figurative expressions can also mean idioms. Literary devices and figurative expressions have in common the fact that they convey hidden meaning. A figurative expression is the use of words in a non-literal way to add depth, imagery or emotional impact to what is being communicated in the literary text, while literary devices are literary techniques or tools that writers use to bring literature to life, and among these techniques is the use of figurative expressions. I would also like to express a precaution arising from my data analysis concerning the way the student participants used the term ‘figurative language’. In the context of my study, the students used the term “figurative language” to mean figurative expressions rather than literary devices (see Chapter 4: Section 1.3).

Although literary devices enhance literary text, help improve students’ critical thinking skills, help improve students’ ability to analyse text or appreciate a text or help elicit emotional



responses from readers and help readers connect on a deeper level with the content, they can equally pose a challenge that may hinder students' literary text comprehension. This is because they are complex and not everyone understands their literal meaning because they need to be interpreted in context. Interpreting a text in context is a challenging process because firstly, it involves cognitive adjustments where the reader is expected to construct meaning based on prior knowledge (Piaget, 1957). Secondly, it involves a dialogical engagement with the text where the reader must bridge the gap between biases in the text and the content of the text (Gadamer, 1975). Lastly, it involves the personal response of the reader where the reader must reconcile their personal responses with the text context, which may elicit multiple reactions (Rosenblatt, 1938). Similarly, literary devices make literary texts difficult because students fail to identify them or understand how to use them in sentences (see Chapter 4: Section 2.2). For the students to appreciate the value of literature, educators need to help students overcome the challenges associated with comprehension as well as interpretation of literary texts.

### **5.7.5 Reading Skills**

The analysis of data (see Chapter 4: Section 7: Sub-section 2.5) reveals that the reading process is a matter of concern among the students in the EAC due to their lack of reading proficiency and inadequate utilisation of reading techniques. According to Bharuthram (2006), students enter universities with insufficient reading exposure and skills. The student participants argued that their inability to read and use reading strategies were some of the factors that contributed to their lack of understanding of literary texts. Most students may be capable of basic reading, but university students must read extensively (Reis, 2019). They must possess the requisite skills to engage in reading, absorb the content and effectively interpret the texts. In order to comprehend written content, the reader must possess the necessary knowledge and skills to decode the words. Additionally, the reader must be familiar with the specific reading strategies and techniques required to effectively engage with different types of texts, which may involve considerations such as reading speed and accuracy. For effective communication to occur between the reader and the text, it is important that the reader can not only read multiple texts, but also comprehend them. The process of communication facilitates understanding and interpretation, requiring readers to engage in critical thinking and textual analysis to discern the intended message of the author. In order to foster the acquisition of proficient reading abilities, it is important that students are provided with many opportunities to engage with a diverse range of textual materials. Engaging in consistent reading practises, coupled with

deliberate actions to strengthen comprehension and critical thinking skills, may greatly enhance students' reading proficiency. I must also mention here that students revealed that not all of them appreciate reading literary texts; some would prefer to view PowerPoint or film presentations of texts to visualize the texts' action for better text comprehension (see Chapter 4: Section 7: Subsection 2.5).

### **5.7.6 Teacher and Student Attitudes**

One intriguing feature identified by the student participants in my study, which they perceive as adding to the difficulty of literary texts, is that of the attitudes of both teachers and students. I will first discuss the teacher factor, and thereafter, the student factor.

My data analysis reveals that teachers do not actively engage in efforts to ensure that students comprehend literary texts (see Chapter 4 Section 7: Sub-section 2.6). Based on the students' arguments, there are teachers who are aware of the challenges students face in their attempt to comprehend literary work, yet these teachers persist in employing the same instructional approaches to address these issues as they have traditionally done. Regarding this notion, the constructivist view argues that if a teaching approach does not align with the students' cognitive abilities to construct meaning, it may result in ineffective teaching and learning outcomes. Therefore, educators need to adapt their methods to better match the students' needs and promote more meaningful and constructive learning experiences (Piaget, 1957). I must therefore reiterate here that this is the primary reason why I decided to conduct this study, i.e. to at least determine whether peer assessment as a strategy for teaching reading through literature could enhance students' comprehension of literary texts. As I alluded to earlier in the literature review chapter, students who acquire knowledge through cooperative education have better intellectual, interpersonal, emotional, and mental abilities than students who are taught through traditional methods (Johnson & Johnson, 2018). Similarly, in a cooperative learning environment students learn efficiently from each other because they are allowed to debate knowledge or practice abilities that were initially provided by the teacher. This has been suggested as an alternative to a wide range of instructional issues (Slavin, 2014).

With regard to the student factor, the student respondents highlighted that the students' attitudes cause them to find literary texts difficult to understand (see Chapter 4: Section 7). Students with negative attitudes towards literary texts do not take the reading process seriously,

and when they do read the books, they do it to please the teacher. I also believe that students who are less motivated, especially intrinsically, always struggle with the content to be learnt because they lack the inner drive to carry out the task. Van (2009) argues that it is for reasons such as these that students' schemata need to be activated when reading literature as it promotes student motivation and participation. In addition, addressing students' negative attitudes towards reading requires educators to enhance students' self-efficacy as well as intrinsic motivation, as I alluded to earlier (Bandura, 1986). Educators can influence this behavioural change in students by creating a supportive reading environment that is less intimidating and that aligns with the students' needs and interests. As discussed in the literature review chapter, students' lack of interest in the content or subject matter may reduce their focus and comprehension (Padurean, 2015).

It is against this background that motivation and interest in the subject matter must be created for a positive and productive learning experience. These factors can be utilized by teachers to foster a passion for learning, promote curiosity, and assist students in attaining their maximum potential. Students are more likely to become committed learners and develop a deeper understanding of the subjects they study if learning is engaging, pertinent, and meaningful.

### **5.7.7 Language barrier**

My analysis of data confirms that the language barrier was also mentioned by both the students and lecturers to be a contributing factor in literary text difficulty (see Chapter 4: Section 6.1). Reading English texts has never been an easy task for non-native speakers like my students, despite the fact that all of my students have studied English at primary, secondary and tertiary level. The most widely acknowledged language barrier in literary text comprehension is difficult vocabulary, which seems to feature more in literary texts. Limited knowledge of vocabulary can pose a challenge in the reading of literary texts that contain complex and unfamiliar words. Students may struggle to comprehend the meaning and context of these words, impacting their overall understanding of the text. Also associated with a language barrier is sentence construction, especially in interpreting the author's intended message. The hermeneutic view argues that in instances where the reader fails to interpret the author's intended meaning, there could be challenges in the reader's dialogue with the text, which results in multiple interpretations (Gadamer, 1975). Poor language proficiency also impacts negatively on student learning. It creates a communication breakdown if students cannot

understand what they read or hear because, to a certain extent, their language proficiency is inadequate.

Although my presentation in the previous paragraphs centred around the factors that make literary texts difficult, we must nevertheless not lose sight of the overall aim in incorporating literary texts in our language classrooms. It is therefore up to us to find mechanisms that we can use to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts so that literature can serve its intended purpose of equipping our students with knowledge, critical thinking skills, increased vocabulary, analytical skills, problem-solving skills and inferencing skills.

Having so far presented the factors that make literary texts difficult for EAC students to understand, in the next section, I wish to present my findings on the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts.

## **5.8 Students and Lecturers' Attitudes Towards the Teaching and Learning of Literary Texts**

Regarding the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts, I asked this question to determine how the students and lecturers perceive the inclusion of literary texts in their teaching and learning curriculum. The students' and lecturers' responses showed that there are various views (see Chapter 4: Section 7) that support the teaching and learning of literary texts.

### **5.8.1 Acquisition of Language Skills**

My analysis of data (see Chapter 4: Section 8, sub-section 2.5) confirms that the lecturer participants displayed positive attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts because it results in students acquiring language skills. In their view, the students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills improve, which ultimately contributes to their improved performance in examinations and tests. When students acquire these skills, they develop the ability to engage in meaningful communication, especially written and spoken.

Similarly, as I alluded to in Chapter 4 (see Section 6: sub-section 2.5) the lecturer participants believed that developing proficiency in the four language skills is crucial for effective language use and overall language competence. Furthermore, in support of the theory that reading of literary texts leads to the acquisition of language skills, Simataa & Nyathi (2016), Povey (1972)



and Khatib (2011), confirm that studying literature facilitates the growth and enhancement of all language skills. This confirms the relevance of the literature component in the English courses. It is important to note that the four language skills are essential in any language classroom because they are interrelated. Students with strong listening abilities become efficient in speaking, students with extensive reading skills improve their vocabulary development, and those with good writing skills demonstrate good language usage. Therefore, language learners benefit significantly from a teaching approach that develops all four skills.

### **5.8.2 Pleasure**

My analysis of data confirms that although the student participants acknowledged the presence of difficult or unknown vocabulary in literary texts, they also took cognizance of the fact that literature exists to provide pleasure to readers (see Chapter 4: Section 7). The students enjoyed reading literary texts because the texts made them happy and improved their moods (see Chapter 4: Section 7). Also, the issues and insights that I covered in my literature review concur with the students' views in that some readers find pleasure in pausing as they read to allow their own experiences to interact with those described in the text or to create a clearer picture of characters and events (Holland,1975). This pleasure enables the readers to become immersed in the book as they try to make sense of what they are reading. This type of pleasure is what Rosenblatt (1977) refers to as aesthetic reading. Aesthetic reading is a source of pleasure, and in the context of the reader-response theory, it emphasizes that the act of reading goes beyond comprehension and is a personal and emotional experience that brings joy and satisfaction to the reader (Rosenblatt, (1938). Rosenblatt argues that the purpose of writing literature is to provide readers with an aesthetic experience that allows them to appreciate the beauty of well-crafted sentences and descriptive passages. Furthermore, the pleasure that results from reading literary writings allows readers to relate to the characters' emotions and experiences. This emotional connection can result in catharsis, empathy, and a greater understanding of human nature. Likewise, when reading literary fiction, the reader is able to experience a different form of reality than that they are accustomed to, providing an imaginary escape that may be both enjoyable and rewarding at the same time.

### **5.8.3 Vocabulary Acquisition**

I find it ironic that students find literary texts difficult to comprehend because of difficult words that the authors use to convey messages, but at the same time, they enjoy reading literary texts because they get to improve their vocabulary (see Chapter 4: Section 7: subsection 1.1). Students are aware that word knowledge improves their language abilities, including reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Students with a low level of vocabulary knowledge will have poor comprehension abilities in other subjects because their study skills are hampered. Vocabulary is a crucial factor in reading comprehension, and if students struggle to understand words used in a text, this lack of understanding can affect their comprehension. In the literature review for this study, it was noted that students who engage in reading literary works demonstrate enhanced understanding of words, better reading comprehension and better communication abilities (Collie & Slater, 1987; Frantzen, 2002; Ihejirika, 2014; Lombardi, 2021).

The wealth of vocabulary found in literature helps readers improve their writing skills by allowing them to practice composing different types of sentences and learning new methods of connecting ideas. Simataa and Nyathi (2016) reiterate that for this reason, students need to have a knowledge of a wide range of words in order to comprehend the meaning of any work. In the same vein, the lecturers indicated that through reading literary texts, students improve their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. These four skills are essential for effective communication and language proficiency. Each skill plays an essential role in various aspects of language acquisition and communication, and they are interdependent and mutually supportive.

In contrast to this argument, the student participants felt that although understanding of literary texts may lead to improvement in language skills and grammar, in the context of the EAC, a student needs to perform well in all the functional language areas such as speaking, reading, writing, listening and grammar that are offered in the EAC. However, it is my view that when students understand and can interpret a literary text, this understanding enhances their improvement in those language skills, which ultimately may improve their performance in English as a subject.

#### **5.8.4 Tests and Examinations**

Further analysis of data (see Chapter 4: Section 3) confirms that the student participants acknowledged that understanding of literary texts may improve their performance in tests or examinations. Some student participants argued that comprehension of literary texts helps them answer questions better because their imagination and thinking abilities have improved. However, some students disagreed with this argument, stating that it does not matter how much one understands in a literary text, how well one can argue, or how well one can interpret or analyse the literary text, because if a student is unable to answer the question asked in an examination or test, that student's performance in that subject area will be affected negatively. I find this argument interesting, because we learn from the students that in providing the correct answer to a question, it is not always about one's knowledge of the content but about how well one understands the question. This is therefore a call for educators to train students on how to interpret and answer questions.

#### **5.8.5 Cultural Awareness**

Increased cultural awareness emerged from my data analysis as a benefit of reading literary texts (see Chapter 4: Section: 7; sub-section 1.3). The student participants believed that it is through reading literary texts that the reader appreciates the different ways of life that exist, and therefore literature can be seen as a beneficial tool for developing students' cultural awareness. Cultural awareness as a benefit of literature aligns well with the principles of the reader-response theory because that theory posits that readers play an active role in responding to, interpreting and appreciating cultural diversity (Rosenblatt, 1938). As discussed in the literature review chapter, Hişmanoğlu (2005) argues that literature is not only an instructional method for improving students' proficiency in writing and spoken skills in the language to be learnt but also provides insights into the culture associated with the target language, allowing students to gain cultural competence. However, I believe that for readers to understand the culture depicted in the book and to make comparisons with their own culture, they need to explore how characters are portrayed, how they relate to one another in the book, and how the themes, plots and other literary techniques are used in the text. In addition, readers need to read literary books with an open mind where they acknowledge that their interpretation can be biased or subjective, or that their interpretation may be influenced by their own cultural background. Since the world is becoming more globalised, and in education, many classes are becoming more multi-ethnic, the notion of culture is an essential aspect of the language

classroom (Salih, 2017), and what better way to create cultural awareness than by incorporating literature in the language classroom.

### **5.8.6 Life Experience**

The data also confirms (see Chapter 4: Section 7) that the student participants felt good about reading literary texts because they learn about real life experiences. I believe that literature offers a vast array of life experiences that readers can learn from, providing insights into the complexities of human existence, emotions, relationships, and the world around us. Literature also enables readers to step into the shoes of characters with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of different perspectives and obstacles.

During the role-play sessions, I observed this kind of response. As the experimental group students attempted to represent the characters, student players displayed emotions of anger, happiness, and sorrow. Equally interesting was that during the book discussion with the participants in the control group, they debated how unfairly the chief (a character in the book) judged several of his subjects (other characters). This shows that literature can open the reader's eyes to social injustice, discrimination, and inequality issues. Students can learn to become advocates for change or for justice for all through this experience. Similarly, the imaginative use of language in literature encourages readers to experiment with new methods of expressing themselves and communicating their thoughts and emotions about life experiences.

One of the questions I asked the participants in the focus group interview was to highlight what they had learnt from the book. Responses encompassed aspects such as unfair practices affecting those with a low status in society, or that people can be deceptive because what is really intended is never revealed, as well as the types of social relationships that people have with each other and how leaders make decisions based on what suits them while neglecting the communities that elected them to power.

These responses can be seen as testimony to the educative power and potential of reading literature. I believe that this is what Rosenblatt (1977) posits as readers reading aesthetically to become emotionally involved in the text and reading efferently to retain information for learning purposes.



Finally, the constructivist theory postulates that reading a book is an active and personal process through which readers construct meaning and gain life experiences. Viewed through the lens of this theory, the reader's life experiences derived from a book are individualized and can have a significant impact on their comprehension of the world and themselves (Vygotsky, 1978).

The discussion presented in the previous paragraphs reflects the views of the students and lecturer participants pertaining to the teaching and learning of literary texts. In the following section, I will present a discussion of the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.

### **5.9 Students and Lecturers' Attitudes Towards Peer Assessment During Literature Instruction**

The purpose of this question was to find out how the students and lecturer participants perceived peer assessment in their literature lessons. With reference to the definition provided in the literature review chapter (see Chapter 2: Section 2.11.1), peer assessment refers to an assessment of the learner by his or her peers and can serve as a beneficial mechanism for learners to engage actively in the learning process, both their own and that of others (Geysler, 2004).

The literature further indicates that peer assessment involves students providing feedback on their fellow students' work that follows a shared set of criteria for the assignment (Rousseau, 2018). I wanted to determine how the student participants viewed peer assessment, because in the context of my study peer assessment is intended to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts by the students themselves. The aim was therefore to find out whether they enjoy engaging in peer assessment activities. Equally so, my aim in exploring the lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment in their literature classroom was to determine whether the lecturers valued peer assessment as a contributing factor to students' acquisition of the content to be learnt.

At this juncture, I would like to point out that there were some students who felt strongly about peer assessment and others with whom it did not sit well. What is interesting to note in this like and dislike of peer assessment is that the views against it outweighed the views in support of it. This discrepancy in the students' attitudes towards peer assessment serves as an indication that if any form of assessment is poorly designed, it can compromise the beneficial attributes of an essential learning and instruction tool (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999). That is why it is important for educators to make sure that any form of assessment is used meaningfully and for the right purposes, as assessment contributes to a comprehensive and effective educational experience for all students.

I will now present a discussion of both the control and experimental group participants' views that supported peer assessment based on the themes that surfaced in my data analysis (see Chapter 4, section 4.1). This discussion also includes the lecturers' views regarding peer assessment.

