



Heads of departments' perspectives in teaching English as a first additional language in secondary schools: A systematic review

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Abstract—This study explored the perspectives of heads of departments (HODs) in teaching English as a First Additional Language in secondary school. HODs are an integral part of school leadership. HODs are responsible for directing, maintaining, stimulating, and enhancing education and focusing on the instructional methods that produce high levels of knowledge. It showed that the HODs are responsible for leading teaching and learning in English FAL and assisting their staff members, particularly those who teach English, through mentorship, assessment, and accountability. Strategies that can be recommended for HODs to improve instructional leadership in teaching English FAL were also provided. The study suggested that there must be coherent and deliberate training and development for aspiring HODs. The leadership training and development of incumbent HODs should be based on the needs analysis of all HODs. Finally, HODs should lead teaching and learning in English FAL and assist their staff members, particularly those who teach English, through mentorship, assessment, and accountability.

Keywords: Heads of departments, English, First additional language, Secondary schools

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE ability of Heads Of Department (HODs) to motivate, support, and inspire educators is essential for secondary schools' effective teaching and learning (Maponya, 2020). Similarly, Bambi (2020) argued that HODs are responsible for directing, maintaining, stimulating, and enhancing education and focusing on the instructional methods that produce high levels of knowledge. Fleming (2014) claimed that HODs have additional leadership management duties besides being subject and classroom teachers. Since 1994, the educational landscape of South Africa has undergone changes, and HODs are now responsible for overseeing the curriculum and how it is implemented in their departments or learning phases. HODs must keep up with the most recent methods and approaches, share them with teachers, and ensure they are used for learning and teaching (Sartori et al., 2018).

The perspectives of HODs played a crucial part in the teaching of English. According to Ali and Akthar (2019), HODs are responsible for managing and administering the English language and departments, and their perspectives can greatly influence the direction and effectiveness of English instruction. Additionally, the perspective of HODs on teacher professional development has been studied. Ajani (2020) found that HODs believe that teacher professional development is important for improving the quality of English teaching, and they support various forms of professional development, such as workshops and conferences.

Jones (2014) stated that reading and writing skills in English as an Additional Language are an international issue because many learners struggle to master these skills. Due to its numerous peculiar rules and pronunciations, English is unquestionably one of the most challenging languages to learn because the rules are accompanied by unexpected explanations that vary from nation to nation (Gilakjani, 2011). It takes a lot of commitment and motivation to attain a high level of good

performance as educators of English FAL (Gilakjani, 2011).

Summing up, the perspectives of HODs are crucial in shaping the direction and effectiveness of English language teaching. Numerous researchers have examined and are expanding their understanding of HODs' perspectives on teacher development, curriculum leadership, their roles as instructional leaders in the English teaching profession, and the barriers they encounter when practicing their roles. Additionally, they encounter challenges that hinder them from delivering. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2012) highlighted that HODs also encounter barriers when executing their leadership roles. Therefore, this study focuses on the perspectives of Departmental Heads on teaching English as a First Additional Language in secondary schools.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

While principals are considered school leaders and are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is successfully implemented, it is challenging to quantify their impact on daily teaching activities (Lipscombe et al., 2023). The HODs are the ones who are pivotal to the administration and implementation of the curriculum in schools (Grootenboer, 2018). According to Shaked and Schechter (2017), HODs have two roles: manager leaders and teachers, and they are subject leaders who supervise the curriculum's application in their department. Shaked and Schechter (2017) further emphasised that beyond curriculum leadership, HODs participate in additional activities to lead teams, solve problems, innovate, manage resources, and develop and access their subject curriculum. Ogina (2017) contended that the challenges faced by department heads have been overlooked in South Africa. Murphy and Bleiberg (2018) supported that by stating that it is an area that necessitates immediate attention. Albashiry et al. (2016) also added that studies about barriers faced HODs are still lacking. Due to this deficiency of cognisance of the associated barriers, it is difficult for HODs to perform their work. Understanding the challenges that HODs

face is, therefore, critical. HODs must be made aware of the potential barriers to their work and assisted in overcoming them. To contribute to ongoing research on the perspectives of departmental heads on teaching English as FAL, the curriculum leadership barriers that HODs face will be explored in this study. HODs must acquire new teaching methods and techniques, hone their management and leadership abilities, and deal effectively with the challenges of daily work (Dosunmu & Adeyemo, 2018).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transformational leadership

