

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**USING LITERARY TEXTS TO TEACH FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN A PRIMARY
SCHOOL LANGUAGE CLASSROOM**

BY

KENEILOE ROSETTA MODISE

217043864

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Education in the Language and Media Studies specialisation.**

Supervisor: Prof. Ansurie Pillay

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DECLARATION

I, *Keneiloe Rosetta Modise*, declare that:

The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.

This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers use literary texts in primary school language classrooms to teach for social justice. It worked with teachers from two primary schools in the Zululand district - one school is an independent school, and the other a government school. Teachers who participated were English-language teachers in the intermediate and senior phases. This study made use of a qualitative approach and data was generated through document reviews, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. There were many socio-economic challenges identified by the teachers, many of which affect teaching and learning. Data generated from this research does not necessarily implicate these socio-economic challenges, nor the curriculum. Rather, it shines a spotlight on the challenge of teaching for social justice especially in Home Language English classrooms to non-native speakers of English. This is exacerbated by a seeming lack of interest in reading by learners, which makes the teaching of literary texts, never mind the engagement with social justice issues, a mammoth task. While teachers in this study have not been explicit in their teaching for social justice, they still regarded it as fundamental in examining the historical and present systems of privilege and domination, since they have direct implications not only on the locations of their schools, but the socio-economic challenges of the communities in which they work. Foremost in addressing the challenges that hinder foregrounding social justice in language classrooms is providing teachers with the resources necessary to teach literary texts. These would include, but not be limited to, a library, free access to books, and time for reading in the classroom. The study recommends more teachers be offered workshops on how to engage learners' critical thinking when studying literary texts. Furthermore, this study advocates for a collaborative project for stakeholders, especially language teachers, to communicate and interact in advancing an emancipatory education that makes teaching for social justice a practical reality. It is hoped that research of this kind can help teachers and educational scholars move from a theorised understanding of social justice in education to a more practical application of it in primary school language classrooms.

Key words: banking education, literary texts, social justice, critical thinking, activist teacher

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

When discussing the theoretical foundations for social justice education, Bell (2007) asserted that social justice education needs a “theory of oppression” (p. 4). She presents the defining features of oppression. They include the pervasiveness of oppression, the restrictive, hierarchical and complex nature of oppression, the multiple forms it may take, even in cross-cutting relationships, and the internalized nature it may assume. (p. 4). It is these features of oppression that make the teaching of social justice in education a necessary part of every language classroom. To begin to work through a liberating and emancipating education (Freire, 1996) there needs to be a direct agenda to address the features explicitly. Müller, Motai, Nkopane, Mofokeng, Lephatoe and Mouton (2018) believe that to deal with issues of social justice, a teacher should engage in anti-oppressive education as a theoretical stance. This means bringing forth an awareness of systemic and systematic, repressive, and oppressive practices that continue to perpetuate injustices. Part of confronting these practices is having a deliberate awareness of education as being invariably political.

Smith (2018) links education to political views of a particular time in relation to fairness and justice and he understands that the role of education is to reduce poverty and promote social mobility. In terms of politics in England, Smith contends that the views from the left point out that inferior educational opportunities make the poor less likely to succeed whereas the views of the right are that “the poor are poor because they failed to work hard and take advantage of educational opportunities” (Smith, 2018, p. 3). These ideas of the connectedness of poverty and education are seen in the works of educational thinkers like Freire (1996) and hooks (1994) who declare education not only as an act of freedom but as an opportunity that should be available to everyone. In a South African context, the various issues related to lack of access was reduced in part by the establishment of the new Department of Education, post-apartheid, later called the Department of Basic Education (Vally, 2015). Beyond access, education is mainly about learning and teaching. Biesta (2015) believes that “the point of education

is that students learn something, that they learn for a reason, and that they learn it from someone” (p. 76). The focus falls heavily on teachers and on the possibilities of a curriculum that embraces, to full capacity, social justice education.