### **5.9.1 Students Views in Support of Peer Assessment**

#### **5.9.1.1 Peer Assessment Promotes Peer Learning**

In reference to the definition presented in the literature review chapter (see Section: 2.10.1) peer learning is “the use of teaching and learning strategies in which students learn with and from each other without the immediate intervention of the teacher” (Boud, Cohen & Sampson 1999, p. 413). Participants in the control group, the experimental group and the lecturer group felt that peer assessment promotes cooperative learning or peer learning among students because the mistakes highlighted by peers are not so easily forgotten, and that leads to learning. This revelation by the students strongly supports the sentiments expressed by Boud (2001), as indicated in the literature review chapter, who argues that we continue to learn from one another every day of our lives, and in particular, students gain a lot from expressing ideas to one another when participating in peer-to-peer learning activities.

The student participants in favour of peer assessment may have felt this way because peer learning places a higher importance on collaboration rather than on competition and results in deeper respect for the participants' diverse experiences and backgrounds (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999). Many students dislike learning that is centred around competition as they

would rather learn from each other harmoniously. This view is strongly supported by the cooperative learning theory advocates, who argue that cooperative learning environments are designed to offer positive dependence (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991), facilitate shared goals and mutual support (Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Stevens & Slavin, 1995), and entail students learning from each other (Vygotsky, 1978), all in the name of non-competitive environments. The student participants in my study stated that in any class, there are clever learners, and during peer assessment activities, less clever learners learn from clever ones as they assess each other (see Chapter 4: Section 4.1).

By the same token, student assessors usually correct wrong answers by writing them down on the scripts they are marking. This exercise makes it easier for the corrected student to go back to the marked paper, because the correct answer is there. Through this kind of assessment, the assessed student discovers where his or her problems with the content to be learned lies. It is for reasons such as this that cooperative learning groups facilitate effective learning between students as well as from the educator, which results in improved academic achievement. Furthermore, as indicated in the literature review chapter, Johnson and Johnson (1990) postulate that during cooperative learning, students collaborate in order to optimize learning. Similarly, with regard to peer learning, students cooperate to accomplish a task that allows them to develop their problem-solving skills, engage in self-reflection, and progress to the next phase of their learning (Sardareh & Saad, 2012). Therefore, both peer learning and cooperative learning align with the constructivist principles of learning, which emphasize the importance of actively constructing knowledge through interactions and experiences.

#### **5.9.1.2 Peer Assessment Promotes Motivation**

In Chapter 2, I referred to Slavin, Hurley and Chamberline (2003), who highlight motivation as one of the key theoretical approaches associated with the achievement of cooperative learning. However, Gardner (1992) and Robin and Oxford (1992) caution that students' levels of motivation may be measured by how often the students use L2 learning strategies. Therefore, educators need to create as many learning opportunities as possible where students get a chance to understand the content better through various teaching approaches.

This view is commensurate with my attempt to teach the EAC students reading through literature with the aid of peer assessment for the purpose of creating student-to-student learning. The participant groups indicated that peer assessment promotes motivation. Their argument was that peer motivation can greatly improve student learning because students look up to each other and whatever positive comments they receive from their peers has an influence on how they move forward with their learning. Motivation plays a crucial role in learning and education because it provides an engaging learning environment where students learn from one another and encourage and inspire one another to attain their academic and personal potential. I have now presented the control and experimental groups' views that support the incorporation of peer assessment in the teaching and learning of literary texts. I must re-emphasize here that both the control and experimental groups, as well as the lecturer participants, shared the same sentiments regarding the notion that peer assessment promotes peer learning and peer motivation.

It is important to note that these are the only favourable responses that emerged from the control and experimental groups, and the only positive views aired by the lectures regarding the theme of the students and lectures' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction, as revealed in Chapter 4: Sections 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

In the section that follows, I wish to discuss the control and experimental groups' views that did not support the incorporation of peer assessment in the teaching and learning of literary texts despite the numerous benefits associated with this, as revealed in the literature review chapter (Alzaid, 2017; Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999; Gravette & Geysler, 2004; McGarrigle, 2013). The student participants expressed reservations about the overall effectiveness of peer assessment on their learning, and in particular, their self-confidence and relationships with other students. I now wish to present a discussion of the student views that oppose peer assessment.

## **5.8.2 Students' Views Opposing Peer Assessment**

### **5.8.2.1 Peer Assessment Induces Jealousy**

When students participate in commenting on the work of others, it increases their capacity for making intellectual choices and judgements. In the same vein, when students receive peers' comments, it allows them to gain diverse perspectives regarding their own work, thereby



promoting and improving students' learning (Alzaid, 2017). It is the latter part of this argument that the student participants did not seem to agree with. Not all student assessors were happy with each other's performances, especially those that performed well. The students referred to this negative attitude as jealousy. From my perspective, I would refer to this kind of jealousy as academic achievement jealousy, where the assessed student feels that the assessing student does not feel good about assessing a performance higher than their own. The predicament of this is that the process produces an environment where the assessed students feel unfairly judged and the assessors feel that they are in charge and can do whatever they want to do because they have that right. It is for reasons such as this that Tsagari and Cheng (1997) warn that no matter how important peer assessment is in student learning, subjectivity should not be overlooked because it affects student learning negatively.

That being the case, I must mention at this juncture that the cooperative learning theory does not explicitly address jealousy; however, it acknowledges that jealousy is prevalent among peers during peer assessment, which can be challenging, especially in situations where competition is prevalent (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2014). It is therefore against this background that the proponents of the cooperative learning theory recommend that educators set clear goals, assign shared responsibilities among peers and create environments that foster positive interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

#### **5.8.2.2 Peer Assessment Promotes Feelings of Inferiority Among Students**

My definition of feelings of inferiority among students, based on the context of this study, is that this is a feeling of self-pity and low self-esteem that students have towards themselves in relation to what they can offer as individuals in comparison to their peers. In most cases, students who feel this way need reassurance that they are on the right track in terms of their academic performances, and in cases where they are off track, educators need to constantly remind them that peer assessment is designed to assist them in acquiring the content to be learnt, irrespective of who the assessor and the assessed person are. In addition, it is also during this reassurance stage where educators need to reassure the students that both the assessor and the assessed have equal status and should therefore work together.

Peer assessment is a crucial learning approach in education because it helps students take responsibility for their own learning, and it develops students' critical and independent thinking skills, increases student confidence, and improves intrinsic motivation (Dochy et al. 1999;

Falchikov, 1986; Lapham & Webster, 1999; McDowell, 1995). It is based on this background that educators should not ignore students' negative attitudes towards peer assessment, as this ignorance may compromise the aims of the learning strategy.

My analysis of the data in Chapter 4 (see Section 4: Sub-section 4.4) is that students who receive unfavourable comments believe that they have failed themselves. They feel victimized and fail to see that the comments are directed toward the answers they have given and not toward themselves as individuals. However, there are some assessors who deliberately make harsh comments simply because they can, or ridicule others for poor performances in activities. These are assessors who do not consider the feelings of others and who do not know what type of comments to make. In the process, the affected students develop negative feelings towards peer assessment as a learning and teaching technique, which eventually leads to the affected students developing poor self-esteem which ultimately may affect their personalities and academic performance.

Another factor that relates to this discussion emanates from the lecturer participants, who also indicated that students' attitudes towards peer assessment play a role. The lecturers believed that peer assessment may not serve its intended purpose if students do not see the process as relevant to their learning. During peer assessment, students are expected to engage in meaningful interactions with their peers and lecturers. However, if there are students who do not enjoy this exercise, no learning is likely to happen. It is therefore important for educators to remind students of the purpose of peer assessment before, during and after the peer assessment activity.

### **5.8.2.3 Peer Assessment Induces Favouritism**

As revealed in my analysis of the data as presented in Chapter 4 (see Section 4: Sub-section 4.3), the student participants expressed a perception that some students favour others during the peer assessment process. This could be attributed to the fact that student assessors find themselves assessing their friends, or vice versa. Such sentiments concur with those of Dochy et al. (1999), who argue that students express concern that assessment bias may occur during peer assessment, with friends or more powerful classmates of the assessing student potentially earning better scores than the others. Unfair judgements do not serve the purpose of teaching or improving the content to be learnt. Rather, they paint a false picture of the real situation, and

instead of students learning from their mistakes, they are made to believe that they have already mastered the content. Students who have witnessed this, and especially those that are not friends to the assessors, become demoralized, because in the end, their true efforts are not recognized or rewarded. This once again results in students developing negative attitudes towards peer assessment.

#### **5.8.2.4 Peer Assessors Lack Assessment Skills**

Another factor identified by student participants as a contributing factor to their dislike of peer assessment is some student assessors' lack of assessment abilities. Students have less trust in each other in situations where their learning is involved can be inferred from the response of one of the student participants stating that "*students are not experienced in assessing each other*". This is despite the fact that teachers provide marking grids to be used by students during peer assessment activities. This type of distrust is what Hauff and Nilsson (2022) refer to as the assessment of one's own level of expertise in relation to that of others, as well as the level of trust that one perceives in fellow students. According to Dochy et al. (1999), it is common for students to have limited confidence in their own ability to effectively evaluate the work of their peers. Similarly, the student receiving the assessment may not have the essential skills or knowledge to accurately interpret the feedback provided (Boud & Holmes, 1995). Hence, it is evident (see Chapter 4: Section 4: Sub-section 4.6) that students do not feel good about their peers assessing them. These students believe that peers do not know the answers to questions they are assessing, nor do they award appropriate marks.

I have presented a discussion of the views of control and experimental student participants who opposed the use of peer assessment in teaching and learning environments. In the following section, I will present a discussion of the views of the control and experimental participants, as well as the lecturers, on the effects of peer assessment on students' academic performance.

### **5.9 Effects of Peer Assessment on Students' Academic Performance**

#### **5.9.1 Peer Learning**

Peer learning emerged as one of the beneficial factors that results from peer assessment that can improve students' academic performance, as indicated by the control, experimental and lecturer participants (see Chapter 4: Section 4: Sub-section 4.1). During a peer assessment exercise, students learn a great deal by examining others' answers through explaining ideas, a process that eventually leads to peer learning. It is during this process that students listen, take

note of the mistakes they have made and learn from those mistakes, as indicated by the control and experimental groups in the data analysis chapter (Section 4), where one student responded: *“Mistakes highlighted by peer are barely forgotten”*. According to Boud, Cohen and Sampson (1999), students are able to explain their thinking, have it criticized by others, and gain from taking on the role of a reciprocal partner. Studies by Boud (2001) have also shown that peer learning encourages specific educational objectives such as collaboration, analytical thinking, introspection, effective communication and expression of knowledge, mastery of abilities and self-directed learning. However, Boud warns that peer learning should not be seen as a replacement for activities by teachers, but rather a helpful addition to already existing instructional and educational activities aimed at improving the standard of teaching.

### **5.9.2 Feedback**

One of the factors that also seems to lead to improved student academic performance after peer assessment activities is feedback. Peer assessment is feedback-centred, and the primary focus of feedback is to assist educators to understand and monitor students' learning progress while instruction is still going on and to find out where improvement is needed. Feedback is also important because it allows students to better understand their progress and identify areas of growth, as well as make improvements in their learning where necessary. However, for feedback to serve its intended purpose, it should be timely, and it should be constructive in a way that assists rather than destroys student confidence and motivation. Feedback can be both formative and summative. However, in the context of my study, my focus is on formative feedback, because as alluded to in the literature review chapter, peer assessment, when employed as formative assessment, enables both the student and the instructor to better understand the student's overall performance during the time it was conducted, as well as the areas in which the student can improve (Rousseau, 2018).

Formative assessment is a continuous assessment that occurs throughout the duration of learning and provides both teachers and students with feedback aimed at enhancing instruction and learning (National Research Council, 2000). Similarly, the information gathered through formative assessment helps educators make informed decisions about instructional strategies such as researching a topic or providing additional support to students.



Having discussed the benefits of feedback in enhancing student academic performance, in the next section, I will present a discussion on yet another factor that results from peer assessment that can improve student academic performance which is critical thinking skills.

### **5.9.3 Critical Thinking Skills**

Students in both the control and experimental groups revealed that peer assessment can lead to students developing critical thinking skills. According to Alzaid (2017), as indicated in the literature review chapter, the objective of peer assessment is to facilitate a change in mindset among students from being mere recipients of information handed down by instructors to developing into active participants in their education and evaluation process. This involves promoting interaction, exploration, and questioning to produce novel information that embodies intellectual curiosity and innovation. Students who develop critical thinking skills are better at making informed decisions because they can argue and make comparisons between variables. Because they do not rely on memorization, they also develop a better understanding of the subject being learned. These same students also gain confidence as they try to solve and make decisions regarding their learning.

Finally, this new way of thinking improves their learning by changing their attitudes, which ultimately leads to improved academic performance. Therefore, the development of critical thinking skills not only improves students' academic performance, but also enables students to flourish in a world that is constantly changing.

### **5.9.4 Improvement in Content Delivery**

The lecturer participants indicated that peer learning that develops from peer assessment not only assists student learning but also serves to create awareness for educators to improve their teaching (see Chapter 4: Section 4.1). Educators learn to observe how students learn, and through this observation, understand how students develop ways to improve their teaching. Moreover, peer assessment may also help improve students' learning strategies. During peer assessment activities, students can reflect on their own performance and assess how much they

know about the content and how much they have learned from their peers and find ways to improve where they have failed in order to maintain good performance.

In line with this view, during cooperative learning activities such as peer learning, when students explain concepts to others, they reinforce their own understanding of the text. Similarly, during cooperative learning groups or peer learning activities, educators get a chance to assess students' understanding of the material to be learnt, thereby identifying areas where students need further assistance or clarification in their content, and thereby improving content delivery.

In this section, I have presented the discussion of the findings of my study. In the following sections, I present the conclusion and summary of this chapter.

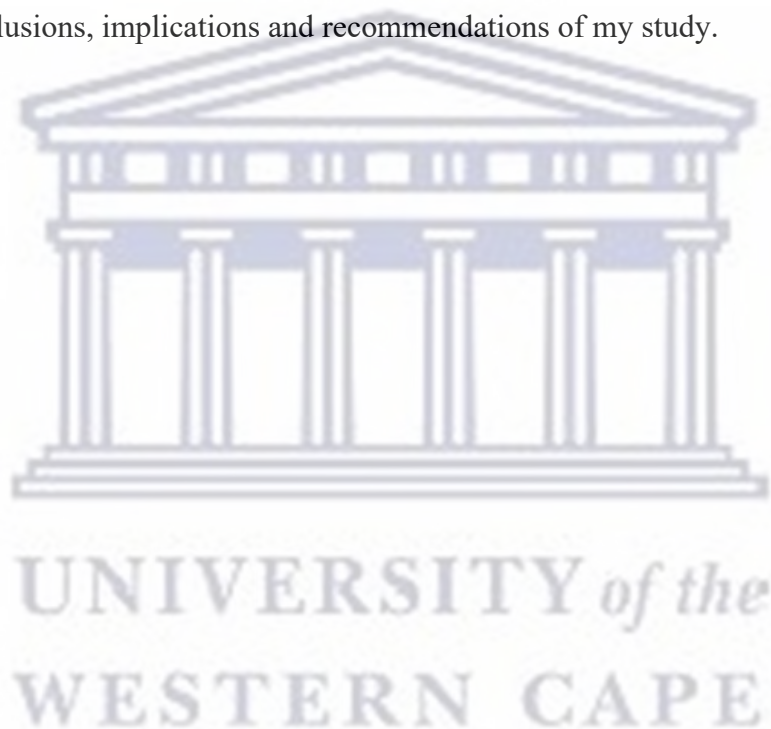
### **5.10 Conclusion and Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, I presented a discussion of the findings collected from the pre- and posttests, interview, observation, and questionnaires. I narrated the discussions of my study findings in accordance with the objectives and the research questions of the study. With regard to the factors that make literary texts difficult to understand for the EAC students, my findings revealed there are indeed hindrances that prevent students from fully comprehending literary texts. With regard to the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts, my findings revealed that even if students and lecturers support the inclusion of teaching reading through literary texts, lecturers especially need to be cautious as to how they deliver the content in order to make sure that the students are motivated to learn through literary texts. In addition, the findings pertaining to the effects of peer assessment on the students' academic performance as well as the overall views of the students and lecturers regarding the incorporation of peer assessment in the learning environment revealed that some students are in favour of peer assessment in their learning because peer assessment promotes peer learning; however, some students do not support peer assessment. My findings also revealed that incorporating peer assessment can improve students' academic performance.

The main focus of the study was to determine whether incorporating peer assessment in the teaching of reading through literature would improve the students' overall performance in

English. The control group that did not receive the interventions improved only slightly in performance in the posttest, which is an indication that my usual way of teaching reading through literature can be effective with improvements in its delivery. Similarly, the experimental group that received the interventions improved more in the posttest, which is also an indication that incorporating peer assessment in teaching is an effective method. My fifth research question, which asks about the framework that could be employed to improve the teaching and learning of literary texts, will be discussed in Chapter 6, under the recommendations section.

Having presented the discussion of my study findings in Chapter 5, in the next chapter, I will present the conclusions, implications and recommendations of my study.



## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusion

#### 6.1 Reappraisal

Having discussed the findings of my study in Chapter 5, in this chapter, I wish to relate the findings to my conclusions. First, I will restate the rationale for my study, re-emphasise the significance of the research methodology that I selected for this study, and explain how the findings relate to the research questions. Second, I will present a teaching framework that may assist in the teaching and learning of literary texts in the language classroom. Lastly, I will present the limitations, implications, and recommendations for my study.