James V. Downton, a sociologist, was the first to coin transformational leadership in 1973 (Dionne, 2004). According to Bush (2007), transformational leadership is a concept in which the leader works with teams to identify the necessary transformation, creates a vision to motivate the transformation, and then executes the modification with determined individuals. Burns (2014) furthered the theory, contending that this leadership theory pertains to a leadership style in which both leaders and followers push one another to greater levels.

This theory was helpful because it emphasised the development of the leaders' capacity to establish expansive purpose and vision. Sergiovanni (2007) stated that leaders in transformational theory cultivate a positive culture through mentoring, empowering, and developing the potential of others. According to the relevant literature of Tabala (2024) and Mashapa (2019), HODs currently tend to use transformational leadership styles. They tend to concentrate primarily on the management responsibilities of their roles. This study provided an opportunity for the perspectives of HODs on teaching English.

Rowold and Rohmann (2009) state that a transformational leader goes beyond managing day-to-day operations, just like HODs have additional leadership management duties. This theory provided the researcher with the platform from which I understand the complementary relationship from both perspectives as they relate to the HODs perception of what they do and how they do it. HODs must strike the right balance to manage and influence others effectively.

Perspectives of HODs on the fulfillment of their responsibilities as instructional leaders in the teaching of English FAL

HODs are the teachers and supervisors of other teachers and oversee the academic curriculum. In schools, HODs are individuals who are part of the management team and middle managers (Ogina, 2017). As instructional leaders, the department leaders play a vital role in teaching English FAL in the schools. King and McGrath (2002) state that instructional leadership can enhance learning and teaching. According to Ali and Akthar (2019), HODs oversee the implementation of effective instructional strategies in teaching English and provide support and professional development opportunities for English teachers. Research by Ali and Akthar (2019) found that HODs ensure effective instructional practices are used while teaching English and providing support and opportunities for professional development for English teachers.

The study further states that HODs must monitor and assess English learners' development and ensure suitable interventions are implemented to address difficulties. Alves (2021) demonstrated that, despite the importance of their role, HODs face several challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities as instructional leaders in teaching English. One major challenge is that HODs lack time or resources to assist and provide professional development opportunities for English educators. To guarantee that learners receive the possible advantages of implementing the curriculum, HODs have been continually empowered to carry out modern instructional methods by appropriately and frequently supervising instructors (Sengai, 2019). He further states that the key position of HODs in the school, as instructional leaders, and their influence on the tone and ethos favourable to teaching and learning.

The Policy Guidelines (Department of Education [DoE], 2002) stated that department heads are designated instructional leaders. McEwan

(2003) emphasised the importance of assisting teachers in setting and achieving personal and professional goals related to improving school instruction, as well as monitoring that these goals are met; conducting regular formal and informal classroom observations; conducting post-classroom observation conferences with teachers, with a focus on improving instruction; and providing constructive critical evaluations and making recommendations for personal and professional growth. Gronn (2002) adds that there are three components of instructional leadership: designing and building school vision, administering instructional programs, and creating a pleasant learning atmosphere in English FAL. Gronn (2002) emphasised that HODs are the SMT's front line and that the first dimension is defining and conveying the school's vision. They collaborate closely with instructors and are then expected to communicate the school's mission in various contexts; for instance, the HODs of the English FAL department should do so within their division.

According to Buthelezi et al. (2021), HODs must always be optimistic to accomplish their goals and execute their duties. Mpisane (2015) found that HODs find it difficult to cooperate with teachers who arrive late to class, are unionised, and are aware of their rights, making it challenging to meet the demands of their roles as instructional leaders. As a result, HODs perceive their work as improving English FAL as stressful.