Biesta (2015) worries that teachers have been relegated to “factors” who need to perform to enhance the educational system (p. 75). In this regard, the professional judgements and discretions of teachers are disregarded. Teachers can grow and be empowered by a holistic model of learning and have the courage to transgress the boundaries of a curriculum and teaching which “confines each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning” (hooks, 1994, p. 13; 21). Unfortunately, teachers work in contexts that might prove a hindrance in the engagement of quality education. In 2015, Salim Vally spoke at the Strini Moodley Memorial Lecture where he addressed South Africa’s education crisis. In the lecture, he addressed several issues that contribute to the education crisis. He began by noting that “the education system as a whole reflects and reproduces the wider inequalities in society” (p. 154). Some of the issues he identified include: reports on unions selling teacher and principal posts, the contemptible state of facilities and infrastructure, and the poor performance of learners in international benchmark tests. It is with the latter that I am concerned. It speaks to the state of education in our country and how it is a social justice concern.

Chisholm (2012) has asserted that since the coming into power by the democratic government, the quality of education linked to equity has been regarded as a challenge facing the educational system in South Africa. A study on how the government has gone about promoting racial equity in schools, conducted by Fiske and Ladd (2005), showed an unequal educational system, still prevalent in many areas of the country. Their observations coincide with a study done by Spaul (2013) on what he terms “the dualistic nature of the primary education system” (p. 436). The main social justice concerns here are the fact that race, according to the research by Fiske and Ladd (2005), is still a determining factor in who gets quality education and who does not. This dualistic nature means that some learners have access to libraries and other resources while some do not; it also means that the majority of learners in the country are taught by teachers who are underqualified to do so (Vally, 2015). There needs to

be a drive towards a purposeful (Vally, 2015), transgressive (hooks, 1994) and libertarian (Freire, 1996) education that goes beyond the culture of testing and performance (Badat & Sayed, 2014) if social justice is to prevail.

In the later years of the past decade, there seems to have been an increase in the need to address social justice issues in the larger context of society. The reported violent attacks by police on African American men, which led to movements like Black Lives Matter (Brown, 2020), and the violent attacks on gay men and women on the African continent (Sandfort & Reddy, 2013) have made research such as mine essential. On the discussion of the purpose of schooling, Biesta (2015) outlines three domains of educational purpose, namely, qualification, socialisation and subjectification. Qualification refers to the transmission and acquisition of knowledge skills and dispositions; socialisation refers to ways of being and doing; and subjectification refers to ways in which children are initiated as subjects rather than objects of the actions of others (Biesta, 2015, p. 77). It is within this understanding of education that social justice education exists. Although the concept will be discussed later, I would like to note here the statement by Nieuwenhuis (2011) that social justice in education should not be looked at from a theorised or idealistic perspective but “from the social realities of the situation within which social justice must be achieved” (p. 197).

In this chapter, I will begin by outlining my motivation for conducting this research. I will further discuss the purpose of the research. To make the purpose clear, I will give background information in relation to the social justice paradigm shift pre- and post-apartheid South Africa. The context under which the participants of this research work is discussed. I have outlined the objectives of the research, followed by the research questions and I have provided an overview of the research process, including my research stance. The delimitations of the research give an overview of the decisions made to enhance the quality of the research. Finally, I have given an outline of how this dissertation is set out.

1.2 Rationale for the study

I was a Bachelor of Arts graduate, having specialised in Media Studies and English Literature when I decided to go into education. My consciousness in social injustices was awakened during my two years of studying African Literature. It was there that I began to truly understand the plight of the oppressed. It was also during this time that I began to have an identity crisis about whether or not I was African enough. Since language was a big part of the African renaissance, as students, we echoed Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1985) who asserted that there cannot be true African liberation without the rejection of the colonial language. I attended an excellent primary school in Alexandra township, where I was taught in my mother tongue and moved to an excellent high school where I was taught only in English. The struggles of my fellow learners in other parts of the country, for proper sanitation and infrastructure, were unbeknownst to me. Even in our township school we had a library and due to our partnership with an independent school, we had computer lessons every week at that school. It was with growing trepidation that I came to realise that I was not the rule but the exception. Despite the difference in the primary school and high school I attended in terms of resources, one having predominantly black learners, the other having predominantly white learners and teacher engagement, never have I ever had an experience of social justice discussions in any subjects at school, ironic when one considers the rich political history of a township like Alexandra, if not that of South Africa.