My main investigation was to examine the incorporation of peer assessment in the teaching of reading through literature for the purpose of developing students' critical thinking skills, writing skills and analytical skills, and enhancing reading comprehension skills, with the ultimate goal of improving students' academic performance. In addition, my investigation also focused on the educational and social values of literature in the language classroom. This investigation was prompted by the fact that a majority of EAC students perform poorly in reading literary texts. Since the process of reading literary texts can be social, some scholars (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978) believe that the teaching could be done through socially constructive groups where students learn from each other. In light of this view, I sought to incorporate peer assessment in this investigation in my attempt to enhance the teaching and learning of reading through literary texts.

The nature of my study prompted me to use a mixed-methods approach because in order for me to verify whether there could be any observable improvement in the teaching of reading through literature, I needed to carry out an experiment. I was interested in determining how the treatment impacted the experimental group's overall performance in literature. It is an approach that I believe provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than would the sole use of qualitative or quantitative methods. My investigation therefore entailed employing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, where the qualitative design followed the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, and the quantitative design followed the positivist paradigm. I collected data through pre- and posttests, observations, peer assessment, questionnaires, and interviews, with the goal of gaining an understanding of the participants'



perspectives, as well as the causes and effects of the phenomena under discussion. I wish to point out that qualitative data collection instruments such as observations, peer assessment, interviews and questions fall under the interpretivist paradigm because they require participants to express their subjective views based on how they see reality about the study. In the same vein, the quantitative data collection procedures, such as the pre- and posttests, fall under the positivist paradigm, as they aimed to describe, explain, predict, or control events of interest. This paradigm implies that reality is objectively given. As I alluded to in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3), I used multiple data collection procedures because using multiple methods of data collection in a single study increases the reliability of the observation and allows the methods to complement each other, thus balancing out the shortcomings of either research method (Mouton, 2009). For instance, the data I obtained from the t-tests informed the interpretation of data I obtained from the observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Equally so, the findings I obtained from the observation, interviews and questionnaires could explain the t-test results in depth, and therefore, those results (t-tests) became comprehensible. At this juncture I am better able to assert that I have gained insights as to why the control and experimental group participants performed as they did in the pre- and posttests owing to the subjective nature of the responses that they gave during the interviews, the answers they provided in the questionnaires, and the observations I carried out as a non-participant observer.

My attempt to incorporate peer assessment in literature instruction prompted me to investigate different approaches to the teaching of literature, and therefore, in keeping with the predominantly subjectivist epistemology of this research, I decided to use the reader-response theory, the constructivist theory, the cooperative learning theory and the hermeneutics theory as theoretical assumptions to guide my study. In keeping with these theories, my study aimed to investigate a teaching approach that promotes a critical, reflective reader. I decided to use the reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938) in my study because it lays a reading foundation for students. This theory acknowledges that there is communication between the reader and the text, and the more the readers interact with the text, the better they become at understanding literature as well as appreciating the beauty of literature. This theory gives support to some of the responses of student participants who argued that their failure to understand literary texts could also be attributed to their not having been exposed to reading literary texts earlier in their educational journey. Students who read from a young age develop skills to respond to texts in terms of what the narrative is about and how it affects them.

The theoretical orientation of my study was also based on the hermeneutic theory (Gadamer, 1975). I decided to use this theory as it dwells on text interpretation. As I alluded to earlier in this section, my study findings revealed that some students could not interpret what they read; for example, the figurative expressions (see Chapter 4). In this regard, the hermeneutic principle argues that readers need to engage with the text in order to uncover the deeper meaning of the text. This immersion helps the reader not only understand the literary text but also appreciate the beauty of literature. Incorporating the hermeneutic view in the analysis of my findings, I would argue that the hermeneutic perspective advocates for text contextualization. Text interpretation is an ongoing dialogue between the reader and the text, and when the reader experiences difficulties in understanding or interpreting the text, it could be that there is a breakdown in this dialogue, leading to text misinterpretation.

In order to emphasize the importance of peer assessment in student learning, I used the cooperative learning theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1991) because of its stance on collaboration and social interaction among students. Peer assessment entails students evaluating one another on a given task, for instance, in this case, the role-play, and the cooperative learning theory stresses that an activity such as this enables students to work together as a team and share their ideas and insights, which fosters a deeper understanding of the text. It is for this reason that incorporating peer assessment in learning goes beyond students evaluating one another. It transforms the learning process into an interactive one where students construct their own learning through learning from one another.

Last, I also used the constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) which emphasizes how students construct their own learning. During the role-play sessions, the student participants in the experimental group observed and assessed each other and gave feedback. This role-play, observation and assessment, facilitated the construction of own knowledge by the students. The fact that the students could pinpoint what was done right or wrong is an indication that students constructed their own knowledge through the role-play and peer assessment interactions.

It is evident from the narrative I presented above that the findings of my study point to an eagerness to learn and interpret literary texts on the part of the students. In terms of the students' overall perspective regarding the teaching and learning of literature and the inclusion of peer assessment in student learning, the students expressed their views as they see them in the hope of an improved teaching and learning approach.

Now that I have recapitulated the rationale of my study, I wish to point out that the fifth research question will be addressed in the recommendations section of this chapter. In the following section, I will present a summary of the findings of my study and relate them to the research questions.

## **6.2 Relating the Outcomes of the Study to the Research Questions**

The discussion I presented in the previous section of this chapter serves to summarize what I have presented in the preceding chapters. At this juncture, I find it useful to relate the research questions of my study to the outcomes discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. This is what my study proposes to do in this section of the conclusion chapter. I therefore hope that the following explanations relating to the research questions of the study will contribute practically to this conclusion.

I would like to point out that the following explanations should be viewed as confirmation that supports the relevance of my study. My conclusions are context-dependent, context-based confirmations of constructivist knowledge, and constitute interpretivist knowledge and cooperative knowledge proposed through the narratives representing my students' experiences of learning a second language and the lecturers' experiences of teaching a second language. With that being said, what I propose in this section of my study is reinforcement rather than generalizations of the findings of my study.

### **6.2.1 Research Question 1: What difficulties do EAC students have in reading literary texts?**

In response to the first research question, my study found, through the use of questionnaires and interviews, that there are various challenging factors that affect students' reading of literary texts. The most commonly articulated factor was difficult vocabulary. Viewed from the standpoint of the reader-response theory, the presence of unfamiliar or difficult vocabulary can affect the reader's response to the text because of the reader's experiences, background, and emotions that they bring to the text, which in turn affect the reader's interpretation of the text (Rosenblatt, 1938). The hermeneutic theory also acknowledges that the presence of difficult words in a literary text can pose challenges as the reader tries to interpret meaning. The proponent of this theory (Gadamer, 1975) argues that whenever a reader is confronted with

unfamiliar words, that reader should engage in the process of contextualizing the author's message, which can lead to multiple interpretations and/or misinterpretations. The students stated that literary texts have an abundance of unfamiliar vocabulary that hinders their comprehension of texts. Vocabulary is an essential component of reading comprehension, and therefore a reader needs to be familiar with as many words as possible to ease reading comprehension difficulties. In addition, the presence of figurative expressions and literary devices also affects students' reading of literary texts. As I alluded to in the preceding chapter, figurative expressions can be problematic to students because of the hidden meanings that they are intended to convey. Most students are not familiar with some of those figurative expressions mostly because of cultural differences. Figurative expressions are context-based, and if the context does not provide the reader with sufficient background information to draw from, this lack of context clues will potentially affect the reader's comprehension of the figurative expressions. There are also concerns of students not being exposed to literature early in their education, as well as their lack of reading skills coupled with language barriers. Early exposure to literature provides a strong foundation for young learners and adults to develop strong reading comprehension skills. Vygotsky emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge because it shapes an individual's cognitive development for future reflections and inferences. This is what I refer to as the back-up plan, the student will always have something to tap from. With reference to poor reading skills, Bharuthram (2006) posits that students enter academic institutions with limited reading experiences and strategies. Any student who is unable to read effectively or use reading strategies is likely to experience reading comprehension difficulties. Lastly, my study also found that there are factors related to both teachers and students that contribute to students' difficulty in understanding literary texts. One is when the teacher fails to find alternative ways to enhance the teaching and learning of literary texts, and another is when the students hold negative attitudes towards literature. The teacher, as the facilitator of learning, needs to constantly align the teaching approaches to the cognitive abilities of the student for an effective construction of knowledge on the part of the student. On the part of students, those who have negative attitudes towards literature need some kind of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in order to develop different perspectives towards literature. I therefore believe that this set of findings and its attendant narratives can offer a verifiable response to research question 1.



### **6.2.2 Research Question 2: What are the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction?**

My decision to incorporate peer assessment in the study underscores its impact on student learning. This teaching approach of incorporating peer assessment connects well with the cooperative learning theory, hermeneutics, and interpretivist theories because it involves a socially interactive process where students share ideas and insights and eventually construct their own knowledge for a deeper understanding about the subject matter. In response to this second research question, my study found that there are some students who feel strongly about engaging in peer assessment activities in their lessons and others who feel less strongly about it. Students in favour of peer assessment cited the benefits associated with this activity, as peer assessment promotes peer learning and peer motivation. Some students enjoy engaging in peer assessment activities because the end result of peer assessment places a higher importance on collaboration rather than competitive learning. Peer assessment promotes motivation, and motivation plays a crucial role in learning and education because it provides an engaging learning environment where students learn from one another and encourage and inspire one another to attain their academic and personal potential. This kind of motivation can greatly improve student learning because students look up to each other, and whatever positive comments they receive from their peers have an influence on how they move forward with their learning. The lecturers likewise acknowledged that peer assessment promotes peer learning, so its incorporation in the teaching and learning of literary texts is necessary.

On the other hand, students who feel less strongly in favour of peer assessment cited negative factors that seem to be associated with it. They mentioned that peer assessment induces jealousy, promotes feelings of inferiority among students and encourages favouritism. They further felt that the peer assessors lack assessment skills. The student participants felt that not all student assessors were happy with each other's performances, especially those that performed well, and this is the feeling they saw as jealousy. In the jealousy environment, the assessed students feel unfairly judged and the assessors feel that they are in charge and can do whatever they want to do because they have that right. With regard to feelings of inferiority among students, those who suffer from an inferiority complex are those who do not believe in themselves as compared to their peers. The situation can be aggravated when the assessors give negative comments as feedback. The students affected feel victimized and fail to see that the comments are directed toward the answers they have given and not toward themselves as individuals. As a result, these students require constant reassurance that they are doing well in

their performance. Some students also feel that some peer assessors display favouritism. This kind of assessment happens especially when friends assess one another. They are lenient with each other, thus in the end, not serving the intended purpose of peer assessment, which is peer learning. Lastly, some students have less faith in the assessment of their peers as they believe that the peer assessors are not qualified to assess them. This kind of attitude emanates from lack of trust, despite the assessment guide being provided by the teacher to the students. Based on these findings, I believe that while peer assessment is vital in education and students and lecturers are aware of the benefits associated with it, for it to be incorporated into the teaching and learning of literature, students' fears, discomfort, and doubts should be taken into account. I believe that this set of findings and its attendant narratives offer a verifiable response to research question 2.

### **6.2.3 Research Question 3: What is the effect of peer assessment on the overall academic performance of the EAC students?**

In response to the third question, my study found that both students and lecturers are aware of the benefits associated with peer assessment. My study findings revealed that peer assessment has the potential to positively influence the academic performance of the EAC students. This is due to the fact that the primary effect of peer assessment is peer learning. Peer assessment promotes student-to-student learning. During a peer assessment exercise, students learn a great deal by examining each other's work, listening to each other, taking notes of the mistakes they have made and learning from those mistakes. This is because of the interactive process that takes place between students. Similarly, peer assessment allows students to receive feedback from their peers. Feedback from peers is important in student learning because it helps them to understand the content better, which ultimately results in knowledge acquisition. Peer assessment is feedback-centred, and the primary focus of feedback is to assist educators to understand and monitor students' learning progress to find out where they need to improve. Feedback is also important because it allows students to better understand their progress, identify areas of growth, and make improvements where necessary in their learning. As educators must, however, be cautious that for feedback to serve its intended purpose, it should be timely, and it should be constructive and not corrosive. This is the expectation that students have of any form of assessment. I must highlight at this juncture that the type of feedback that emerged from the findings of my study is formative feedback. Peer assessment employed as formative assessment enables both the student and the instructor to gain a better understanding

of the student's overall performance during the time it was conducted, as well as the areas in which the student can improve. The study also found that peer assessment enables students to develop critical thinking skills as they debate the answers or subject content with their peers. This is because the goal of peer assessment is to transform students from passive recipients of knowledge transmitted by teachers into active learners who interact, search and explore in order to generate new knowledge that is characterized by critical thinking and creativity. Students who develop critical thinking skills are better at making informed decisions because they can argue and do not rely on memorization to make informed decisions. The end result is often a student who understands the content better. Students' development of critical thinking skills not only improves their academic performance, but also enables students to navigate in this ever-changing world.

On the side of the lecturers, peer assessment helps them improve content delivery as they witness how the students engage in the peer assessment/peer learning activities. Educators learn to observe how students learn, and through this observation, they develop ways to improve their teaching strategies. Peer assessment is the key element of my research project because it is a teaching approach that would help shape the conceptual framework of the teaching and learning of literary texts. The fact that it received recognition and appreciation from both the students and lectures is an indication that once it is applied diligently, it can help facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts, which can lead to students' successful academic performance. I therefore believe that the issues I have pointed out here can offer a verifiable response to research question 3.

#### **6.2.4 What are the students' and lecturers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of literary texts?**

In response to the fourth research question, my study found that despite the challenges associated with the teaching and learning of literary texts, the students and lecturers had positive attitudes towards this. It is through literary texts that students acquire language skills and vocabulary, enjoy the beauty of literature, appreciate cultural diversity, and learn life lessons. When students acquire these skills of reading, speaking, writing, and listening, they develop abilities to engage in meaningful communication, especially written and spoken. These four language skills are important in any language classroom because they are interrelated. Students with strong listening abilities become efficient in speaking, students with extensive

reading skills improve their vocabulary development, and those with good writing skills demonstrate good language usage. Therefore, language learners benefit immensely from a teaching approach that develops all these four skills, and in this case, the teaching and learning of literature. The student participants also took cognizance of the fact that literature exists to provide pleasure to those who read literary texts. This pleasure enables the readers to immerse themselves in the book as they try to make sense out of what they are reading.

Although students find reading literary texts difficult because of difficult vocabulary, they still believe that one of the benefits of literature in a language classroom is vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary is a crucial factor in reading comprehension because students with a low level of vocabulary knowledge will have poor comprehension abilities, not only in the subject of English but in other subjects as well. The wealth of vocabulary found in literature helps readers improve their writing skills by allowing them to practise composing different types of sentences and learn new methods of connecting ideas.

There is also the factor of tests and examinations that students highlighted and which I find worth noting because it informs educators that although the teaching and learning of literary texts develop students' critical thinking skills, students still need to learn how to answer questions in preparation for tests and examinations, because no matter how much one understands about the literary text, how well one can argue or how good one can interpret or analyse the literary text, if a student is unable to answer the questions asked in the examination or test, then that student's performance in that subject or subject area will be negatively affected. I find this finding interesting because it tells us that it is not always about one's knowledge of the content but about how well one understands the question to supply the correct answer. Without this knowledge related to tests and examinations, the teaching and learning of literary texts, as well as its overall purpose of facilitating students' academic performance, may be in vain.

Cultural awareness emerged from my data analysis as a further benefit of reading literary texts. According to Hişmanöglü (2005), literature should not be seen only as a tool for improving students' writing and speaking skills in the target language but also as a window into the target language's culture, allowing students to gain cultural competence. In order for the student to appreciate the cultural perspectives in the literary texts, the student needs to read these texts



with an open mind, where they acknowledge that their interpretation can be biased or subjective or that their interpretation may be influenced by their own cultural background.

The student participants indicated that they felt good about reading literary texts because they learnt about real-life experiences. Literature enables readers to step into the shoes of characters with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of different perspectives. I observed this during the role-play. As the experimental group students attempted to depict the characters, student players displayed emotions of anger, happiness, and sorrow. The imaginative use of language in literature encourages readers to experiment with new methods of expressing themselves and communicating their thoughts and emotions in real-life situations. Based on these findings, I believe that the issues I have elaborated on here can serve as a tenable response to research question 4.

Based on the confirmation I have presented in this section, I view my students' positive attitude towards the inclusion of peer assessment in the teaching and learning of literary texts as evidence of their love for learning language through literature. By promoting an interactive atmosphere in the literature classroom, literature can provide students with an opportunity to appreciate its aesthetic effects. The data discussed in my study not only illustrates the immediacy and primacy of the importance of literature in the language classroom but also points to the need for an improved approach to literature teaching.

Now that I have presented a discussion of findings from my study that support my research questions, in the section that follows, I will present a summary of the pre- and posttest findings of my study.

### **6.3 The t-test Findings of the Control and Experimental Groups with and without the Interventions**

I administered the pretest and the posttest to the control and experimental groups in order to make a comparison of their overall performance in literature. This was done in order to determine the impact that peer assessment through role-play had on this performance.

My study revealed that the performance of the control and experimental groups without the intervention produced a p-value of 0.159 which is higher than the commonly recognized

significance level of 0.05 (5%). Based on this, the statistical test does not provide enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ). Therefore, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis and concludes that there is no statistically significant difference in the literary text performance scores between the experimental and control groups without the intervention. I believe that either the experimental group and control group may have similar abilities in reading and interpreting literary texts, or that the usual teaching approach that I have used to teach these groups literature is not effective enough to have that great an impact on the performance of the experimental and control groups in literature without the intervention.