Furthermore, Maingi (2015) contended that HODs are aware that specific responsibilities and duties that teachers should undertake are assigned to them, increasing their already enormous burden as administrators running English FAL programs. Mokoena (2019) discovered that although some departmental heads struggle with role conflicts, others deal with position ambiguity. In the context of this study, role ambiguity for HODs refers to the realisation by a particular head of the department that while he or she is expected to perform a task at the departmental level, he or she is also delegated to perform many other tasks, which may affect his or her efficiency to improve the teaching of English as a second language. The HOD is perplexed since they must conduct extra chores rather than focus on subject-related concerns and perform their obligations.

Furthermore, the duties of HODs have also changed over time and internationally. Since student progress and the effectiveness of teaching and learning depend on HODs' effective leadership and administration, their leadership responsibilities are becoming more difficult (Mampame, 2017). Phillips (2009) added that to promote learner accomplishment, the HOD, as an instructional leader, must keep a standard curriculum, instruction, and assessment all in sync. Furthermore, according to Kruger (2003), leadership is a practice that comprises defining and sharing a feeling of responsibility. Bush and Glover (2003) show support by revealing that HODs as instructional leaders guarantee that the school provides knowledge that allows all English FAL instructors to participate in all educational activities, cooperation, and peer management to achieve the aim of professional progress.

HODs' roles and duties in the teaching of English FAL

The HODs are responsible for leading teaching and learning in English FAL and assisting their staff members, particularly those who teach English, through mentorship, assessment, and accountability. Monitoring is an educational process that enhances human performance and recognizes progress (Mullen, 2005). According to Kydd et al. (2003), HODs become knowledge architects, seeking improvement, establishing collaborative knowledge environments, promoting reflection, and consistently leading the growth of educators and learners. HODs supported and monitored, assessed, and evaluated staff. According to Tapala et al. (2022), the HOD's responsibility is to monitor and appraise the value of knowledge instruction. Tapala et al. (2022) indicated that reviewing instructors' portfolios, workbooks, and student work to see whether teachers' aims for student success can create desired results. HODs are responsible for ensuring that instructors in their departments are motivated to fulfill their everyday duties. Under normal conditions, successful teaching and learning in schools rely on the ability of HODs to inspire, excite, and assist

educators (Muhammad, 2009). Hopkins (2002) expresses similar views, arguing that HODs must persistently pursue techniques that enhance their teaching skills and thus create circumstances that direct, care for, arouse, and stimulate learning, as well as focus on teaching techniques that foster very high levels of learning and quality results in their departments. Furthermore, DoE (2002) adds that part of the responsibility is to support educators to acquire subject expertise to be competent in demonstrating skills that help learners in the classroom and that will help in good performance in the teaching of English, as they will also be fulfilling their responsibilities in their departments.

HODs' challenges in teaching English as FAL

Leading is not always simple. Leaders constantly face problems that restrict their work performance while on the job. Impediments or obstacles can appear in various forms and stages of the leader's activity. Supervision drives school progress in teacher quality and student learning (Ghamrawi, 2010). Shaked and Schechter (2017) point out that HODs have extra responsibilities beyond their actual responsibilities, leading to challenges. Ogina (2017) contended that the challenges faced by the heads of departments have been ignored in South Africa. Murphy and Bleiberg (2018) supported this idea by stating that it is an area that needs urgent attention. Albashiry et al. (2016) also added that studies about barriers faced by department heads are still lacking.

Moreover, Ogina (2017) contents that departmental heads face several obstacles in their work, such as a shortage of time and inadequate communication. Badugela (2012) As stated that Curriculum Policy Assessment Statements (CAPS) impose extra expectations on South African heads of department, making it impossible for them to take on a role in monitoring and teaching English as a FAL.

Thorpe and Bennet-Powell (2014) further stipulate that CAPS demand HODs to be subject matter experts with the skills to guide the curriculum, apart from the roles they already have. Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2022) bring out that the department head said that their workload makes them unable to balance their curriculum duties, which affects their responsibilities in increasing the quality of teaching and learning. With all this stated, it is difficult for HODs to supervise and teach (Tapala, 2019). Leithwood (2016) pointed out that some challenges of HODs can be related to educator preferences. This shows that most educators prefer to be leaders rather than supporting HODs as middle leadership, especially regarding class visits and inspections.