In hindsight, I can say that I received quality education throughout my schooling life. The problem then is, what use is getting 'quality education' if it does not empower one to recognise and question oppressive power structures in a society that is so rife with them? I was introduced to these concepts while doing my Bachelor of Arts in African literature, however, it was during the second semester of my Post Graduate Certificate in Education that it was truly made explicit to me. The look at how the system of domination and oppression is perpetuated through hegemony made me realise how I was colluding with this system. I believe that this lesson which I learned at a much older age should be taught at a younger age to create a culture of critical thinkers and thus a society of people conscientised into asking whose ideologies are dominant in society and who is disadvantaged in this system. As a teacher, with a better

understanding of social justice, it has become imperative for me to engage with learners on issues that affect them. Creating meaningful and thought-provoking dialogue in the classroom is essential to social justice education.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers teach literary texts in primary schools and how they incorporate social justice issues in their discussions. I am interested in how they teach social justice implicitly and explicitly. This research focuses on language classrooms in primary schools as avenues where social justice issues may be introduced, enhanced and realised. The historical nature of education in South Africa (Soudien, 2007) and the current imbalance in equal and quality education (Chisholm, 2012; Moloji, 2019), have rendered this research necessary in responding to the ongoing debate about how to bridge the gap between the conceptual understanding of teaching for social justice and the actual practice. One cannot overemphasize the importance of family background, undereducated or absent parents, poverty and unstable communities and how they affect education and the way in which learners learn (Fiske & Ladd, 2005; Smith, 2018). This research aims to show how teachers respond to these different realities, how they interpret them and how they use them in tackling social justice issues in the classroom, if at all.

1.4 Background and Context

1.4.1 Background

In their pursuit of teaching literature foregrounded by social justice education, teachers are informed by two things: the curriculum and the pedagogy. The history of education in South Africa has been inherently linked to its political history. When the apartheid government officially came into power in 1948, they sought to separate people into racial groups, thus creating a system that dehumanized black people (Chisholm, 2012, p. 86). This system filtered into education and was made official when the Bantu Education Act of 1953 came into existence. The aim of education at that time was to “maintain white superiority and dominance in the economy and state” (Chisholm, 2012). Through that ideology, ‘white’ schools received better funding, resources and

adequately trained teachers, while 'non-white' schools were taught an education that was suitable for preparing learners to become labourers (Soudien, 2007; Chisholm, 2012; Fiske & Ladd, 2005). When the new democratically elected government came into power, a new constitution was drafted which sought to "heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights" (Constitution of South Africa, no. 108 of 1996, p.1243, Preamble). One of the key issues for reparation was the racially divided education system and the Constitution gave a special provision to the right to basic education for all (1996, 2: 29a).

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (hereafter as CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011) is a guiding document to which schools must adhere. Its principles include social transformation, active, critical learning, human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice (2011, pp. 4-5). The social justice agenda of the CAPS document is stated as being "sensitive to the issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors" (DBE, 2011, p. 5). The statement is prescriptive, not descriptive. That is, it has an assumption that those who impart this curriculum will do so with special attention to its core principles. This vision of the curriculum is also connected to the type of outcomes it envisions from the learners who receive this education. Some of the outcomes are: learners who are able to "identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking; learners who can demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation" (DBE, 2011, p. 5). The curriculum provides teachers with tools to make pedagogical decisions that can promote a social justice agenda. In theory, this vision of the department is flawless and admirable. However, it is not clear if it is able to be realized in many South African schools.

During a conference hosted by the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) in 2019, one of the speakers was outlining some challenges children face during the 21st century. Her main concern was social media and other online platforms like pornography which occupy the minds of young people, leading to under-

achievements in academics. The next speaker was Dr Mamphela Ramphele (political activist). She commented on how she wished the problems the previous speaker had outlined were a reality in most South African schools. She commented on data that identified 80% of schools in South Africa as dysfunctional. Research done over a decade prior to her talk by Soudien (2007) pointed to the same issue. Similar conclusions were reached by Moloi (2019) on dysfunctional schools in the same year of Dr Mamphela Ramphele's address. Characteristic to all the research is the invariable and unshakeable legacy of apartheid. Despite the several curriculum changes, there still exists a huge gap between former White-learner schools and former African-learner schools. Sixteen years later, not much appears to have changed.