On the other hand, my study revealed that the performance of the control and experimental groups with the intervention produced a p-value which was less than 0.001. This low p-value indicates that the difference in text comprehension scores between the experimental and control groups is unlikely to have occurred by chance alone but rather that the significant t-value and low p-value provide strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and accept the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ). This finding implies that a low p-value serves as a strong indicator that the difference in performances of the control group and experimental group in text comprehension scores is not likely to be a result of random chance but rather an indication that there is a substantial significant difference between the two groups, which is most likely to have been caused by the intervention.

The significance of these findings cannot be underestimated. Education, particularly in the field of literature, can significantly influence a student's intellectual growth. The performance of the experimental group revealed that interventions that involve teaching approaches have significant promise for improving academic achievement and promoting a more social learning group.

It is against this background that I believe that since there was an observably and statistically significant impact of the intervention on the performance of the experimental group, this means that incorporating peer assessment as an intervention in the teaching and learning of literary texts has the potential to improve the English Access Course students' performance in literature and English.

Having addressed the findings of my pre- and posttest results, I will now point out the limitations and implications of my study.

## **6.4 Limitations**

### **6.4.1 Institutional Setting**

As a researcher working in an institutional setting, I have had to conform to the systematic constraints imposed on me. I designed my study in accordance with what was already laid down by the institution in terms of what I studied and when the study commenced. I was not at liberty to start my data collection earlier, although it would have been preferable to commence the data collection process sooner in order to use time productively.

### **6.4.2 Participants' Social Status**

Another potential limitation was that of the social status of the lecturers and students. Participants with low social status may not view the phenomena under study in the same way as those with higher social status. For instance, student participants who may have experienced good prior engagement in peer assessment could have viewed the study differently compared to those who may have had bad experiences with peer assessment. As a result, the study could incorporate views from students of either social status which would not be a representative view of all participants.

### **6.4.3 Absent Participants**

During the role-play preparatory sessions, some of the experimental group participants were absent. Their absence affected the groups' role-play because they were required to work as a team. Although some experimental group participants showed interest in participating in the role-play, their caregivers refused to give them permission to attend the role-play preparatory sessions, while some participants did not have money for transport money to attend these preparatory sessions. All these limitations may have affected the impact of the role-play on student learning as well as the generalizability of the findings.

#### **6.4.4 Methodological Limitations**

My study was confined to only one campus of the University of Namibia, whereas it could have included all campuses that offer the EAC. Based on this shortcoming, the results do not reflect a national phenomenon, and as such, cannot be generalized.

I have now presented the limitations of my study. In the following section, I will present the implications of the study.

#### **6.5 Implications**

At this juncture, I would like to point out that the results of this study are neither wholly conclusive nor more definitive but are relativistic. I therefore wish to present the significance of my study through the following suggestions:

1. I intend to disseminate the findings of my study through different academic platforms such as conference presentations, workshops, and seminars. I believe that through these engagements, my findings would be accessible to a larger scholarly audience.
2. With regard to the implication of my findings on the inclusion of peer assessment in the teaching and learning of literary texts, the findings of my study confirm that peer assessment as a collaborative pedagogical approach promotes peer learning, which develops students to be critical thinkers. Therefore, educators need to be aware of the benefits that peer assessment affords to student learning, and as such, it would be ideal to incorporate it into their lessons for students' better content acquisition. Incorporating peer assessment also enables students to develop social skills which help students to communicate effectively through debates and offer solutions to problems.
3. The findings of my study provide valuable insights for the professional development of teachers as they can use the study findings to review their existing pedagogical approaches and incorporate peer assessment as a cooperative learning technique for effective instructional approaches.
4. The findings of my study can help inform educators in the education fraternity to review the way that they deliver content, especially in situations where group work is encouraged. I find it interesting that the student participants acknowledged that peer assessment is important in their learning. However, educators need to take into consideration the processes involved in such a learning process. Educators need to make students aware of what peer assessment is, its purpose and its benefits. Equally so,



educators need to assure students that peer assessment is not a competitive exercise but rather a platform where they can learn from one another for the purpose of improving academic achievement. Lastly, in situations where peer assessment requires peer-to-peer grading, educators need to provide a universal marking grid that can be used consistently for all students and by all students.

The theoretical contributions of my study are consistent with my study findings. The cooperative learning theory (Johnson & Jonson, 1991) highlights the importance of collaborative learning among students which leads to shared knowledge and experiences. The hermeneutic theory (Gadamer, 1975) emphasizes the importance of text interpretation where students are expected to construct their own understanding. The reader-response theory (Rosenblatt, 1938) emphasizes how unique every student is in their attempt to interpret textual meaning. The constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) dwells on the importance of students constructing their own learning through experiences. It is for this reason that I suggest that educators need to create learning activities that promote active participation of students where they construct their meaning through shared interactions with peers. It is therefore evident that the integration of these theories in my study serves to make educators aware of the need to appreciate the synergy between these theories as they transform the traditional teaching approaches into a more engaging learning environment.

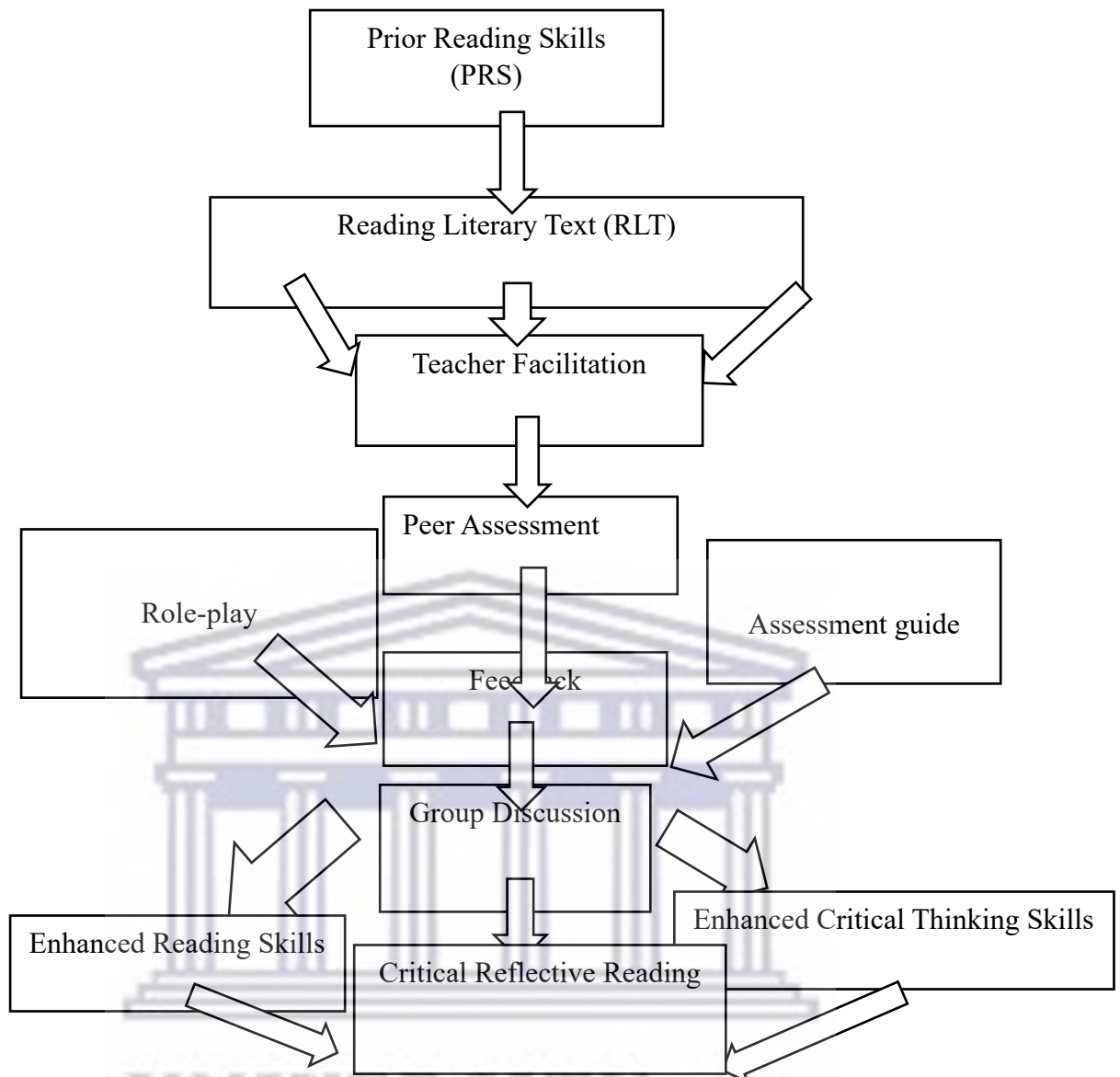
Based on the significance of my study that I have presented so far, I believe that the findings have far-reaching implications for educators and students in improving students' learning and teachers' instructional practices. In the following section, I will present the recommendations of my study by addressing research question 5: What type of framework could be employed to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts?

## **6.6 Recommendations**

### **6.6.1 Proposed Framework to Facilitate the Teaching and Learning of Literary Texts**

In this section, I intend to propose a teaching framework that would conceptually and visually foster a method for teaching literary texts. Studies have shown that when teachers vary their teaching approaches, students are more likely to show improvement in academic performance (Joyce & Weil, 2003). According to the Dictionary of Contemporary English (2012, p. 692), a framework is “a set of ideas, rules, or beliefs from which something is developed, or on which decisions are based”. It is in line with this view that I propose a framework that could be instrumental in the integration of peer assessment in the teaching and learning of literary texts. My framework aims to assist educators in helping students learn how to learn. I propose this framework based on the notion that it contributes to the development and advancement of knowledge for educators, students, and all stakeholders within the field of education. My framework has the potential to improve student achievement as well as help educators improve content delivery. Joyce and Weil (2003) suggest that there is no single approach to teaching that is appropriate in all instructional settings; therefore, for effective teaching and learning to take place, teaching approaches should be varied. I would like to caution here that my framework should not be viewed as a substitute for existing frameworks, but rather as a complementary teaching approach that helps educators teach more effectively by making their teaching more systematic and efficient.

Now that I have given a brief background of what my framework entails, in the next section, I will present the five-stage Collaborative Peer Assessment Framework for Teaching Literary Texts (CPAFTLT).



*Figure 3: Collaborative Peer Assessment Framework for Teaching Literary Texts*

Figure 6.5.1 presents a diagram of a framework to facilitate the teaching and learning of literary texts. Within this framework, there are five guiding principles which are informed by the findings of my study. These principles are prior reading skills, reading literary texts, peer assessment, feedback and group discussion. I would now like to present an explanation of the significance of each principle in the framework.

### **6.6.1.2 Prior reading skills**

The principle of prior reading skills suggests that the starting point of students attending a literature classroom is that all students possess emergent literary skills. In this context, this implies the ability to read printed work. I would like to note here that reading is a complex process, so a distinction needs to be made between the types of reading skills the students may possess. In my view, the term reading cannot be equated with comprehension because the term “reading” alone means being able to recognize words and pronounce them accurately, while reading comprehension means being able to extract meaning from printed work. In the context of my framework, the principle of prior reading skills is used as a foundation upon which the rest of the principles are built. It is for this reason that the participant groups read the literary book (play) first before being exposed to the pre- and posttests. It is also this reading exercise that informed the findings of my study that although some students could read, some struggled to understand the content of the book. Hence my caution on the distinction between reading and reading comprehension.

### **6.6.1.2 Reading Literary Text**

In the context of literature teaching, this principle suggests that the literary text needs to be read for it to be interpreted. The purpose of incorporating literature in the language classroom is firstly to develop language skills, namely, speaking, where students engage in class debates about what they have read; writing, where students write essays on their views regarding what they have read; vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking skills and improved reading competency. Secondly, literature aims to evoke the emotional or subjective views of the reader. According to the reader-response theory discussed in Chapter 2, the principle of reading literary text is vital in the language classroom because it exposes the reader to the two types of reading, efferent reading, and aesthetic reading, as posited by Rosenblatt (1938). According to this theory, during the engagement between the reader and the text, the reader reads aesthetically in order to experience the effects of the text. Similarly, the reader reads efferently in order to extract information from the text. Both these types of reading allow the reader to be emotionally involved as well as intellectually stimulated by the literary text. It is against this background that this principle forms part of the framework.



### **6.6.1.3 Teacher Facilitation**

The principle of teacher facilitation in my framework has three branches, namely, role-play, assessment guide and peer assessment. Within this principle, the teacher assumes the role of the facilitator who informs the students of the processes involved after the students have finished reading the literary text. This stage emanated from the findings of my study where the student participants argued that they need guidance on how to assess their performance so that the assessment process would be free of bias. In this regard, the teacher facilitator familiarizes the students with the concept of role-play, its purpose and how it would be carried out. In addition, the teacher facilitator also familiarizes the students with the concept of peer assessment by discussing its benefits in the teaching and learning of literary texts as well as its importance in enhancing analytical skills. Lastly, the teacher facilitator familiarizes students with the assessment guide which emphasizes the importance of constructive feedback. In the context of my framework, the teacher facilitation principle is important as it sets the scene for peer assessment by providing all necessary guidelines to be considered. At this juncture, I would like to reiterate that peer assessment is the core aspect of my study as it is a complementary teaching approach that I propose should be incorporated into the teaching and learning of literary texts for the purpose of improving literary text comprehension. During role-play, for instance, peer assessment as a collaborative learning exercise enables students to recognize the difference between a role-play that has been performed successfully and one that leaves room for improvement (Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 1999).

### **6.6.1.4 Feedback**

Feedback in education enables students to identify gaps in their learning, provides suggestions to improve learning, sharpens teaching strategies, motivates students to learn more and provides constructive information for both students and teachers (Obilor, 2019). The principle of feedback in my framework comes after the teacher facilitation process and aims to provide students with valuable insights about their learning and areas where they need improvement. The findings of my study revealed that although students enjoyed engaging in peer assessment activities, they disliked the feedback from their peers because it was sometimes corrosive rather than constructive. Therefore, in the context of my framework, the principle of feedback emphasizes that students' peer assessment activities should be guided by constructive feedback that reinforces learning and instil a sense of accountability and responsibility in students. This

constructive feedback should therefore be informed by the assessment guide provided by the teacher during the teacher facilitation stage.

#### **6.6.1.5 Group Discussion**

The principle of group discussion is the final stage in my framework, with three branches, namely: enhanced reading skills, enhanced critical thinking skills, and critical reflective reading. It is a stage born out of the feedback stage where both the students and the teacher engage in a meaningful discussion about the feedback that the students provide during peer assessment. In keeping with the cooperative learning theory (Johnson & Johnson, 1991), during group discussions, students work together by exchanging ideas, challenging each other's interpretation, for instance, in the context of literary text analysis, while reflecting on their own analysis in light of their peers' judgements. Viewed from the interpretivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1978) and hermeneutics perspective (Gadamer, 1975), when students engage in group discussions, they exchange ideas and interpretations, processes that enable students to develop a richer understanding of the subject matter. A student who acquires knowledge through group discussions develops enhanced reading skills and critical thinking skills and develops into a critically reflective reader.

The framework I presented in the previous section provides a model for teaching literature for the purpose of improved learning. It is important to note that some models prioritize the teacher while others aim to develop the students. In the context of my study, my priority lies in involving both the teacher and the student. I proposed this framework because I would like to encourage teachers or educators to improve their instructional strategies and students' academic performance. The framework should, however, not be regarded as a mandatory teaching approach but rather as a complementary tool that educators can consider in addition to other existing frameworks. The framework is thus intended to enhance the teaching and learning of literary texts.

I have now presented the framework of my study, and in the section that follows I will present recommendations for further research.

## 6.7 Recommendations for Further Research

1. Since the present study focused on pre- and posttests, I suggest future research that investigates contexts where the participants write a test and discuss the results of the test in order to justify their test responses.
2. My study focused only on the integration of peer assessment into the teaching of literary texts. I suggest future research that incorporates peer assessment into students' essay writing.
3. It might also be productive to investigate how literature can be taught through media such as television to foster a deeper appreciation of the subject on the part of the students.
4. Teacher trainers should address the challenges associated with the teaching and learning of literary texts by offering support through workshops.
5. In order to address the many perspectives that students have towards the teaching and learning of literary texts, educators/teachers should employ different teaching approaches to teaching literature.

All in all, my study has provided valuable insights into the realm of literature education by exploring the challenges affecting students' comprehension of literary texts, the role of peer assessment and students' attitudes towards literature. My study further advocates for a teaching approach that promotes peer assessment in the teaching of literature. As we move forward, it is my hope that my study inspires further investigations in the field of education, particularly the teaching of English as a Second Language. The following quotation echoes the beliefs and concerns I have voiced in this research (Benton & Fox, 1985):

As educators we need to make sure that literature teaching approaches address the issue of student response to texts that also includes development of text comprehension and interpretation skills. Reading a story is an imaginative collaboration between the reader and author from which a secondary world is created. This phenomenon as it occurs when one reads or listens to a story is the fundamental subject matter of literature teaching. (p. 18)

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## APPENDIX 1: Information Sheet

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021

### **To Whom It May Concern**

My name is Leader Hilongwa. At present, I am pursuing my studies as a doctoral candidate in the field of Language and Literacy at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. I have taught English as a Second Language at the secondary and tertiary levels for a number of years. As a consequence, I have developed a strong interest in exploring different approaches to literature instruction.