HODs' challenges faced instructional leadership in the teaching of English as a FAL

It is important to note that lack of time, support from the school leadership, resources, and heavy workload can be considered HODs' challenges. Lack of time limits HODs' capacity to fulfill specified tasks. In line with this assertion, some scholars concur with competing priorities, and HODs exacerbated the problem of time (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2018; Pinkelman et al., 2015). Time is the primary resource in all schools because the curriculum depends on it. Thorpe and Bennet-Powell (2014) support this by pointing out that where HODs are overburdened with duties, they will fall behind on tasks like monitoring teachers and learner performance. Murphy and Bleiberg (2018) further stipulates that HODs must spend time in schools and at external meetings, departmental workshops, and development sessions. Furthermore, a lack of time prevents them from completing all these tasks.

Bantwini (2010) complained that HODs face a lack of resources as a barrier when trying to do their job. McIntosh et al. (2014) show that resources could be restricted due to insufficient time, money, textbooks, classrooms, laboratory equipment, and staffing. Simpson et al. (2016) pointed out that resources such as textbooks, classroom space, laboratory equipment, the internet, and computers will impede HODs ability to do their task. He gives an example: assume there is a staff shortage; the HOD must ensure that learners who do not have an educator for a specific subject are provided with instruction or kept active. Ogina (2017) concurs that a scarcity of educators may result in overwork for some staff members, a circumstance that the HOD must

handle. Tapala (2019) continues to say that lacking resources also contributes to low student performance, which holds HODs accountable.

Leithwood (2016) states that a lack of support from the school administration could jeopardise the HODs' ability to supervise and instruct effectively. Leithwood (2016) demonstrates that an HOD may not be innovative if leaders do not support their work. He says support is a leadership strategy that could help HODs be more productive and complete their duties. Torres (2016) contends that HODs are being overworked, and being piled up with work can be overwhelming. It results in barriers and an unmanageable workload that hinders them from performing their duties, such as supervision. HODs said they work more than usual hours (Fitzgerald & James, 2019). This is also evident in the Iqbal et al. (2022) research, in which HODs stated that the burden they experience prevents them from balancing their curriculum tasks in supporting excellent monitoring, teaching, and learning. The literature demonstrated that HODs' obstacles in monitoring and teaching English FAL come in a loophole. Still, HODs must be aware of the upcoming barriers in their work and work hard to overcome them (Ogina, 2017).

HODs' strategies for instructional leadership in the teaching of English as a FAL

Planning, teacher evaluation, regular meetings, training, development, and support are crucial. All a school's operations and actions revolve around its educational leaders. According to Bush (2007), curriculum management and implementation, planning, assessments, and monitoring are the responsibilities of instructional leaders. He also emphasised the need to create a collaborative culture at schools for these leaders to succeed, since strong leaders are known for their adaptability and flexibility. Schools need prosperous HODs to give their learners the highest quality education possible (Bush, 2011). Bush (2007) argued that for HODs to provide instructional leadership roles, staff, and resources should be efficient and effective, as HODs integrate their teachers into highly successful teams, pooling their knowledge in their shared learning areas to improve teaching and maximize student results. He emphasised that where the management team is effective, they have considerable potential to enhance classroom procedures through HODs.

Planning, teacher evaluation, and regular meetings are strategies that HODs can use to provide instructional leadership and enhance teaching in English. HODs operate at the department's strategic and operational levels. A HOD must engage in departmental strategic planning and establish short-term and long-term goals. According to the PAM document (2003), the HOD is presumed to participate in agreed educator appraisal processes to regularly review their professional practice to improve teaching, learning, and management. The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) is used to accomplish this. The IQMS is guided by Schedule 1 of the Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998, which states that the Minister must define educator performance requirements. The law further states that the HOD must:

Keep abreast of advancements, research, and publications in his or her learning area and possess a keen interest in his or her learning area to the point where he or she excels in teaching it.