The legacy of apartheid cannot be excluded in any discussion on education and social justice. Research, including that of van der Berg (2007), Chisholm (2012), Spaul (2013) and Fiske and Ladd (2005), have shown that the Department of Basic Education has not been able to shake itself of the shackles of apartheid. While many issues are systematic, there is among others, a concern for the depreciating standard of education in South Africa. The abovementioned researchers have indicated the ongoing discrepancy in quality of education between the former white schools and former African schools. Additionally, they have also discussed curriculum issues that have hindered the progression of quality education in South African primary schools. Besides the bimodal education system presented, Spaul (2013), Chetty (2015) and Fiske and Ladd (2005), among others, have examined in greater detail the pitfalls of the various curriculum statements in the education department. Interestingly, these curriculum changes have been introduced because of their social justice agenda in the form of critical thinking and problem-posing approaches to education.

The CAPS document cautions teachers against offering their own interpretations without engaging with learners in a dialogue meant to engage their critical thinking (DBE, 2011). The statement acknowledges that learners in primary schools might not be able to provide high level of interpretation, but they should take "a close look at how a text is being created, manipulated, and re-arranged to clarify and emphasise what

is being expressed” (DBE, 2011, p. 12). In this regard, the role of the teacher is paramount because they need to make decisions about approaches, pedagogy, and curriculum for the classroom and the teaching of literary texts (Biesta, 2015). The difficulty in pursuing this vision of teaching literary texts is the demand for formal assessments or examinations. This emphasis on achievements (Biesta, 2015; Naiditch, 2010), has made it difficult for teachers to engage with learners in meaningful ways in the classroom. The meaningful engagement with learners on social justice issues has been met by responses that they are hard to assess. While this will be covered in the literature review chapter, it is vital to point out here that I do not suggest that the teaching of social justice would single-handedly restore the ailing education system, but I believe it would enhance the quality of learning, something the CAPS document also articulates.

1.4.2 Context

The historical background of the legacy of apartheid is important in this study because it bears a direct consequence to the schools participating. The two schools participating in this study are in former racially segregated areas, one in an area formerly for white people only, based in the town, and the other in an area formerly for Coloured and Indian people. The schools are in the KwaZulu Natal, Zululand District. School A (as it will be referred hereafter), is an independent, former white missionary school run by Catholic missionaries. It initially catered for the white community. There seems to have been a turning point in the 1980s however, when the school admitted African learners. With this turn of events, the Department of Education at the time banned the school from all sporting codes and it fell under scrutiny for what was deemed to be disobedience to the state. Over the years, while the academic staff of the school remained predominantly white, the number of white learners in the school depreciated, and Black and Indian learners became the majority. There are two possible reasons for this. Firstly, the school fees increased, which meant that only middle to upper class families could afford to send their children to the school, the majority of these seem to be Black families. Secondly, other predominantly white schools, both government and independent, offered Afrikaans as a language of teaching and learning, making them better alternatives for both the Afrikaans and

English-speaking learners. As it stands during the time of this research, the academic staff comprises 60 percent White teachers, 20 percent Black teachers, and 20 percent Indian and Coloured teachers. Black learners make up 98 percent of the learner population.

In contrast to School A, School B is a no-fee government school, in a former Coloured /Indian community. This school's current state is also indicative of the difficulty of schools to transition out of the apartheid legacy. The high unemployment in the area, especially amongst the youth, has seen growing violence in the area, which affects the school's teaching and learning programme. With less than eight kilometres between the two schools, the differences are astonishing with School A not plagued by these issues. School B is not a religiously affiliated school but there is high emphasis on discipline and moral teaching. The academic staff of the school is made up of 20 percent White teachers, 30 percent Coloured and Indian teachers and 50 percent Black teachers. School B serves the poor to middle-class families of the community and those that can afford to send their children to the independent schools in the area do so. It should be noted here that there are other primary schools in the area. The context of both these schools provide a classic example of Spaul's (2013) theory of a bimodal education system. However, this research makes the stance that although the two schools have glaring differences, the teaching of literary texts for social justice in a language classroom is more dependent on the teachers' pedagogical decisions, rather than the breakdown in educational systems or the existence of a bimodal education system.