I cordially ask respondents of this study to acquaint themselves with the information provided and to openly inquire about anything for clarity. Participation in research is entirely voluntary and participants have the right to discontinue their involvement in the study at any time. The data obtained from the participants will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. The data will only be used for the purpose of accomplishing the research thesis. The final report conclusion will not be attributed to the individual participants, the Language and Development Department, or the University of Namibia. The research poses no risk of physical harm and will not result in any social, mental, or emotional harm to participants or any other constituent of the university community.

Research Title: *An investigation of a Literature-Based Approach to Reading: Promoting Peer Assessment in the English Access Course at the University of Namibia*

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the effectiveness of peer assessment during literature instruction.
2. Assess the students and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.
3. Explore the factors that make literary texts difficult to be understood by EAC students.
4. Propose a framework to assist the teaching of literary texts.


5. Assess whether a relationship exists between literature and academic performance of students in English.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 safety measures which include the use of masks, sanitization and maintaining social distance will be observed during gathering of data.

My hope is for this research to improve the teaching of literature through peer assessment, and ultimately, the overall academic performance of the EAC students in English. Furthermore, this study aims to enhance my professional skills as a language educator.

Your voluntary participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: [jambylee@yahoo.com](mailto:jambylee@yahoo.com)

Should you have any queries regarding the study, you may also contact my supervisor, Prof. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)

**APPENDIX 2: Statement by the researcher**

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021


I, the undersigned, have accurately read out the information sheet to the participants, and to the best of my ability, I have made sure that they have understood what they are expected to do.

I confirm that I have given them opportunity to ask questions about the study, and that I have answered all the questions to the best of my ability and to their satisfaction.

I also confirm that they have not been coerced into giving consent, and that their consent has been freely and voluntarily.

I also confirm that I have explained all COVID-19 safety protocols to be observed during the study.

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD Candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20 /03/ 2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: jambylee@yahoo.com

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact detail below:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)





### APPENDIX 3: COVID-19 Measures for Consideration

Faculty of Education  
Private bag X17  
Bellville 7535 South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 335820  
May 8, 2021

COVID-19 caused loss of lives worldwide and affected our normal way of living. It has since affected many social and physical phenomena, particularly in the health and education sectors. Education must nonetheless continue, but we recognize the need to be careful in how we proceed at all levels of education.

My study entails role play, peer assessment, a focus group interview, a pretest, and a posttest, as well as completion of questionnaires by participants. All these activities involve direct contact between the researcher and participants and between participants. Face-to-face interaction is necessary because role-play, and peer assessment need to be done physically in order to yield the intended results.


During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have started to adapt to the so-called new normal which has engendered new ways of living, and education is no exception. However, since COVID-19 is still prevalent, permission must be sought from the Language Centre and Oshakati Campus in order for the face-to-face research to be conducted.

It is against this background that the following COVID-19 measures will be considered during face-to-face contact lessons and data collection:

1. The literature lesson will take place three times a week for two hours to avoid unnecessary movement of students on the campus.
2. It is anticipated that 132 students will participate in the study, and this number will be divided into two groups of 66 students to avoid overcrowding of students in one class.
3. Lessons will be offered in a lecture hall where there is enough space to allow for social distancing between students.
4. Lessons will be offered for literature only, and once data collection is complete, students will continue with online lessons for other language components.

5. Before lessons commence, students will be sanitized, and their temperatures will be recorded.
6. Any student participant or lecturer participant who does not feel well will be allowed to leave the study freely.
7. The role-play will be done in the amphitheatre in order to allow for social distancing between participants.
8. For the same reason, role-play rehearsals will also be conducted in the amphitheatre.
9. Throughout the contact lessons and role-play, all participants, including the researcher, will wear masks.
10. The researcher will make sure that all participants adhere to the appropriate COVID-19 measures.
11. The researcher will also inform the participants of their right to take part in the study and will offer the assurance that if they wish to withdraw during the process, they will be free to do so.

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: [jambylee@yahoo.com](mailto:jambylee@yahoo.com)

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)

**APPENDIX 4: Permission request letter to the University of Namibia**

Private bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
South Africa  
Tel. 021-959 2449/2442  
Fax 021-959 3358  
May 8, 2021

The Director  
Oshakati and HP Campuses  
University of Namibia

Dear Dr Sheehama

**REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA,  
OSHAKATI CAMPUS**

My name is **Leader Hilongwa**. I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct research at Oshakati Campus focusing on the English Access Course Students for the academic year 2022 during the first semester.

I am a lecturer at the University of Namibia in the Science Foundation Programme, and I have also taught the English Access Course students on a part-time basis.

I am currently a part-time registered PhD Language and Literary student at the University of the Western Cape under the supervision of Prof. Sivasubramaniam. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis is titled: **An investigation of a Literature-Based Approach to Reading: Promoting Peer Assessment in the English Access Course at the University of Namibia**. My research focuses on issues of instruction methods as they manifest themselves in literature learning.

I wish to be granted permission to teach the English Access Course through the face-to-face mode in order for the study to achieve its intended purpose. In light of the current time of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, please refer to the attached outline of how the lessons as

well data collection will be carried out taking into consideration, the COVID-19 safety protocols.

I am aware of ethical concerns involved with data collection which entails focus group interviews, observation, questionnaire, peer assessment, pretest, and posttest.

As a result, I will apply for ethical clearance from both the University of Namibia and the University of the Western Cape.

The information to be collected from the participants will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. In the final report findings, it will not be traced back to the individual participants, the Language Centre, or the University of Namibia. The research participants also have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process.


Should you have any queries regarding the study, you may also contact my supervisor, Prof. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam at Tel. +27 21 959 2995 or email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

I have attached a brief description of the study, particularly the methodology.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: [jambylee@yahoo.com](mailto:jambylee@yahoo.com)

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam



Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)



## APPENDIX 5: Approval letter from the University of Namibia

HIFIKEPUNYE POHAMB & OSHAKATI CAMPUSES

**DIRECTOR**

University of Namibia,  
Private Bag 5507, Oshakati  
Tel: (+264 65) 2323 000; Fax: (+264 65) 230006; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



Enquiries: Dr Jacob Sheehama ([jsheehama@unam.na](mailto:jsheehama@unam.na))

23/08/2021

To. Leader Hilongwa

UNAM Oshakati Campuses

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881 / Email: [jambylee@yahoo.com](mailto:jambylee@yahoo.com)

Dear Ms Hilongwa

**REF: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA, OSHAKATI CAMPUS**

We are grateful dear **Ms Leader Hilongwa**, and I am hereby provide you with the permission to do your study/research at Oshakati Campus focusing on the English Access Course Students for the academic year 2022 during the first semester. Your theme is very much very relevant to our setting and we look forward to see your findings. This will be done in accordance with the ethical approval from your academic Institution: University of the Western Cape.

The University of Namibia, reserve the right to withdraw this permission to conduct your study, if the study protocol is not followed and per the approval received from the institution of study and accompanied your request to our office.

Blessed data collection ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J Sheehama", written over a horizontal line.

**Dr J Sheehama**

CC; L Pinehas  
Prof A Peters  
Mr L Mbangula



## APPENDIX 6: Ethical clearance from the University of the Western Cape



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



12 August 2021

Ms L Hilongwa  
Language Education  
Faculty of Education

**HSSREC Reference Number:** HS21/4/26

**Project Title:** An investigation of a literature-based approach to reading: Promoting peer assessment in the English access course at the University of Namibia.

**Approval Period:** 06 August 2021 – 06 August 2024

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

**Please remember to submit a progress report by 30 November each year for the duration of the project.**

*The permission to conduct the study must be submitted to HSSREC for record keeping purposes.*

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse events and/or termination of the study.

*Ms Patricia Josias  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape*

NHREC Registration Number: HSSREC-130416-049

Director: Research Development  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X 17  
Bellville 7535  
Republic of South Africa  
Tel: +27 21 959 4111  
Email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.

**APPENDIX 7: Participant Consent Form: Peer assessment (Role-play)**

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021

I, the undersigned, certify that I have thoroughly read the information sheet and I am aware of my role as a participant in this investigation.

I confirm that I was given the opportunity to ask questions concerning the study and that the questions were addressed correctly and satisfactorily.

I confirm that no pressure was used to obtain my consent, and that my participation in this study is entirely free and voluntary. I have also been informed that I maintain the right to withdraw from this investigation at any given time without any obligation.


I also confirm that all COVID-19 safety protocols have been explained to me and I was given an opportunity to ask questions. My consent to take part in this study during the COVID-19 pandemic is given freely and voluntarily.

Participant's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: jambylee@yahoo.com

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:



Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)



**APPENDIX 8:** Students' peer assessment observation guide of the role-play

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021

The peer assessment form below will be used by the student participants who will be peer assessing others during the role-play. The main focus will be on how student characters interpret the play.

**Group no:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Act /Scene performed:** \_\_\_\_\_


**Criteria** **Observations**

How did the characters respond to the text?	
How did the group perform?	

Is the theme well portrayed?	
Any impressive performance noticed?	
What did you learn from this performance?	



Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: jambylee@yahoo.com

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)





**APPENDIX 9: Researcher observation guide (role-play)**

Private Bag X17,  
 Bellville, 7535,  
 South Africa  
 Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
 May 8, 2021

The observation form below will be used by the researcher as a guide to observe the role-play being performed by student participants. The main focus will be on how the student characters will interpret the play taking into consideration various roles of all characters portrayed in the play. The researcher's role will be to observe and take notes as the student participants engage in the role-play.


**Group no:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Act / Scene performed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

CRITERIA	Performance	Observations	
		Individual Student	Group performance
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	1. Recall and narrate events as in text  2. Evidence of depth understanding of text  3. Evidence of understanding of character roles		
<b>Interpretation</b>	1. Performance well organized		

	2. Performance related to theme of act  3. Performance related to learning objective  4. Performance convincingly executed		
<b>Proficiency</b>	1. Good flow of performance  2. Minor flaws have no effect on performance  3. Performance attracts attention of audience		
<b>Communication</b>	1. Character shows enthusiasm and desire to convince  2. Depiction of feelings and attitudes well demonstrated		

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: jambylee@yahoo.com

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email; [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)



**APPENDIX 10: Pre-Posttest**

**Department of Language and Development**

**University of Namibia**

**Literature**

**20 April 2022**

**Duration: 1Hour**

**Marks: 35**

**QUESTION 1: Short Questions**

- 1.1 Who is the author of “The Oracle of Cidino”?  
..... /1
- 1.2 What is the main setting of events in the Oracle of Cidino?  
...../1
- 1.3 What genre is “The Oracle of Cidino”?  
...../1
- 1.4 Why is it important for students to study literature?  
..... /1
- 1.5 Mention at least two functions of literary devices.  
...../1

**QUESTION 2: True or False**

State whether the following statements are **True** or **False** by filling in the blanks.

- 2.1 The first opening of the play discusses about the villagers’ removal from their land  
..... /1
- 2.2 The character whose ancestors originate from the Pula people is called Mbeha.  
..... /1
- 2.3 The King’s ally is Muyatwa..... /1
- 2.4 Poetry is another genre of literature..... /1
- 2.5 Quinine is a bitter plant people along the Zambezi River have for time immemorial used to treat Malaria..... /1

**QUESTION 3: Literary Devices**

Which of the following literary devices are exemplified in each of the following utterances from the play?

- a. ambiguity
- b. simile



- c. metaphor
- d. foreshadowing
- e. irony

- 3.1 Neo: “Muyatwa is a toothless boomslang” (Act 1, Scene 1).  
 ..... /1
- 3.2 Town Clerk: ...” Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouse and your children find their way back to the Pula people” (Act 4, Scene 1)  
 ..... /1
- 3.3 Thelma: ... “Your eyes are like doves behind your veil...” (Act 1, Scene 2).  
 ..... /1
- 3.4 Mbeha: ... “If the dead are still with us, in tier name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away” (Act 4. Scene 1).  
 ..... /1
- 3.5 Queen: “Some of them are your children, Father of the children” (Act 5, Scene 1).  
 ..... /1

**QUESTION 4: Figurative language**

What do the following figurative expressions mean?

- 4.1 “When your flesh descends to the clay and ash of this earth an era of fools shall bring civility to your troubled subjects”.  
 .....  
 ..... /2
- 4.2 “I shall not allow this noble discussion to degenerate to realms of morons”.  
 .....  
 ..... /2
- 4.3 “The Pula people are the gods of rain, and we are the crocodiles of the river”.  
 .....  
 ..... /2
- 4.4 “As a dog return to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly”.  
 .....  
 ..... /2
- 4.5 “A child of a snake is a snake”.  
 .....  
 ..... /2

**QUESTION 5: Comprehension**

5.1 Explain in 5 sentences how the King's actions lead him to his own destruction./5

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

/5

5.2 What moment in plot of the play do you consider to be the climax? Motivate your answer? /5

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

/5



## APPENDIX 11: Focus group interview

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: Dramatization of the play

1. Tell us about the character you played in the story?
2. What was the most important thing about your character or characters?
3. What have you learnt from this story?
4. What did you like about the role-play?
5. What did you dislike about the role-play?
6. Would you say at this particular moment after this play, you now have a clear understanding of the book? Why do you feel this way?
7. Do you call this new understanding learning?  
If yes, what is learning?  
If no, what is this new understanding?  
Do you have other comments?
8. Would you say at this moment after dramatizing the play, you will answer the questions better in the test or examination about this book?
9. How do you feel about the comments given by your fellow students regarding your performance in the play?
10. Would you recommend role-play to be used by lecturers to teach plays or novels?
11. How do you feel about your fellow students assessing you?
12. What were some of the difficulties you experienced when you were preparing for the role-play?
13. What did you do to overcome those difficulties?
14. What did you enjoy the most during this group work?
15. What are your views regarding group work?
16. What did you like best from this role-play?
17. What is your view regarding the teaching and learning of literature especially plays and novels?
18. How else do you think the literature lesson can be made easy and enjoyable?

## APPENDIX 12: Information Sheet for Lecturer Questionnaire

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Leader Hilongwa. At present, I am pursuing my studies as a doctoral candidate in the field of Language and Literacy at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. I have taught English as a Second Language at the secondary and tertiary levels for a number of years. As a consequence, I have developed a strong interest in exploring different approaches to literature instruction.

I cordially ask respondents of this study to acquaint themselves with the information provided and to openly inquire about anything for clarity. Participation in research is entirely voluntary and participants have the right to discontinue their involvement in the study at any time. The data obtained from the participants will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. The data will only be used for the purpose of accomplishing the research thesis. The final report conclusion will not be attributed to the individual participants, the Department of Language and Development, or the University of Namibia. The research poses no risk of physical harm and will not result in any social, mental, or emotional harm to participants or any other constituent of the university community.

Research Title: *An investigation of a Literature-Based Approach to Reading: Promoting Peer Assessment in the English Access Course at the University of Namibia*

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the effectiveness of peer assessment during literature instruction.
2. Assess the students and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.
3. Explore the factors that make literary texts difficult to be understood by EAC students.




4. Propose a framework to assist the teaching of literary texts.
5. Assess whether a relationship exists between literature and academic performance of students in English.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 safety measures which include the use of masks, sanitization and maintaining social distance will be observed during gathering of data.

My hope is for this research to improve the teaching of literature through peer assessment, and ultimately, the overall academic performance of the EAC students in English. Furthermore, this study aims to enhance my professional skills as a language educator.

Your voluntary participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)


Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: [jambylee@yahoo.com](mailto:jambylee@yahoo.com)

Should you have any queries regarding the study, you may also contact my supervisor, Prof. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)

**APPENDIX 13: Participant Consent Form – Lecturer Questionnaire**

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021

I, the undersigned, certify that I have thoroughly read the information sheet and I am aware of my role as a participant in this investigation.

I confirm that I was given the opportunity to ask questions concerning the study and that the questions were addressed correctly and satisfactorily.

I confirm that no pressure was used to obtain my consent, and that my participation in this study is entirely free and voluntary. I have also been informed that I maintain the right to withdraw from this investigation at any given time without any obligation.


I also confirm that all COVID-19 safety protocols have been explained to me and I was given an opportunity to ask questions. My consent to take part in this study during the COVID-19 pandemic is given freely and voluntarily.

Participant's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: jambylee@yahoo.com

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:

Signature: 

Date: 8 May, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)



## APPENDIX 14: Information Sheet for Student questionnaire

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Leader Hilongwa. At present, I am pursuing my studies as a doctoral candidate in the field of Language and Literacy at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. I have taught English as a Second Language at the secondary and tertiary levels for a number of years. As a consequence, I have developed a strong interest in exploring different approaches to literature instruction.

I cordially ask respondents of this study to acquaint themselves with the information provided and to openly inquire about anything for clarity. Participation in research is entirely voluntary and participants have the right to discontinue their involvement in the study at any time. The data obtained from the participants will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. The data will only be used for the purpose of accomplishing the research thesis. The final report conclusion will not be attributed to the individual participants, the Language and Development Department, or the University of Namibia. The research poses no risk of physical harm and will not result in any social, mental, or emotional harm to participants or any other constituent of the university community.

Research Title: *An investigation of a Literature-Based Approach to Reading: Promoting Peer Assessment in the English Access Course at the University of Namibia*

The research objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the effectiveness of peer assessment during literature instruction.
2. Assess the students and lecturers' attitudes towards peer assessment during literature instruction.




3. Explore the factors that make literary texts difficult to be understood by EAC students.
4. Propose a framework to assist the teaching of literary texts.
5. Assess whether a relationship exists between literature and academic performance of students in English.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, COVID-19 safety measures which include the use of masks, sanitization and maintaining social distance will be observed during gathering of data.