According to the papers, the HOD should also engage in departmental committees, seminars, and courses to contribute to and update professional standards. Styn (2020) supported this by pointing out that HODs should arrange their programs to focus on school-driven activities like workshops, seminars, and conferences since professional growth occurs when all of this is made available to HODs, and learner performance increases. However, Sartori et al. (2018) reiterated that training and development could define those educational activities implemented in organisations to empower the competencies of workers, employees, and managers in the lifelong learning perspective of their performances. Training and development aims to improve individual and group performance in institutions like schools (Hammond & Churchill, 2018). They expand on their justification by detailing that training and development ensure that employees can perform their jobs,

gain an edge over their competitors, and seek personal development through value addition; this measurable performance results from good training and development, and they will enhance school development. They say this technique increases the HOD's abilities and knowledge, leading to higher job production and, perhaps, better learner results in English FAL. Bell (2018) stated that giving training and development for teams, such as subject departments overseen by HODs, increases the efficacy of these departments. Support is a leadership strategy that may assist HODs in being more efficient. They will be innovative, and their performance can be enhanced with support (Leithwood, 2016). Pinkelman et al. (2015) argued that if there is no leadership support from the school, HODs may not support management initiation, no matter how promising the initiation may be. He expands on this by showing that HODs may be the initiative's passive supporters, meaning they will consent to participate but do nothing when implementation is needed. To make it easier for HODs to fulfill instructional leadership roles and improve teaching, both the HOD and leadership must rely on one another for assistance.

Lifelong learning.

According to Dosunmu and Adeyemo (2018, p. 34), lifelong learning may be defined as an opportunity for continuous education that is inclusive and that promotes the value and rights of the individual. Lifelong learning is a method for acquiring new things, developing skills and knowledge, adapting to demanding circumstances, volunteering in the workplace, and generally adapting to new methods (Sartori et al., 2018). According to Dosunmu and Ademoye (2018), creating possibilities for educators to advance to leadership roles, such as HODs inside schools, backed by strong leaders, is crucial. Lifelong learning is a strategic tool that can help heads of the department improve their instructional leadership roles, as professional advancement may be ascribed to the information and abilities earned by ongoing training and retraining on the job before and after employment. For the sake of this study, it is vital to recognize that lifelong learning is also crucial for HODs' career progression and personal development because of the experiences and learning opportunities they obtain as instructional leaders.

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study explored the HOD's perspectives on teaching English at secondary schools.

V. METHODS

Research paradigm

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is a set of beliefs or hypotheses about parts of reality that provide a specific perspective. Interpretivists seek to comprehend the social world. In that manner, they recognised the existence of multiple realities (Maree, 2019). Myers (2019) stated that the research paradigm is a set of philosophical assumptions researchers hold when conducting research. Hennink et al. (2011) considered a paradigm as a set of viewpoints or perspectives about reality. The term paradigm is used in educational research to characterise a researcher's world perspective (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Kaushik and Walsh (2019) define it as the community's beliefs and knowledge. This worldview is a perspective, a style of thinking, a school of thought, or a collection of beliefs that affects how research data is understood or interpreted. Every researcher follows one of the paradigms as a guideline for establishing research methods. It suggests that there are numerous explanations for reality and that reality is not purely one-sided but broad and has different meanings based on societal conceptions. The strength of this approach is that the researcher examines the issue from a participant's perspective (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Through this paradigm, the researcher was able to draw on the perspectives of the HODs on teaching English FAL, their perspectives on fulfilling their responsibilities as instructional leaders in teaching English FAL, and their roles and duties in teaching English

FAL. The challenges they encounter in supervising and teaching English FAL, and the strategies recommended to them to deliver their responsibilities.

Research approach

This study used a qualitative research approach. The fundamental underlying element of qualitative research is that knowledge building is a continuous process in which people engage in and make sense of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One distinguishing feature of qualitative research is that individuals socially produce reality as they interact with their surroundings (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), a second characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher is as essential to the research process as the participants and the data they contribute. This study used appropriate instruments for data generation and analysis. As Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stipulated, one feature of qualitative research is that it focuses on meaning and understanding. Creswell (2018) further explained this as the approach that aims to investigate and comprehend the meaning of the individual or group ascribing to a social concern or problem. Also, Hammarberg et al. (2016) note that qualitative research emphasised different realities rooted in participants' viewpoints and perceptions. Silverman (2013) clarified that qualitative research is an inductive process. In this regard, by reading articles, journals, books, and document analysis, the researcher explored the perspectives of HODs in teaching English FAL and contributed to the descriptive nature of qualitative research.