1.5 Overview of key studies

This study draws and builds on various research studies. However, there are three viewpoints from which I will present the key studies that I have identified and examined as studies that shaped this study. These studies are in line with the objectives of this research as they focus on the teaching for social justice in practical ways. While not all studies engage with the use of literary texts to foreground teaching for social justice, they still offer ways of moving from theory to practice.

1.5.1 Conceptual foundations

The works of Paolo Freire (1985; 1996) rejected a system of education which continued to keep learners from marginalised groups in perpetual servitude to dominant groups. The banking education, a system of rote learning and memorisation, was seen by Freire as counter-intuitive to emancipatory education which brought strong movements seeking to bring social justice to education. The studies of Hackman (2005) and Carlisle, Jackson and George (2006) offer components and principles of social justice education. I view these as conceptual foundations for the teaching of social justice.

1.5.2 Concrete expressions

In 2012, Bree Picower published two important papers on the advancement of social justice education in primary schools. Her studies respond directly to the first two research questions in my study. In her first study, she focuses on teaching social justice inside and outside the classroom; in the second paper, she provides elements that teachers may utilize in foregrounding social justice issues in the curriculum. This also serves to emphasise my objective of exploring ways in which teachers may engage with social justice in a primary school language classroom. The study by Sensoy and DiAngelo (2014) is also a key part of the research because they also provide guidelines with which to engage social justice in the classroom.

1.5.3 Social justice in literary texts

In seeking to answer the third and fourth questions of my research, I examined the works of Herring (2017), Martin (2015), Thomas-Fair and Michael (2005) and Da Cruz (2017). These studies have provided extensive reports on teachers' experiences of teaching for social justice. Many of the issues they raised corresponded with the responses of my participants and have been indicated in my data reporting process. These studies show how literary texts provide ideal platforms to engage with systems of power and oppression and they advocate for a system that goes beyond textbook-teaching. These studies do not only advocate for a socially just syllabus (Da Cruz,

2017), they also believe that classrooms should be places of engagement, dialogue and action.

While these studies are explored in detail in the Literature Review, the studies are mentioned at this point to contextualise the research related to the topic of this dissertation.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this research are:

To identify the social justice issues, if any, that language teachers in two primary schools foreground in their teaching of literary texts

To explore why specific social justice issues are chosen to be foregrounded by language teachers teaching literary texts in primary schools

To understand how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice in primary school language classrooms

To understand how literary texts support the teaching of social justice issues in primary school language classrooms

1.7 Research questions

This dissertation addresses the following questions:

What social justice issues, if any, do language teachers in two primary schools foreground in their teaching of literary texts?

Why are the specific social justice issues chosen to be foregrounded by language teachers teaching literary texts in primary schools?

How do teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice in primary school language classrooms?

How may literary texts support the teaching of social justice issues in primary school language classrooms?

1.8 Overview of the research process

My research is situated within the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is interested in capturing the lives of the participants as subjects and not objects. Following this understanding of the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research is used in this research with the understanding that reality is subjective. To understand the constructions of reality achieved in qualitative research, I have employed a multiple-case study as a research design. This provided me with the rich descriptions from which I could thematically analyse the data. The data was generated from document reviews of lesson plans, questionnaires and interviews. Having generated this data, I used thematic analysis for all research instruments. The process included forming themes from the responses of the participants. The research process is explained in more detail in chapter three.

1.9 Researcher's stance

Cropley (2019) states that the primary purpose of research is to enlarge knowledge and the researcher is a facilitator in that process. Seeking to be a facilitator rather than a conductor of the affairs of the participants' lives, I tried to directly address the power relations issue by always giving the participants the opportunity to meet with me at their convenience and in their chosen spaces. These meetings and interviews were conducted in their classes, as I believed that this would make them comfortable because these were areas where they had power. After engaging with them in their spaces and getting them used to my research topic before sitting with them for formal interviews, they began to be comfortable with their knowledge on the topic. This subliminal recession of power from the researcher to the participants made them more comfortable and led to the increase in sharing of information from their part. While I agree with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) that the relationships between the researcher and the researched are rarely symmetrical, conscious decisions like leaving the location and time in the hands of the participants helped tip the scale in their favour.