My hope is for this research to improve the teaching of literature through peer assessment, and ultimately, the overall academic performance of the EAC students in English. Furthermore, this study aims to enhance my professional skills as a language educator.

Your voluntary participation in this study will be highly appreciated.

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

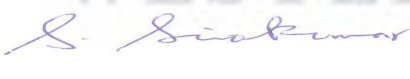
Signature: 

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: [jambylee@yahoo.com](mailto:jambylee@yahoo.com)

Should you have any queries regarding the study, you may also contact my supervisor, Prof. Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)

**APPENDIX 15: Participant Consent Form – Student Questionnaire**

Private Bag X17,  
Bellville, 7535,  
South Africa  
Tel. 027-21-959 2442/2650  
May 8, 2021

I, the undersigned, certify that I have thoroughly read the information sheet and I am aware of my role as a participant in this investigation.

I confirm that I was given the opportunity to ask questions concerning the study and that the questions were addressed correctly and satisfactorily.

I confirm that no pressure was used to obtain my consent, and that my participation in this study is entirely free and voluntary. I have also been informed that I maintain the right to withdraw from this investigation at any given time without any obligation.

I also confirm that all COVID-19 safety protocols have been explained to me and I was given an opportunity to ask questions. My consent to take part in this study during the COVID-19 pandemic is given freely and voluntarily.

Participant's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher: Leader Hilongwa (PhD candidate UWC)

Signature :

Date: 20/03/2021

Mobile: +264 81 290 0881

Email: jambylee@yahoo.com

Should you have any queries in this regard, please contact my supervisor, Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam on the contact details below:

Signature: 

Date: May 8, 2021

Supervisor: Professor Sivakumar Sivasubramaniam

Contact details: +27 (0) 21-959 2995;

Email: [ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za](mailto:ssivasubramaniam@uwc.ac.za)

You could also contact HSSREC for further clarifications at the UWC

Email: [research-ethics@uwc.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.za)



## APPENDIX 16: Student Participant Questionnaire

### Instructions:

- Do not write your name on the questionnaire.
- Mark your choice with an X where a choice is required.

### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age group: [19 – 21 \_\_\_\_\_]; [22 – 24 \_\_\_\_\_]; [25 – 27 \_\_\_\_\_]; [28 -30 \_\_\_\_\_]; [31 + \_\_\_\_\_]

### SECTION B: Literature

1. Have you been taught literature before?

Yes	
No	

If yes, where were you taught literature?

Secondary school	
Primary school	
University	
Other	

2. If you had studied literature before, which subject was it?

English as a Second Language	
Oshikwanyama 1 <sup>st</sup> Language	
Oshindonga 1 <sup>st</sup> Language	



Afrikaans	
Otjiherero 1 <sup>st</sup> Language	
Other	

2.1 If you had studied literature before, was it your decision or did someone tell you to study literature?

(a) It was my choice, why?

(b) Someone told me to study literature, why?

3. If you had studied literature before, how was it taught?

4. Do you enjoy reading literary texts such as novels or plays?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

5. Do you think there are students who do not understand literary texts such as a play, novel or poem?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

6. Do you think literature should be taught at secondary level or university or college?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

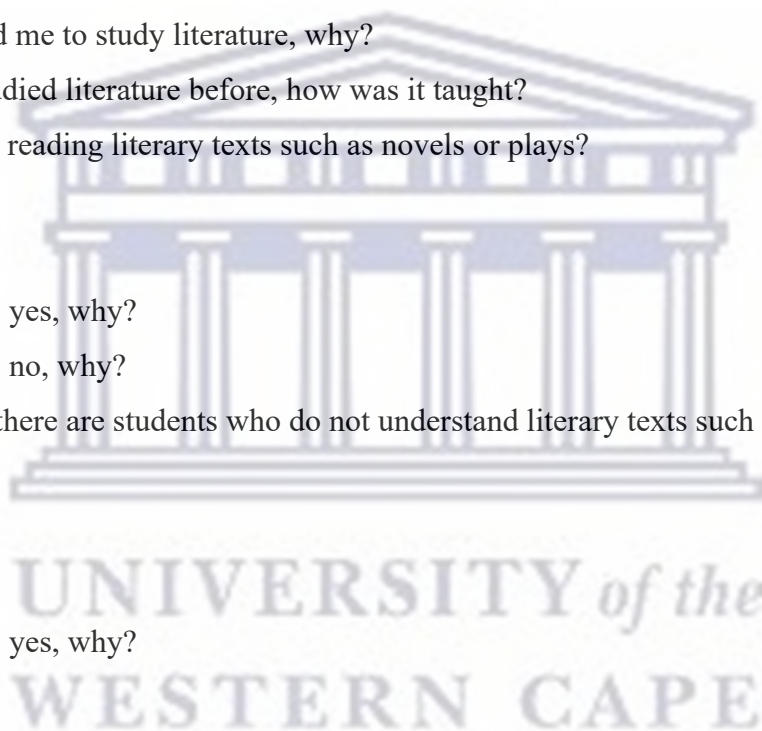
If your answer is no, why?

7. Do you think there are some students who understand literary texts well?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?



If your answer is no, why?

8. Do you think once you understand a literary text such as a play or novel you will perform well in the English?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

9. Do you think students' poor performance in English is because the students do not understand the literary texts?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

10. What do you think is the biggest challenge when reading literary texts?

### **SECTION C: Peer Assessment**

1. Peer assessment involves students judging themselves during or after they have performed a task.

(a) Do you think this kind of assessment is good?

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

2. In your opinion, do you think when students assess themselves during or after an activity, they will understand the content of that activity better?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, why?

If your answer is no, why?

## APPENDIX 17: Lecturer Participant Questionnaire

### Instructions:

- Do not write your name on the questionnaire.
- Mark your choice with an X where a choice is required.

### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age group: [25 – 30 \_\_\_\_\_]; [31 – 36 \_\_\_\_\_]; [41 – 46 \_\_\_\_\_]; [51-56 \_\_\_\_\_]; [61-66 \_\_\_\_\_]

3. Highest qualification

Doctorate complete	
Doctorate incomplete	
Masters complete	
Masters' incomplete	
B.Ed.	
BETD	

4. What is your major?

Education	
Linguistics	
Applied Linguistics	

Literature Studies	
Other (please specify)	

5. Number of years of teaching English

Less than 5 years	
5 years	
10 years	
15 years	
20 years	
More than 20 years	

6. Number of years of teaching literature

Less than 5 years	
5 years	
10 years	
15 years	
20 years	
More than 20 years	

7. Have you taught English at Secondary or primary level?



Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, which grade/s? .....

If your answer is yes, for how many years? .....

8. Have you taught literature at Secondary level?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, which grade/s? .....

If your answer is yes, for how many years? .....

9. Are you a permanently employed by the university?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is no, please specify .....

10. How long have you been teaching the EAC?

Less than 5	
5 years	
10 years	
15 years	
20 years	
Other (please specify)	

### SECTION B: Literature

1. Do you think literature should be part of the EAC curriculum?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, please elaborate why?

If your answer is no, please elaborate why?

2. What challenges do EAC students face reading literary texts?

2.1 What advise do you give your students to overcome those challenges?

3. What are your views regarding the literature genres prescribed to the EAC?

4. Do you think there is a correlation between students' performance in literature and the overall academic performance in English?

Yes \_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, please elaborate why?

If your answer is no, please elaborate why?

5. What methods of teaching do you use to teach literary texts? (Prose / Drama)

5.1 Which of those methods do you find the most effective and why?

5.2 Which of those methods do you find the least effective and why?

6. Besides literature, grammar, speaking, reading, and writing; what other content do you recommend to be part of the curriculum of the EAC?

6.1 Other content, elaborate why?

6.2 No other content, elaborate why?

7. What extent do you feel knowledgeable and skilled in teaching literary texts?

Excellent	
Very good	
Good	
Other (Please specify)	
.....	

7.1 Explain your choice in (7)

8. Do you think you need some kind of assistance regarding the teaching of literary texts?

Yes \_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, what kind assistance do you need and why?

If your answer is no, why don't you need assistance?

### SECTION C: Peer Assessment

1. How do you understand peer assessment?
2. What are your views regarding peer assessment in a teaching and learning environment?
3. What are the benefits of peer assessment?
4. What are the disadvantages of peer assessment?
5. Have you ever employed peer assessment in your lesson?

Yes \_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_

If your answer is yes, elaborate why?

If your answer is no, elaborate why?

6. Do you think if peer assessment is used as an instructional method in the literature classroom, may have an effect on the students' performance in literature; either test or examination.

Ye \_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_

6.1 If your answer is yes,

(a) What type of effect; positive or negative?

(b) What may lead to this effect?

6.2 If your answer is no, elaborate why?

7. Do you think peer assessment if employed during any content delivery, may have an effect on the overall academic performance of the student?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

7.1 If your answer is yes, what type of effect and why?

7.2 If the answer is no, elaborate why?

8. How often should peer assessment be used during a literature lesson?

Always	
Once a week	

Once a semester	
Once a year	
Never	
Other (please specify)	

8.1 Explain your choice in number 8 above.

9. What kind of group work activities do you encourage in your literature lessons and why?

10. Do you think students should be encouraged to work in groups?

Yes \_\_\_

No \_\_\_

If your answer is yes, please elaborate why?

If your answer is no, please elaborate why?

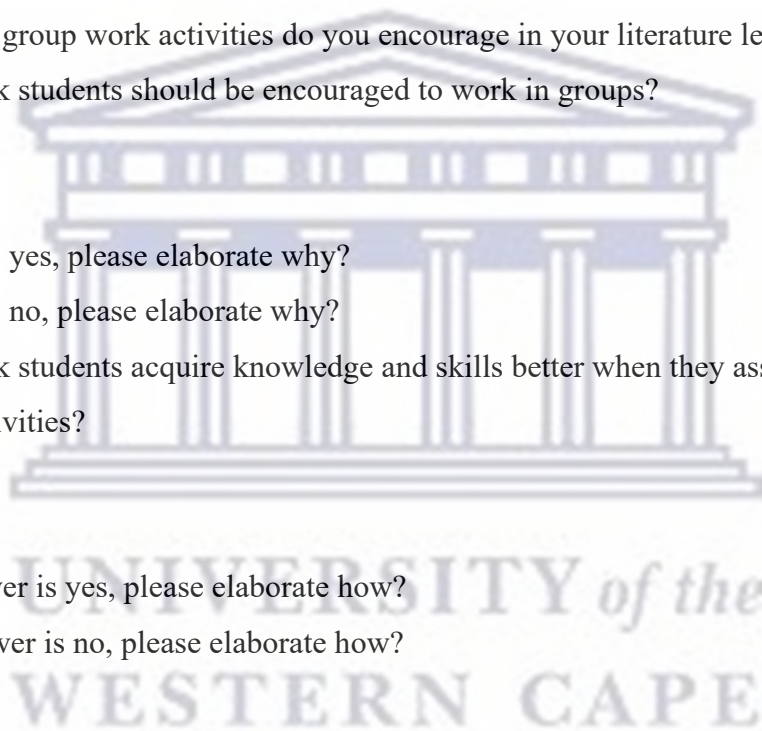
11. Do you think students acquire knowledge and skills better when they assess themselves in classroom activities?

Yes \_\_\_

No \_\_\_

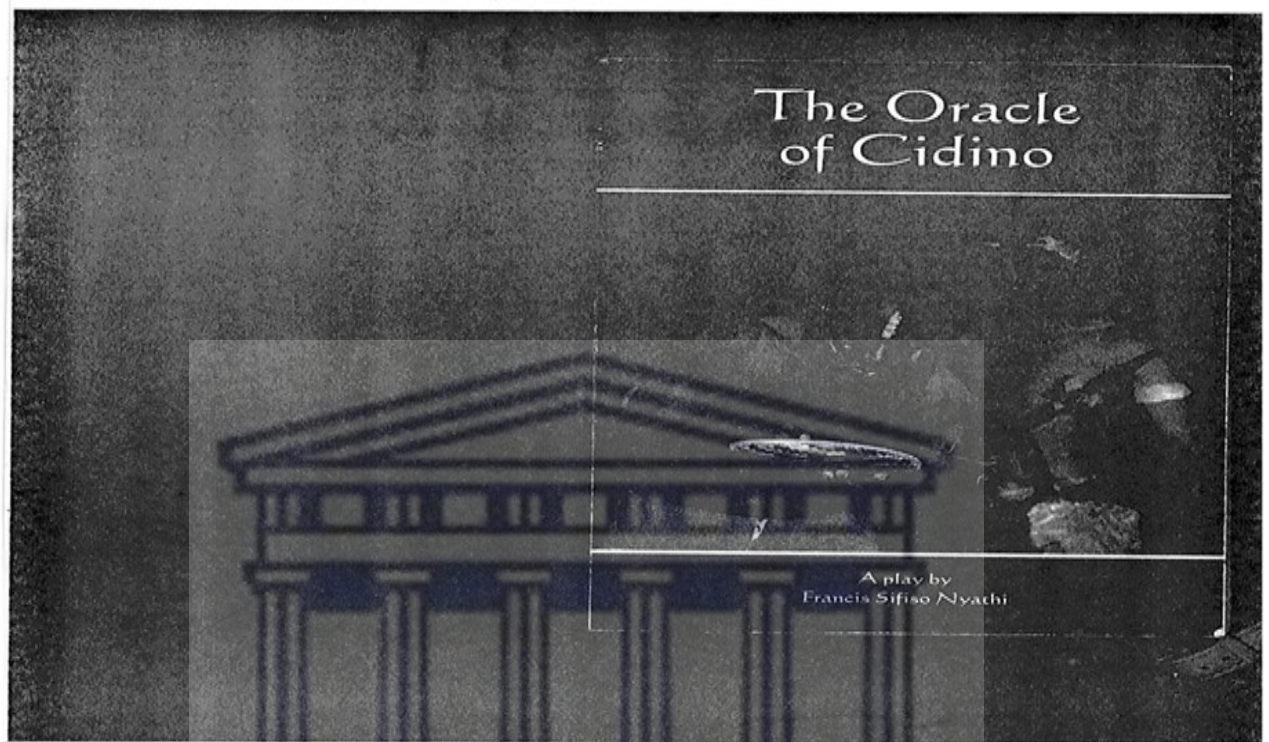
11.1 If your answer is yes, please elaborate how?

11.2 If your answer is no, please elaborate how?





**APPENDIX 18:** Extracts from the Play (The Oracle of Cidino)



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

The Oracle of Cidino was first produced by Roots Travellers Theatre Productions cc at the University of Namibia's Space Theatre in 2002. It was performed for four consecutive days by the following cast and technical crew:

#### Cast

King Lewanika - Lucky "Pieters" Mosalele  
Ma Inonge - Omitted from production  
Messenger - Gilbert Gilt Likando  
Thelma - Justice Kaimu  
Kahimbi - Lilian Mesho  
Town Clerk - Paavo Shikongo  
Peggy - Imelda "Bollie" Tjirera  
Neo - Tony Betts  
Mbeha/Akapelwa - Joseph Molapong  
Fool - Muhindua Kaura  
Girl - Annette Mabuku/Florence Guriras  
Muyatwa - Uhavara Virere  
Mwiya - Frederick Simasiku  
Limbo - Sinvula Mudabeti  
Ordinary Villager - Valie Ashipala

#### Stage Manager

Mahela Mutakalilumo

#### Light Technician

Marcel Theron

#### Sound Technician

Francis S. Nyathi

#### Director

Francis S. Nyathi

#### Co-Directors

Muhindua Kaura

Joseph Molapong

#### Insight Director

Terence Zeeman (Ireland University)



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

# ACT ONE

## SCENE ONE

*(In the King's palace, villagers are gathered and debating. The drums rumble in the background.)*

**Mwiya:** Your imperial Majesty, *(bowing down to the king)* oracle of the Kwena people, we, your subjects and children, beseech your intervention in this land matter. 5

**Neo:** Your Majesty, I implore you to invoke strength from your ancestry so that you can triumph over those that desire to dethrone you. But this time, Your Majesty, let your wisdom prevail, just as it prevailed over the Pula people so that we win this war without a drop in blood or tear. That way, Your Majesty, the conquerors shall jubilate on their victory while the conquered shall smile at them with envy devoid of malice. *(Nodding of approval and appreciation by other villagers.)* 10

**Mbeha:** With your permission, Your Majesty, allow me to utter my heart unceremoniously.

**Messenger:** Sit down, old man. Your undesired words are unwelcome at this moment.

**Mbeha:** Convict me not on conjecture, sir, for you know not of the substance of my utterances. 15

1 The traditional Kings of Southern Africa were not only respected for their leadership skills, but were also recognised as a people that possessed ancestral powers to predict future events. In a word, their abilities to directly communicate with the gods gave them divine status of prophets.

2 All the people of the river banks of the Zambezi in the Caprivi region of Namibia were traditionally known as the Kwena people. Kwena in Namibian languages (Lozi, Subia, Sifwe) means crocodile. The crocodiles of the Zambezi river are popularly known to be the most hostile of the crocodiles of the world.

7 The word "pula" in some Namibian as well as Botswana languages means "rain". In this play, the opposition on the other side of the river is comprised of the foreign tribes who many years ago fought tribal wars against the Kwena people and lost the battle.



Neo: When do we expect back our daughter-in-law to be? 205

King: She has arrived. She is on recess with another female companion who is a descendant of clans afar. You should set together your livestock for my daughter is almost ready. Come, pick up the calabash - let's find shelter from the big tree behind the palace. *(They shake hands and walk off stage.)*

Neo: Your Highness set the date and the livestock will be at your palace within a blink of your eye. Remember I still have to send for 'Libombozo'.