Research design

This study adopted a desktop design. Desktop research collects secondary data from the internet, libraries, and published reports (Snyder, 2019). Desktop research is quick and affordable, and more importantly, it provides quality samples and can further provide the essential time needed to accomplish those challenging project schedules. Jackson et al. (2014) define desktop research as equivalent to a literature review, as the procedure of obtaining published secondary data. This definition highlights two distinct aspects of desktop research. Firstly, desktop research exclusively relies on published secondary data. He further emphasises that the phrase "published" is widely used here and consists of books, journals, articles indexed in many databases, and research reports, which is why this design was selected.

Creswell (2014) further highlights that a desktop study is secondary research that explores data from existing documents. The data for this study were collected through document analysis, which involves collecting data from existing studies. This design allowed the researcher to use the data collected from studies before her study, as it was easy to do. Therefore, through this study, the researcher acquired more about the perspectives of HODs on the teaching of English, the perspectives of HODs on carrying out their roles as instructional leaders in the teaching of English as a FAL, the roles and duties of HODs in the teaching of English as a FAL, the challenges that HODs face in the supervision and teaching of English FAL, and finally, the strategies of HODs in providing instructional leadership in the teaching English as a FAL.

Data collection

Using the Google Scholar engine, the study explored and obtained appropriate data from scholarly articles, journals, books, and the Internet (Snyder, 2019). The second step of data gathering and analysis entailed narrowing the scope of the literature search to manageable quantities. Twenty-five journals and articles were gathered, and only ten were relevant to the study were used. The selected ten aligned with departmental heads' perspectives in teaching English as a FAL.

Selection of articles

Document analysis is a rational procedure for reviewing and evaluating available documents (Bowen, 2009). This study adopted a desktop throughout the collection of data. As a result, the analysis of such documents allowed the researcher to comprehend the perspectives of HODs in teaching English through literature.

Table 1: Articles reviewed

Authors	Year	Topics
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Tapala, T. T.	2019	Curriculum leadership training programme for heads of departments in secondary schools
Kobus, M., Tapala, T. T., & M. P., Van Niekerk	2020	Curriculum leadership barriers experienced by heads of department: a look at South African secondary schools
Maruping, W. M.	2018	Challenges facing subject heads of department in promoting quality teaching and learning in Dysfunctional secondary schools of Mopani District.
Alves, M.	2021	Challenges faced by heads of departments in fulfilling their roles as instructional leaders.
Mampane, S. T.	2017	Training middle managers of South African public schools in leadership and management skills
Shaked, H. & Schechter C.	2019	Educational management, administration, and leadership.
Ogina T. A.	2017	How do heads of department understand their roles as instructional leaders?
Mpisane B. B.	2015	The role of high school heads of department as leaders of learning.
Sengai W.	2021	Heads of department's role in the implementation of History syllabi at selected secondary schools: an instructional leadership perspective
Wilmot, A.	2017	How do English Language head of departments perceive their roles in teacher development and teacher efficacy?

Data analysis

This study employed content analysis. Content analysis is a research technique that identifies patterns in recorded expression. To undertake content analysis, you collect data methodically from a corpus of texts, which might be written, oral, or visual (Luo, 2019). Bengtsson (2016) explains that content analysis by stationing entails arranging what you have seen, heard, and read to make meaning of the information gathered. This study analysed the data to create a composite of experiences that provided a sense of HOD's perception of the perspectives in the teaching of English FAL, how they enacted their responsibilities as instructional leaders, their roles and duties in the teaching of English FAL, the challenges they encountered, as well as the strategies that were recommended to them to fulfill their roles. Data were collected through reading (Berg, 2013). Thereafter, relevant context from the data will be drawn up. The review of the data connects the themes to the notes. Matching was performed to detect similarities and differences between the data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Finally, the data will be analysed, and conclusions will be drawn.