Furthermore, I was conscious of my preconceived impressions of the schools that I researched. As someone who is an active member of the same community as the two schools, I had to be reflexive in every step of the data generation process. It was important that I not impose my own interpretations on the participants based on my beliefs and not theirs. Although I discuss the process of data verification in detail in chapter three, I would like to add here that I went back to the participants to check the data to make sure that I captured it in ways they had intended. All of the participants in the research were female and their ages were not too different to mine and I felt I could relate to them. Speaking to female teachers who were around my age group helped me generate the rich data generated. While I use first person in the reporting of this study, the voices of the participants still resonate and hold the power of their interpretations and their constructions of reality, from which I could meet the objectives of my study.

However, my identity as a religious Catholic sister (I am a nun) proved to present an issue at the beginning of the research. I sought to be a facilitator in the process. However, it became clear that not all of the participants I approached were keen to get involved, with one even commenting that they did not want to be told what to do by sisters (nuns). That participant did not return any of my communication and therefore did not participate in the study. During the course of the research and with the on-going communication with the participants, I could detect that this was no longer an issue. I used constant engagement with the participants as a way to establish a relationship that would be friendly and lead to getting more accurate interpretations of the participants' experiences.

1.10 Delimitations

In this research, I have focused on primary school teachers only, not high school teachers, nor university teachers, to explore and understand how primary school language teachers teach literary texts foregrounded by social justice issues. In this pursuit, I chose primary school teachers because from personal and professional experience, primary school education is an essential element of schooling. Added to this, the element of social justice, so clearly stated in our Constitution and the CAPS

document, has made me interested to find out how many teachers actually seek to make pedagogical decisions that speak to social justice education. This reason also factors into why language teachers were chosen. Unlike many subjects, Language offers a wide spectrum of disciplines through which the teacher may be guided. It offers historic, geographic, scientific and mathematical components that may be taught in the classroom. Literary texts, in particular, offer an opportunity to delve into different societies and ideologies, making them excellent tools to engage with social justice issues.

In addition, this study did not focus on teacher education or the perceived dysfunctionality of schools. While this research touches on some of these aspects, it does not deal directly with them. There is no intention here to discuss how to solve the problem of dysfunctional school nor is there an attempt to ascertain progress made in teacher education on social justice. The focus of this research is teachers and their pedagogical decisions that centre on social justice education. The literature in this research engages with researchers' beliefs and theories of what is social justice and continues to focus on how social justice teachings may be exemplified in a primary school classroom. Choosing to focus on social justice in primary schools is also a challenge that has been pointed out in the literature. Part of the challenge pointed out is whether learners are at an appropriate age to authentically consider social justice issues. This research adds to this aspect of the current literature.

Further, while the study considers what teachers do in their classrooms, it does not prescribe how they should teach nor provide interventions. Therefore, as opposed to participatory action research, this research falls into the interpretivist paradigm. The use of multiple case study as opposed to a single case study allows me to engage with teachers who work in different contexts. While the challenges might be similar in terms of socio-economic issues in the community and operational challenges in the schools, viewing the teaching for social justice from multiple perspectives is enriching to the research. Being interested in teachers in primary schools, this research does not include foundation phase teachers because it is from the intermediate phase that interpretations of literary texts are emphasised.

1.11 Research outline

This dissertation has been divided into five chapters.

Chapter One

The chapter outlined my motivation or rationale on why the teaching of social justice issues has become relevant to me. I further discuss the purpose of the research in a larger context. Picower (2012) has been explicit in her belief that education that is worthwhile can only be realised when it pursues a social justice agenda. This chapter also discusses the background to the dissertation and the need to teach for social justice in primary school language classroom is important in a society like South Africa. It is a society that is still grappling with not only the legacy of apartheid, but the growing economic inequalities in the country. These inequalities invariably affect how learners learn in different contexts. The distinct contexts of the participating schools give a glimpse into some prevalent issues that affect education. The chapter will then discuss my stance in this research and the delimitations of the study.