King: 'Libombozo'. *(They laugh as lights fade.)* 210

## ACT ONE SCENE TWO

*(The King's palace - the stage set is the same as the preceding one. Incomes the King's daughter Thelma with her friend Peggy. They look more Western in dress than the general dress of the villagers. They are carrying traditional containers from which they are drinking a light traditional brew.)*

Peggy: This traditional gourd ravishes my heart with the taste of its content.

Thelma: It's traditional, made out of fermented mealie powder and sweetened by sugar granules.

Peggy: It tastes so fine like wine of the bride of the night. 5

Thelma: It's well distilled; it does not intoxicate though.

Peggy: I am already intoxicated.

Thelma: Intoxicated?

Peggy: Yes, intoxicated by the chastity of its taste. You are so sweet, my honey, so sweet. *(Pause)* The spice of its mug chills my spine.

Thelma: Oh, I catch it. This wine chills my spine too. *(Running her eyes around the mug)* How beautiful you are, my love, how very beautiful! *(Inspecting her friend)* Your eyes are like doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of the burning mountains. 10

Peggy: *(Giggling)* Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come out from the washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them bereaved.

Thelma: Your lips are like a crimson thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil. 15

1 Traditional wine made from fermented mealie powder or remnants of thick porridge after every meal has served as a vital drink during some leisure time or work breaks. Some ethnic groups in Namibia call such wine "oshikundu" while some call it "maheu".

4 Peggy strategically employs the Song of Songs chants of King Solomon of the Bible to express her feelings.



ACT TWO  
SCENE ONE

**Fool:** What about my alibi?  
**Neo:** Your alibi?  
**Fool:** Ma Inonge's brew sends me to deep sleep, but she too - she is crazy. 175

**Messenger:** Crazy? What do you mean - crazy?

**Fool:** She doubts the potency of her brew. When one sips more than two calabashes without being sent to bed, she becomes vexed. Maybe she is paranoid.

**King:** Paranoid? Paranoid you say? (*Angrily*) Are you insinuating that I am paranoid? (*Stands up and passes around fumingly*) You are stretching my patience to the edge. Perhaps it's my tolerance that makes me so vulnerable to be scorned by fools. (*To the Messenger*) Now, take him out of here. Keep him in a borough of correction and make sure he learns of his position. 180

**Messenger:** Yes, my Lord. (*He pulls the Fool violently and drags him off stage.*)  
(*Pause*) 185

**King:** (*To Neo*) My heart bleeds the scorn by fools, lumpens and despicable scams.

**Neo:** My Lord, we need to find a way to the mountains and hills yonder.

**King:** What for? 190

**Neo:** Libombozo, my Lord. Remember the root and leafage of that tree? Its potency has an answer to all. It brings fortune, it conquers darkness, it fights malice, it - it -

**King:** (*Nodding his head*) Yes, countryman, you excite me now: Libombozo! 195

**Neo:** (*Responding*) Libombozo! (*They laugh.*)

180 The King's paranoia makes him react to the word. His uncertainty about his judgements make him paranoid.

184-185 "a borough of correction" refers to a cell or jail.

191-192 Neo still thinks the King's problems can be solved only by herbs.

(*It is on the same stage. The Queen mother is engaged in an intensive conversation with her son. The son is dressed in a suit and looks very modern.*)

**Town Clerk:** Mother, I am becoming so incensed by my father and his people. There is great potential for expanding River Town and you are the only impediments here.

**Queen:** My son, your father has been trying. He is still trying and I think you should be grateful to him for his efforts.

**Town Clerk:** (*Impatiently pacing around and looking at his watch*) Development, development, Mother. That is my mission in this compound. Where you and I stand right now there is potential for a bank; on that kraal (*pointing at some distance*) there is potential for a library, and in that cornfield (*pointing at a distance again*) there is potential for a chamber of commerce and industry. 10

**Queen:** (*In an angry tone*) Your father is trying, John. Don't you understand that?

**Town Clerk:** I do not want him to try, Mother; I want him to do it. (*He repeats himself angrily.*) I want him to do it. Time, I have no time. I have been waiting for a long time now. (*Pause*) He is the King, he commands and people follow. Why is he failing to command his people? Look, Mother, our council counts on me. You need to move out of here in order for me to maintain my job. I do not want a nasty situation where I send policemen and soldiers to forcefully destroy your slums. 15

**Queen:** Slums, slums - you say, my son. It is on this soil that your umbilical cord was buried. It is in this hut you call a slum (*pointing at some distance behind the stage*) in which you were born. It is behind

2 There is always a sense of duality of life in many African societies. While they live in urban areas, they will always maintain a homestead in rural areas that remains custodian of ancestry and traditional heritage. In this case, the King's son sees no value in rural life as he is now the champion of modernity.

this compound in which your great ancestors rest. It is here where you can find guidance from your ancestors. Can't you understand that? *(They look at each other in a tense way. After a while)*  
Your father is trying, he is trying. *(Pause)* 25

**Town Clerk:** I am sorry, Mother, for raising my voice in such a disrespectful way. I did not mean to - I just came to deliver some things I bought for you. I have to go back now. 30

**Queen:** Before you leave *(she holds him back)*: we are making a big fire in the compound. Your sister has gone to fetch firewood. It is an important fire. Your father wishes to pass on his mantle to his successor.

**Town Clerk:** *(Surprised)* Successor? Bu he is still too young, fresh and healthy to do that. 35

**Queen:** Since you are the only son he has naturally, you are of the Royal throne.

**Town Clerk:** That's scary - But where is he now?

**Queen:** He has travelled to the banks of the river. Perhaps to find some peace, but he'll be back before dusk. 40

**Town Clerk:** *(Giggles a little and then speaks)* How funny! Perhaps I should try. Imagine me running two offices, the municipality one and the palace. Perhaps I should try. Yes, maybe I should try. Then it will be easy for me to move all these nincompoops and numskulls out of this place. *(The mother looks at him as he shows gestures of immense happiness.)* It's a golden chance. *(Lights fade and darkness falls.)* 45

## ACT TWO SCENE TWO

*(Neo and his son walk through the audience towards the stage. It is as if they are walking through the bushes.)*

**Neo:** *(Pointing at the sky and talking to the son)* Do you see the fowl of the air? They are of lesser intelligence than mankind. Yet, they know how to play mother-and-father matters.

**Akapelwa:** *(Amazed at his father's talking. He giggles audibly.)*

**Neo:** *(Angrily)* Don't laugh. *(Stops and looks at his son for a while)* Everything you see here has its partner. Of the fowl of the air, there is that of female that serves the male. Of the beasts of the land, there are females that serve the masculine, and of the fish and creatures of the waters, the pattern is the same. Akapelwa, you are not a boy any more. Is your axe sharpened? 5

**Akapelwa:** Yes, Father. *(They walk.)*

**Neo:** The King's daughter's thong of the ritual of chastity is no more visible. It has waned. Your leg is also exhausted from your fold at night. *(The son laughs.)* Don't laugh, it is not funny. 10

**Akapelwa:** I beseech your forgiveness, Father.

**Neo:** *(Looks at the son, then moves on)* I have raised a good breed of cattle to exonerate you of your boredom. The King is ready to surrender his daughter; you are about to dine on royal flesh. *(Amazed by his father's language, the son giggles audibly and Neo slaps him hard.)* Shut up, silly boy. I am trying to knock some sense in you and you portray some strains of nincompoopity. 15

**Akapelwa:** *(Humbling himself again)* I beseech your forgiveness, Father. 20

**Neo:** *(Looks at his son - walks on)* Are you ready to build a home, or is your head failing your mature body?

3 Neo seems to have picked up the issue of homosexuality somewhere and he uses this opportunity to attack it.

9 "axe sharpened" refers to the ability of manhood.

11 The King's daughter is now mature and ready for marriage.

12 "Your leg ....." refers to the loneliness of a single man.



## ACT THREE

### SCENE ONE

*(The King and his wife are on the stage. The King is seated in his usual chair He is cutting his skin with a blade and applying medicine. His wife is kneeling down at a nearby distance, pounding roots into powder)*

**King:** *(Talking to himself while applying the powder)* Libombozo, my elixir, you are the cleanser of all evil spells. You also bear remedy for all known and unknown infirmities. I apply you into my royal veins. Protect me and my palace from the spells of my enemies, protect me from the venom of unstable creatures, waters and air. *(Looks at the wife who is busy grinding the roots)* Mother of the children, how much powder have you produced?

**Queen:** I am still grinding and pounding, Father of the children.

**King:** You shall grind more for the whole ritual, Mother of the children. We shall use some for a bath and apply some in our meals. We shall burn some for a cleansing smoke and the remainder shall be sprinkled around.

**Queen:** Will that not be too much, Father of the children?

**King:** Too much you say? You see, my wife, a royal palace must be well protected from all evil spells of any kind. Its accessibility must be hard as a quarry of dried lava of the bowels of the earth. Right now, the palace is as vulnerable to spells as a nude youth is to a hungry warrior. Perhaps it's time we started treating the whole compound. *(He stands up and walks to the wife. He gets some powder puts it in a container of water mixes it and starts sprinkling it all over. He utters unintelligible words while sprinkling the liquid all over the compound. His utterances and sprinkling are disturbed by the arrival of Villager and Mr Kamwande.)*

9 There are many ways in which herbs are used to treat ailments or simply attack the targeted spells. One of the ways is by cutting some surface area of the skin and apply the powder in some bleeding cutting.

17 "a nude youth" refers to a nude female youth.

**Mwiya:** Pardon my intrusion, Your Highness and your noble queen. I could neither see the messenger nor the children to lead me into your palace. 20

**King:** *(Stunned by the presence of Mwiya in his most private ritual)* No, no, Bo Mwiya, not at all. You are most welcome into my palace. It is a palace for the people, you included, Bo Kamwande. *(He puts down his utensils for cleansing and directs Kamwande to a seat.)*

**Mwiya:** *(Heading for the seat)* I thank you, Your Highness. *(Pause)* 25

**Queen:** *(Crawls to the visitor on her knees and greets him in a traditional way, i.e. clapping hands in a respectful manner)* Was your day passed well, Father of the village?

**Mwiya:** *(Returns the traditional greeting)* Yes, indeed, Mother of the village. How are the children?

**Queen:** They are well, and how is the Mother of the children? 30

**Mwiya:** She is well.

**Queen:** And the children?

**Mwiya:** They are well too.

**King:** Is it all well with you, countryman? Was your day passed well?

**Mwiya:** Indeed it was, my Lord. I am, however, disturbed by the content of a particular dream that I believe is now causing misfortune to my compound. 35

**King:** Misfortune?

**Mwiya:** Yes, my Lord. *(Pause)* Yes, misfortune; perhaps the right word would be spell. *(Struggling to speak)* A fortnight ago a new calf called into my kraal. It was delivered in the woods. 40

**King:** How do we appease our ancestors for that wonderful token?

**Mwiya:** The calf finds refuge in the wilderness and whenever my shepherds try to bring it home with its mother, it sinks into the darkness with the waning sun of the dusk. 45

27 It is more respectful in the culture of many ethnic groups in Southern Africa not to call an elderly person by his first name but by recognizing parenthood to some child especially the firstborn.

King: That is scary.

Mwya: My call for assistance from those of our ancestry has not helped. The ancestors are quiet. I have called them by word. I have even tried to appeal to their thirst by giving them a brew from our millet, but to no avail. They are quiet. This has never happened, my Lord.

King: Indeed, this has never happened; it sounds newsy too. *(There is an immediate mumble backstage coupled with lightning. A moment of silence follows as the surprised elders just look at themselves. After a while, a little girl comes running to the King.)*

Kahimbi: Father, Father, the granary has caught fire. The crops in the granary are burning. *(Panic on stage as the Queen rushes quickly off stage)*

King: Did you set the granary on fire?  
*(The Messenger who enters in a rush to also report the incident gives the answer)*

Messenger: No, my Lord. It is not the child that set the granary on fire. It is natural light, heavenly lightning.

King: You should be helping with fighting the fire instead of putting up a child act of reporting.

Messenger: Yes, my Lord. *(They all hurry outside. There is noise backstage. It is a noise of people fighting the fire. Lights fade.)*

32

## ACT THREE SCENE TWO

*(Peggy and Thelma come on stage carrying buckets of water)*

Thelma: He is so unschooled. *(while walking on stage and giggling)*

Peggy: He comes across as a witty stud though.

Thelma: Witty in hunting and milking cows. *(They giggle, put down the buckets of water and stare at each other)* They want me to marry him.

Peggy: I know, but how do you feel about it?

Thelma: Feel about it, what do you think?

Peggy: Affection.

Thelma: Don't be silly! Don't you believe all I need is you?

Peggy: I do believe, but - *(Thelma pulls Peggy closer and tries to kiss her, but they are interrupted by the rushing in of the Queen.)*

Queen: What are you girls doing? *(The two girls look at the Queen surprised or shocked.)* Bring that water quickly. The granary is on fire and you girls are playing like kids here.

Thelma: Sorry, Mother, we didn't know.

Queen: I guessed so. We need a lot of water though.

Peggy: We will rush back to the well to draw some.

Queen: That will be good. *(The Queen and Thelma quickly go off stage with buckets of water Akapelwa comes on stage, rushing, with another bucket of water and finds Peggy, who is wondering what she should be doing.)*

Akapelwa: I have heard there is a fire to fight here. Where is it?

Peggy: *(With a wide smile)* It's a granary behind the compound on fire. *(Akapelwa picks up the bucket and tries to find his way through to the backstage, but Peggy pulls him back by his clothes.)* Not so fast, gentleman.

33



## ACT THREE

### SCENE THREE

*(The three elderly men come back on stage, carrying empty buckets and showing signs of exhaustion. They take their seats.)*

**Mwiya:** My Lord, I am so surprised at this heavenly fire that chooses to devour your granary of all the organic elements of the earth.

**Neo:** If I may opine, countrymen, I see this strange ordeal as a spell.

**Mwiya:** On the contrary, my friend, the elders have told of a fairy tale in which ancestors gave ominous signs through fires of the heavens. I am fully convinced that what we have witnessed today is nothing else but an omen. I am sure my friend Mbeha will also agree with me. 5

**King:** *(In a reprimanding tone)* Hold your tongue, Bo Mwiya. I think we should take what happened today lightly. Let's exonerate our ancestors from this dirt. 10

**Neo:** I agree - absolutely, our Lord is right. Bo Mwiya, perhaps we should also understand that words alone can also rock the cradle.

**Mwiya:** Your words are well crafted, Bo Neo. They make me feel like a juvenile entangled in a school of initiation. I admire your wisdom. *(To the King)* My Lord, they say never say goodbye. *(He stands and tries to walk out but the King stops him.)* 15

**King:** Spare me a moment, countryman. *(He stands)* Let me see you out to your way home. *(To Neo)* I will be with you soon, Bo Neo. *(He walks the visitor off stage. Before he disappears he calls out for the daughter.)* Kahimbi, Kahimbi. *(Kahimbi does not answer but simply comes on stage.)*

10 The King does not want to acknowledge the divine signs. While opposing Mwiya he does not want to create enmity with him because he knows that Mwiya may incite villagers into rebelling against the palace.

16 It is in the tradition of some tribes of Southern Africa that when you bid farewell to your neighbours, you avoid saying goodbye as this would result into an unwanted omen of you going away for ever.

**Kahimbi:** I am here, Father. 20

**King:** Since when have you become mute to answer my call by your presence? Give Bo Neo a brew.

**Kahimbi:** Yes, Father. *(They all walk out. Then Kahimbi re-enters with a calabash and she speaks to Neo.)* Mama said you should remember to sanctify the elders with the brew. 25

**Neo:** Tell your Mama that it shall be done. *(He gets the brew and pours some on the floor before he starts sipping.)*

**King:** You were quick to respond to the destruction of my cradle, my friend; your Tokoloshi must be very efficient.

**Neo:** *(Laughing hysterically)* No, my friend, it is not about having a tokoloshi. The news about the happenings of your compound spreads faster than the fire that has just devoured your granary. 30

**King:** I am horrified by this mystical act of sabotage.

**Neo:** *(Abrupt reaction)* Well put, my Lord, indeed, well put. I also thought it was indeed an act of sabotage. I could tell by the ominous hints around my compound that some form of misfortune would befall either those of my kinship or friends. 35

**King:** What were the clues, my friend?

**Neo:** In the middle of the past day, a whirlwind from far afield came and ravaged the roof of my senior wife. A fragment from the debris of this wreckage knocked down dead my only product: a he-goat. 40

**King:** *(Surprised)* Ha-ha. I would not call that an omen; that is a calamity in itself.

**Neo:** At first, I thought one of my wives had used wrong timber for the compound fire, but the other omen that followed the one I have just narrated made me change my mind. 45

26 Any liquid meant for drinking, most especially a brew, should be poured on to the floor before one drinks it as a gesture of appreciation of one's ancestors.

28 "Tokoloshi" is the name given to things that are used by witches and wizards. In most cases, these are things that have life in them and they can only be seen and used by their owners to do anything for them, ranging from killing the enemies to stealing necessary items for them.

## ACT FOUR SCENE ONE

*(It is the same stage scenario as in the preceding scene. The Town Clerk dressed in his usual contemporary suit enters the stage. He is breaking shells of groundnuts and eating them.)*

**Town Clerk:** *(Calls in his little sister Kahimbi who comes in quickly)*  
Kahimbi, your groundnuts are well roasted. They are delicious.