Ethical considerations

The researcher sought approval for ethical clearance from the University of the Free State. The morality of human conduct is the focus of ethics (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Thomas, 2017). It is about minimising or preventing harm by applying relevant and proper ethical standards (De Vos et al., 2011). Adhering to ethical guidelines can avoid problems that may develop during data collection (Cohen et al., 2011). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), we base our decisions on ethics while conducting, reporting, and using research findings, rules of behaviours, and questions of values or judgments that can be recognised as good or bad, right or wrong. The ethical clearance process was initiated.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

HODs' roles and duties in the teaching of English FAL

Evidence suggests that HODs play a vital role in the success of departments (Tapala, 2019). Given their critical function, the literature showed that HODs described their experiences as people in authority who had to deal closely with subordinates of varied dispositions. According to what was said, HODs had difficulties in their leadership positions. Literature also revealed that most HODs reported an extensive lack of resources on which to rely to make the teaching environment favorable in teaching English as a FAL (Alkutich, 2017). The HODs are responsible for leading teaching and learning in English as a FAL and assisting teachers through mentorship, assessment, and accountability. According to Bush (2013), HODs' responsibility is to monitor and appraise the value of knowledge instruction. Cann et al.

(2016) revealed that teachers frequently behave in ways contradictory to HODs' expectations, such as by refusing to follow the HODs' instructions when it comes to the instruction they deliver.

Kalane and Rambuda (2022) highlighted that sometimes the HODs ask teachers to hand in their preparations, and when I keep on waiting and think they will bring their files and do their role, they do not turn up. Following instructional leadership theory, an HOD who asks his/her teachers to hand in preparation is goal-oriented in improving results in English FAL performance. Lack of cooperation from teachers causes HODs to work in isolation and hinders them from performing their roles, creating tension that affects teaching English as an FAL (Cann et al., 2016).

DoE (2002) revealed that part of the responsibility is to assist educators in acquiring subject competence so that they may demonstrate skills that benefit learners in the classroom and that will help in good performance in the teaching of English, as they will also be fulfilling their responsibilities in their departments when it comes to exercising accountability in their role.

HODs' challenges

This theme presents the findings on the challenges HODs face in their supervision of teaching English as a FAL. There is no leadership position without challenges. Nkandi (2015) discovered a negative attitude problem regarding English as a FAL supervision and teaching. When resources are scarce, HODs get disoriented and unsure what to do next (Alkutich, 2017). This suggests that if resources are scarce, HODs cannot meet their objectives in the supervision and teaching of English FAL. Cann et al. (2016) observed that HODs have discovered that many instructors openly refuse to recognise their authority, and such teachers are usually recalcitrant when requested to do their task, it becomes difficult for HODs to outdo their job in supervising and teaching English as a FAL. Moreover, Tapala et al. (2021) revealed that HODs face challenges such as inadequate communication, which causes them to be oblivious to teachers' demands. These competing priorities may be stressful to them. Also, underutilization by school principals and misbehaving learners who display negative attitudes. Ogina (2017) remarks that the challenges faced by the HODs have been ignored in South Africa. Maina (2018) discovered that HODs' work is complicated by a lack of facilities for teaching English FAL, a workload that prevents them from assessing teachers, and low morale in English FAL teaching. Madonsela and Proches (2022) agreed with Maina (2018) on the scarcity of resources. However, in many situations, HODs lack knowledge in teaching English as a FAL and monitor instructors not specialised in the subject. Cann et al. (2016) discovered the following issues for HODs. Inadequate professional development, role ambiguity and tension, and a lack of competent service training for the position. Furthermore, due to administrative duties (workload) and demotivated teachers, there is less time to devote to instructional concerns.

HODs' strategies in providing instructional leadership

Effective schools must possess strong instructional leadership. Mampane (2017) mentioned that HODs are instructional leaders who plan and supervise the application of the curriculum, evaluate instructors, participate in learner assessments, and are, most importantly, influential. To achieve professional growth, Mashapa (2019) noted that an instructional leader ensures the school provides the knowledge necessary for all educators to participate in educational events, cooperation, and peer management.