Chapter Two

Chapter two begins by laying down the theoretical framework that guides the research and further discusses key concepts in social justice education. To better understand the foundations of social justice in education, this research discusses critical theory and critical pedagogy as means through which the teaching for social justice may be realised. This chapter goes to a great length to explain justice's evolving definition; it later shows how social justice emerged from it. This is followed by the literature review which provides a critical assessment of relevant published research and key thinkers in the social justice education discussion. Some of the key elements in this section are how social justice teaching may be exemplified in education and the role of the teacher in that perspective. There are projects like the *Tolerance Project* that advocate for social justice specific literary texts which engage the learners' critical thinking and different ways of viewing power structures in society (Contreras & Delacroix, 2017). This assertion is supported by Hines (2007) who encourage teachers to find alternative ways of provoking teaching critical thinking and meaning making when reading literary texts. There is also a strong emphasis on the power of the teacher as an activist

(Picower, 2012) to effect change in and outside of the classroom through teaching for social justice.

Chapter Three

This chapter outlines the research paradigm, approach, and design. It further discusses data generation strategies and how data was analysed. It also explains the recruitment of participants and ethical issues that have risen from carrying out the research. This chapter discusses the importance of the interpretivist paradigm in trying to understand how teachers teach literary texts foregrounded by social justice issues. It further uses qualitative research and a multiple case study design to explore the objectives of the study. The use of the different data generation strategies adds to the rigour and trustworthiness for the authentication of this research. To analyse the data this chapter explains how thematic analysis was used.

Chapter Four

In this chapter, I present the data generated from the research and discuss the findings. This discussion considers the data generated and the implications of the results. I also present themes that have been identified from the generated data. In this chapter, I also talk back to the theory and literature cited.

Chapter Five

This chapter discusses my final comments and judgements based on the research conducted. This is done in conjunction with how it relates to critical theory and critical pedagogy. While the findings have responded to all the research questions, the limitations of the study, as discussed in this chapter, explain how, under different circumstances, a lot more could be achieved to understand how primary school language classrooms may use literary texts in teaching for social justice. These limitations and finding have led to my recommendations of how pursuit of this type of research may benefit the education sector to some degree.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the theoretical framework that guides this research in understanding social justice education. The transition from critical theory to critical pedagogy helps establish the move from social justice in general political ideologies to its relevance in educational research. This chapter will continue by exploring the different definitions of social justice education and how it may be realised in primary school language classrooms when teaching literary texts. The role of the teacher as an activist and their roles in teaching social justice issues will be examined. This chapter will outline the importance of choosing social justice-specific texts when teaching literary texts and discusses ways teachers may engage these texts in language classroom. The concepts of knowledge construction, positionality and safety are explored in seeking to find ways to help guide teachers in forming democratic spaces in the classroom, enriched with dialogue and critical thinking. The relevance of theory is undisputed, however, there needs to be concrete expressions of the teaching for social justice using critical pedagogical practices. This chapter will conclude by examining these through the experiences of other researchers and teacher activists.

Often, a concept that is as hard to define, such as social justice education, may be ignored or understood erroneously. Thus, the importance of understanding theory serves a two-fold purpose. Firstly, it makes one aware that the concept does not exist in isolation, that is, it arises from a particular context with the need to address a particular issue. Secondly, it makes explicit issues that are relevant pertaining to that theory as researched by different scholars. It is through theory that we move from merely giving an opinion to engaging in critical conversations. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) see theory as maps that guide us in identifying problems and conceptualising their solutions.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Critical Theory

Critical theory is a concept which arose from theorists at The Frankfurt School who were critical of theories of the time. Their work was driven by an underlying commitment to the notion that theory, as well as practice, must inform the work of those who seek to transform the oppressive conditions that exist in the world (Darder, Torres & Baltodano, 2017, p. 7). Being informed to a large extent by the Marxist theory, theorists from the Frankfurt school - which included the likes of Theodore Ardono, Erich Fromm and Walter Benjamin, just to name a few - were primarily concerned with the pervasive nature of the dominant ideology (Darder, et al, 2017). Karl Marx was concerned with the treatment of the working class as well as the ideological constructs embedded in mass culture. The work of the Frankfurt School is significant here because it gives purpose to the issues of critical thinking and critical pedagogy. They argued against the domination of cultural industries that led to the promotion of singular opinion. This theory is, according to McLaren (2002), “linked to the theory of domination...[which] refers to unequal powers that privilege some groups over others” (p. 69).