**Kahimbi:** Thank you. When will I come and eat some by my in-law?

**Town Clerk:** Don't start with me now, little girl. *(Kahimbi laughs)* 5

**Kahimbi:** But she looks so lovely.

**Town Clerk:** I told you not to get into that. I have warned you. *(Kahimbi laughs again and tries to walk off stage.)* Hey, stop. Don't go. Come and sit down, I need to talk to you. *(Kahimbi comes back and sits down.)* 10

**Kahimbi:** What do you need to know?

**Town Clerk:** Why are you so rude?

**Kahimbi:** Rude? Me? What about you?

**Town Clerk:** What, me? 15

**Kahimbi:** What about your intentions to destroy your own father's village? Is that not rude enough?

**Town Clerk:** Shut up, you little brat!

**Kahimbi:** Me? Shut up? You must be joking. You come here and threaten to destroy my father's homestead and you ask me to shut up. You must be joking. 20

**Town Clerk:** *(Angrily)* I shall not take this insult from a useless numskull like you. *(He advances to beat her)*

**Kahimbi:** Come on, coward man, beat me. Go on, beat me. *(The Town Clerk stops very close to the sister and hesitates to touch or beat her)*  
You think you can go around bullying everybody. Go

2 "in-law" here refers to the Town Clerk's lover.

42

on, fight me. *(Pushes the brother around. The Queen is attracted by noise and then walks in.)*

**Queen:** What is going on here?

**Town Clerk:** Mother, talk to your daughter. I think she is running insane. 20

**Kahimbi:** Insane? You are the one who is insane. Father is now even thinking of retiring because of you. Who do you think you are?

**Queen:** *(Angrily to the daughter)* You shut up and get out of here before I land my hand on you. *(Kahimbi looks angrily at her brother and slowly walks off stage. The Queen then follows the daughter to backstage. As the Town Clerk paces around the stage, Mr Mbeha walks in carrying a bag of corn.)*

**Mbeha:** Good day, my child. Is the elder of the village around?

**Town Clerk:** Good day to you, Bo Mbeha. My father has gone out for a while. Please feel at home, you are welcome. 30

**Mbeha:** *(Mbeha looks at the Town Clerk and slowly speaks in a building anger)* You *(pointing at the Town Clerk with a shaky finger)* - there you are, you must be the inscriber of the letter of destruction.

**Town Clerk:** *(Surprised at the accusation)* You unfairly pour scorn on me, Bo Mbeha. 35

**Mbeha:** If you were born of my clan I would have killed you myself.

**Town Clerk:** Again you pour scorn on me unfairly, Bo Mbeha.

**Mbeha:** I thought a white man's school would mould a pure man at heart, but now I see an apparition that loathes its cadavers. May your disrespect of these of ancestry reward you with what you deserve. 40

**Town Clerk:** I think you have stretched my patience too far, Bo Mbeha. Now let me tell you. Should I take over the crown from my father, I shall see to it that you, your spouses and children find their way back to the Pula people. You and your children have no say over spoils and matters of the Kwena people. 45

43



**Mbeha:** In the name of our ancestors whose bones are buried in this soil you claim to be of your tribesmen, your life shall see no peace. Your uncultured intended activity shall have you pay dearly. If the dead are still with us, in their name, the crown you wish to inherit will slip away. I pity the womb that carried you. 50

**Town Clerk:** (*Angrily*) Bo Mbeha, I condemn your insolence on my mother. I shall ask you to leave at once if your intentions of coming here were to lure and bribe me into allowing you not to leave this village.

**Mbeha:** Ancestors have cast a spell on the innocent because of your deeds. I assure you, before the thirst of darkness consumes rivers and dams dry, your saliva will have been swallowed first. Although I puff through my frail and ancient lungs I assure you, the gravity of this earth shall have worked your bones before I die. You shall find no serenity in this dystopia. Here, take, take this baggage of grain for your father. I brought it because it has been decreed from his palace that his subjects shall refill the granary consumed by the natural fire. Excuse me. (*He exits.*) (*The Town Clerk picks his dish of groundnuts and leaves the stage as a sad man.*) 55 60

47 Mbeha's usage of the words "our ancestors" carries a loaded concept which the Town Clerk can not detect. They are a counter-response to the preceding claims of "birthright" uttered by the naive Town Clerk.

## ACT FOUR SCENE TWO

(*The stage setting is the same as the preceding one. Thelma walks in with a suitcase followed by her friend Peggy.*)

**Thelma:** You are not going anywhere! You are staying here with me until we go back. That is what we agreed upon.

**Peggy:** You do not understand. I have to go back home. Please give back my bag.

**Thelma:** Forget it, Peggy. You and I promised to face anything together. You will not leave me here alone. Mother knows about us. This is a time for us to be together. You are not leaving me here.

**Peggy:** Us? There is no us, Thelma. You have Akapelwa to marry and I am -

**Thelma:** You are what? Look, Peggy, there is no Akapelwa between us. You know very well how I feel. I know you know we feel for each other and nobody can break that.

**Peggy:** No, no, no, Thelma, you don't understand. Yes, we may be bearing the same deep feelings towards each other, but remember there could have been room for being curious. Perhaps we were just - trying.

**Thelma:** Trying?

**Peggy:** (*Noticing the anger in Thelma*) I don't mean what you think. Thelma - I simply mean that people move on in life. You have to get married to Akapelwa - that's what your folks want and it's time you honoured their wishes.

**Thelma:** I don't need lectures on issues that run contrary to my taste and feelings. I know what I want. I wasn't trying, Peggy - I was and I still feel deeply involved with you. Please don't leave. (*Suddenly the Town Clerk appears on the stage carrying a briefcase.*) 2

The dialogue that opens the scene reflects two girls whose inner worlds are severely torn apart. Thelma is driven by pure innocent inner dictates, while Peggy's outer explorations cause commotion with all those that interact with her.

## ACT FOUR SCENE THREE

*(The oracle of Cidino is an open space with a few bush shrubs here and there. It is illuminated by simple and ordinary light. The King and Neo enter in a respectful manner. They bow down in reverence.)*

**King:** Lords of the soil, Kings of the crocodile people, Royal Ancestors of the tribe, my arrival needs no ceremony for I am your child. Lords of the tribe, my bones have grown feeble, and gray hair has spread on my head and I have never been unblest in my invocation to you. Lords, you that are meant to rest sitting aloof and erect majestically on your royal crowns as if you were of those of life, I beseech and implore your ears, mercy and grace. To you I surrender my baggage and burdens of the crown. Oh, Royal Lords, I implore you once more to hear my plea. *(Severe lightning and thunder strike the stage and the terrified King and his friend run around the stage in confusion.)*

**Oracle:** Mankind, what seeketh thee among the dead?

**King:** *(Trembling)* Royal Lords, my clay carcass mourns and fears the horror of the unknowable spells that haunt your children.

**Oracle:** Behind the dim unknown to you of clay standeth we within the shadow keeping watch above our own. Confess your infirmity that has caused your children the trouble you dread so much.

**King:** Royal Lords, you have never failed any soul. You have listened with zeal to all our obscurations. In times of drought, you have

54 "rest sitting aloof and erect": it is in the tradition of the tribes of the Eastern Caprivi to bury their Kings seated on their thrones as if they were alive. This is obviously different from the conventional norm. All other people of the tribe of the Eastern Caprivi are buried in a conventional way in which they lie flat in their coffins.

10 "Mankind, what seeketh thee among the dead?" is a direct citation from the synoptic Gospels of the New Testament of the Christian Bible in which an angel asked those that went to look for Jesus Christ in his grave on the third day of his burial. The voice is a spirit of a dead king. It is believed that in the past a live king would hold a conversation with the dead kings in this sacred cemetery.

rendered a pelt of rain. In times of afflictions, you have given us wisdom and remedy to live. It's through your mercy and grace that crocodiles of the river swim in serenity and harmony. For the destitute and the low you provide the joys they know. Royal Lords, you who sit prostrate among those lain flat in caskets, I invoke your blessing in passing the mantle and crown to your heir, for Lords you know the speed of a younger crocodile's tail is undisputed and a thorn in the flesh of its cache.

**Oracle:** We heard your orison reverberate from a distance in the horizon. Your trembling and rattling bones echoed by walks of the children of crocodile saddened us. We gave you a rod of correction, which you have traded for the taste of modernity.

**King:** Royal Lords -

**Oracle:** You shall listen - child - *(Pause)* You have violated the spirits of our subjects whose souls rest behind their homesteads. The splinters of their bones displaced by the conquest of aliens haunt your palace. We have sent you signs to warn you against your abomination; but you have received them with mockery and jest. You have poured scorn and ridicule on the custodian of the word. The taste of your yield blindeth you. You reaped without a qualm on who laboured your field. Do you indeed own the field that gives you your yield?

**King:** *(With some difficulty)* I don't know.

**Oracle:** That's right. You do not know - You do not even know the season or the moon to brew for your Lords. You do not know the

2R "a rod of correction" is a direct reference to authority and not the literal use of it.

33 "the conquest of aliens" is a reference to the Western advent on traditional beliefs and institutions.

36 "custodian of the word" in the modern world would be seen as the media while in the world or set-up of the play the expression refers to the utterances by the "Fool".

37-38 The "field", "reaped without a qualm" refer to the King's thriving on the produce by his children without critically evaluating the method and ideological principles on how the children were prepared to produce the produce.



## ACT FIVE SCENE ONE

*(It is in the King's palace. The Queen and her daughter Kahimbi are removing chaff from the grain in a traditional tray.)*

**Queen:** The chaff can be so canny at times it looks like part of grain. You should be careful not to let it deceive you.

**Kahimbi:** Mother, what will happen to my sister and her friend? Is Father going to punish them? 5

**Queen:** If he is true to himself, he will pardon them.

**Kahimbi:** True to himself, what do you mean by that, Mother? *(The Queen looks at her daughter)* But, Mother, how can a girl play mother and father business with another girl? Are you sure they are not insane?

**Queen:** They are normal, just like you and I. Perhaps they just feel differently. 10

**Kahimbi:** Mother, I have heard women of the village talk. They say my elder brother is of the Pula tribe. Is it true, Mother? Is he of the Pulatribe?

**Queen:** *(Shocked and angrily)* What? Where did you pick up that dirty piece of news?

**Kahimbi:** Even my grandmother mentioned it the other day. Why are you perplexed about it, Mother? Am I not to know about it? Why, Mother, why are you angry? Why don't you want me to know about it, Mother? 15

**Queen:** What are you talking about, Kahimbi?

**Kahimbi:** You know what I am talking about, Mother. Don't pretend not to know. Your son is literally destroying my father's kingdom. He

22 In many African traditions it is unusual for a child to talk to a parent in the manner Kahimbi is talking to her mother. However, human nature has it that when one gets driven by anger, even his or her temperament becomes compromised. The angry person also loses track of his or her line of argument; hence a shift from one theme to another. In this case it means a dramatic shift from a birthright theme to the destruction of the palace.

has already destroyed the wealth of his subjects and he wants to inherit him while he is still alive. You know what I am talking about, Mother.

**Queen:** Kahimbi, I shall not allow you to invite a bad spell into my compound. You shall seal your mouth before its stench infests the whole village. 20

**Kahimbi:** Am I unearthing a secret, Mother? Is your secret deeper than the depth of an ocean?

**Queen:** *(Highly emotional)* You shut up! *(Pretends to be strong for a while whilst separating chaff from grain in the tray, then bursts into tears. Kahimbi embraces her and solaces her)* I am sorry, child, I did not realize that you are now a big girl. *(Pause)* When earth whispers its secrets to the heavens a woman feels the treachery, the misery, the shame and the trickery of the molten lava of the boiling crucible. Perhaps my numbness makes me dumb. *(The King enters.)* 25

**King:** Was your day passed well, ladies of the compound?

**Queen:** Good day, Father of the children.

**Kahimbi:** Good day, Father. 30

**King:** *(Gives a small luggage he has come with to Kahimbi)* Take this inside.

**Kahimbi:** Yes, Father.

**King:** My dry throat pleads for mercy.

**Kahimbi:** Does it call for a brew, Father?

**King:** Water will do, my girl. 35

**Kahimbi:** Yes, Father. *(Exits)*

**Queen:** What miracle has occurred to deprive you of the taste of the brew? I thought you had forgotten the existence of water.

**King:** If a man loses a fit of joy, his tongue loses taste too.

33-36 It is not an easy thing to confess one's wrongdoings to a child. This is the reason why the Queen resorts to the use of imagery to express her shame.

**Kahimbi:** Yes, Mother. *(She picks up the tray and leaves the stage with her mother)*

**Town Clerk:** You have heard for yourself. As of tomorrow, you become my subjects and you shall be sorry of your conduct today. That I promise. 85

**Peggy:** There shall be no such tomorrow, Mr Town Clerk. He is coming with me. *(Going to hold Akapelwa's hands.)* Akapelwa and I have come a long way, isn't it so, Akapelwa? *(Akapelwa looks at her with a wide smile.)*

**Thelma:** *(Shocked)* NO, you are not. 90

**Peggy:** Sorry, Thelma, but unfortunately that's how it is.

**Town Clerk:** You cannot go with this filthy maggot. He is just a goat herder.

**Peggy:** That's what I was missing in all the men I have met, a real man with a plain heart. A shepherd, a goat herder, somebody natural.

**Thelma:** But you said you loved me. So you lied to me. You lied to me, Peggy. 95

**Peggy:** I did not lie to you, Thelma.

**Thelma:** You are the one that approached me first and I did not want to until you-

**Peggy:** Just hold it there. Did I not tell you I was not sure about it? Did it not cross your mind that maybe I was just curious? 100

**Thelma:** No! *(sobs)*

**Town Clerk:** *(Reassures the sobbing sister)* You can rest assured, you are going to pay for this. 105

**Peggy:** *(Picks up her bag, pulls Akapelwa)* God bless the King. *(They exit as lights fade.)*

122 "God bless the King" is a popular expression in Great Britain used to honour His imperial Majesty. In this case, Peggy uses it as a mockery on the predicted inheritance of the Town Clerk.

## ACT FIVE

### SCENE TWO

*(Traditional Royal drums rumble backstage. It is dawn. The King comes on stage, walking and struggling to get direction with the help of his Royal rod of correction. He is in his full Royal attire.)*

**King:** Mother of the children, come quickly and lead me to the Royal seat. The prophecies of the gods are at work. My sight fails me and it pains me so. Please come and lead me to the Royal seat so that I commence this ordeal of a ritual. 5

**Queen:** *(Comes on stage quickly wrapping her traditional dress around her waist. She tests her husband's eyes and discovers they are not working.)* What has happened to you? What is wrong with your eyes? *(She tests them again by waving an arm over them, but they don't blink.)* Father of the children, what happened to your eyes? Tell me, what serpent spit its venom in your sleep? Will goat's milk do, my Lord? 10

**King:** Panic not, beloved wife. I grieve the misfortune that has befallen my eyes, but the gods have spoken and we shall abide.

**Queen:** Your healer lives a stone's throw from here and I shall fetch him at once to free your eyes of the venom of the serpent.

**King:** Summon the drummer to play a tune of Royal ritual. I shall pass on the Royal heritage to the heir. The prophecy of the Lords can not be reversed, not by any healer or diviner. Prepare a crucible of water that shall extinguish the Royal fire after the end of the ritual. Summon my son to this sacred earth to seek a sanction. 15

**Queen:** Yes, my Lord. 20

**King:** *(Before he is directed to his seat)* Mother of the children, you did not tell me about the word from my daughter's grandmother.

**Queen:** There is nothing to tell, Father of the children.

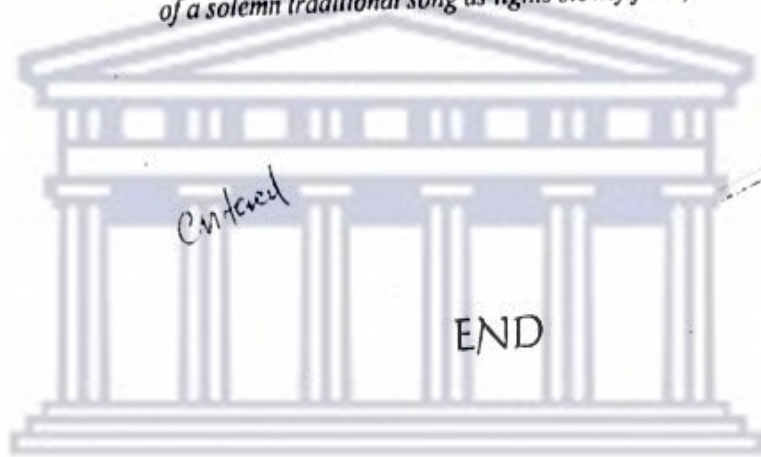
8 Serpent's venom; this is a deadly liquid which just causes blindness in many rural dwellers of Southern Africa. This happens when a venomous snake squirts its saliva straight into one's eyes.



**Queen:**

*(With difficulty the Queen looks at the Town Clerk and then at Mbeha, pointing at Mbeha.) It is his stream of blood that courses in your veins. You are a Pula. (The King who has been seated upright suddenly collapses simultaneously with his wife immediately after her speech. Some villagers including Neo run to the King to examine him. A moment of silence and suspense is felt for a while. The Fool walks over to the dead King, lifts him up with the help of some villagers and places him on his Royal chair: While other villagers try to support the King on his chair; the Fool takes the crown off his head and places it on the dead King's head. He also places the Royal rod in the dead King's hand. All this is done in the company of a solemn traditional song as lights slowly fade.)*

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