Moreover, a workshop handout was read regarding the workshops that HODs attended as a strategy for providing and enhancing instructional leadership. The researcher wanted to give out data on this theme. The following information was extracted from Chepkole et al.'s (2017) handout, in which he stated the workshop's aims and objectives, which are to train HODs on handling and interpreting the English syllabus, to also familiarise HODs with the teaching approaches in the English FAL syllabus, and to familiarize HODs with the domains to be taught and assessed. Furthermore, to evaluate HODs' monitoring capability of syllabus implementation, to evaluate HODs' knowledge of

how-to draught scheme of work from English syllabus, and to evaluate HODs' capacity to draught a thorough scheme of work for their teachers. Finally, the HODs' understanding of the curriculum domains of reading and writing, listening, speaking, and grammar in teaching English as a FAL was evaluated.

The overview of the training HODs received is consistent with the findings of Chepkole et al. (2017), who state that HODs were trained during seminars and workshops for continuing professional development. The information provided in the workshop handout was in line with the Instructional and Transformative Leadership Theories because, if HODs are given the proper training, they can be beneficial to their English as a FAL teachers and help to enhance the outcomes (Mthiyane et al., 2015). Similarly, Maingi (2015) revealed that HODs should structure their programmes to emphasise school-related activities such as workshops, seminars, and conferences, because professional growth occurs when all of this is made available to HODs, and learning outcomes improve.

VII. CONCLUSION

The position of HOD is deliberately placed between the SMT and the teaching staff in the school hierarchy, oscillating between the two tiers of leadership and followership (Ogina, 2017). The primary responsibility of the HOD is to monitor the implementation of the curriculum in the school through the topics they oversee (Fleming, 2014). Their task is significant and difficult. Even though HODs are tasked with the essential role of overseeing curriculum implementation, they lack training, leading to the challenges they face (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2012). These challenges hamper HODs in performing optimally (Thomas, 2019). The literature reviewed in this study revealed that the roles of HODs are essential in teaching English as a FAL, such as monitoring English teachers. According to Kydd et al. (2003), HODs become knowledge architects, seeking improvement, establishing collaborative knowledge environments, promoting reflection, and consistently leading the growth of educators and learners. Also, when it comes to providing strategies for HODs in instructional leadership in teaching English as an FAL, training and development were proposed. According to Hammond and Churchill (2018), the primary goal of training and development is to enhance the performance of people and groups in organizations such as schools. They say this technique increases the HOD's abilities and knowledge, leading to higher job production and, perhaps, better learner results in English as a FAL.

This study explored the perspectives of HODs in teaching English FAL in secondary schools. It further determined the challenges encountered and strategies for improving instructional leadership in teaching English as a FAL can be enhanced in schools.

This study employed a qualitative research approach and desktop design through reviewing articles and documents to obtain perspectives on the research phenomenon and adopted strict ethical norms. The study discovered no opportunities for HODs to develop as instructional leaders to fulfill their duties. HODs encountered obstacles primarily brought on by a lack of training, a lack of time, and a heavy workload. Where tactics were offered, HODs reported some enablers they perceived as the immediate outcomes of the study's techniques. Based on the findings, strategies were offered, and the roles and responsibilities of HODs in teaching English as a FAL were aligned with the difficulties they may also face. The limitations of the study were also clearly outlined.

The study aims to delve into the different perspectives of HODs in teaching English FAL in secondary schools. The literature showed that HODs grumble about the dearth of resources as a barrier (Bantwini, 2010). Therefore, this study explores the perspectives of HODs on the challenges they encounter when fulfilling their responsibilities as instructional leaders. HODs are accustomed to taking significant leadership responsibility for their subject areas and the school (Bennet et al., 2007). As a result, they have a lot on their plate, making it challenging to supervise teaching and learning. Furthermore, HODs are

responsible for ensuring that teachers have professional development for learning and teaching to be effective, as learner's performance results from strong HODs who lead and manage appropriately.

HODs in high schools are remarkably positioned to affect the standard of learning and teaching in their respective subject department (Albashiry et al., 2016; Shaked & Schechter, 2017). The study addressed possible solutions to overcoming the barriers the HODs face. Additionally, this study was helpful to HODs and post-level English teachers under their supervision.

VIII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this study.

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