Thompson (2017) urges us to engage with critical theory through the lens of critique. He states that a critical theory of society desires to uncover the ideological structures under which knowledge is constructed “since the way we comprehend the objective world is related to the ways we conceive of ourselves” (Thompson, 2017, p. 2). He further states that the main function of critical theory is not to replace one form of ideology with another but to expose the discrepancies that already exist. This is echoed by Cohen, et al. (2005), who state that critical theory is meant to transform individuals and society towards a form of social democracy (p. 28). The fundamental aspect of critical theory is that it must transform. This link with transformative justice renders it an essential theory when tackling social justice in education.

Strunk and Betties (2019) view critical theory as a “powerful analytical frame for understanding educational disparities and injustice as functions of power, domination and exploitation” (p. 71). This is the first reason why critical theory is relevant to this

study. The inequalities in education that exist in South African schools (Moloi, 2019) are prevalent and inherently linked to the socio-political nature of the country. Critical theory also seeks to address issues of financial implications on schooling (Spaull, 2012) which have contributed to how education is delivered to learners in South African primary schools. The second reason for the relevance of critical theory in this research is its underlying link to critical pedagogy – an educational theory linked to educational research. Strunk and Betties (2019) admittedly use critical theory and critical pedagogy interchangeably. This research does not use them interchangeably but rather sees critical pedagogy as the extension of critical theory. It does so by responding to the critique that it does not adequately centre race and gender issues (Strunk and Betties, 2019). Theories like critical race theory, gender theory and critical pedagogy accompany critical theory to realise its full potential in educational research.

2.2.2 Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is an expansion of critical theory, understanding that critical theory is “hard to realise in action short of a full revolution” (Strunk & Betties, 2019, p. 78). While critical theory focuses on hegemony in society, critical pedagogy does so in education and the hidden curriculum which exists. Hegemony are practices in society that are seen as normal or obvious that promote ideologies of the dominant culture (Strunk & Betties, 2019, p. 78). It was these hidden ‘norms’ in society that compelled Paulo Freire to examine how schools in Brazil were politically contested arenas (Freire, 1985). Freire (1996) saw schools as suffering “narration sickness” (p. 52). Education in this instance depicted teachers as omniscient bearers of information who deposited knowledge into learners and later withdrew it in assessments; learners were empty objects waiting to gain knowledge from the teacher. This is linked to rote-learning and memorisation which characterised the apartheid state of education for black learners. There was no emphasis on recognising how knowledge is constructed, nor was there any probe into how dominant ideologies are perpetuated in society. Paulo Freire’s preoccupation with various challenges in education led to the rise of critical pedagogy, problem-posing education, and democratic, multicultural and culturally responsive teaching.

Kincheloe (2008) asserted that critical pedagogy was not simply about making the learners feel good about themselves but it also “focuses on subtle workings of racism, sexism, class bias, cultural oppression and homophobia” (p. 11). It furthermore exposes what is usually labelled as ‘neutral’. Critical pedagogy is also grounded in several principles which include: the alleviation of human suffering, the teacher as researcher, social change in cultivating the intellect, and the understanding that education is inherently political (Kincheloe, 2008). However, these principles work off the assumption and emphasise that educators need to have a deep knowledge of content, as it is a prerequisite to social justice education. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2014), Hackman (2005) and Picower (2012) also acknowledge that teacher activists have to go beyond the boundaries of the planned curriculum and make their classrooms safe spaces for dialogue on social justice issues. This study seeks to understand how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice in a primary school classroom and critical pedagogy is an essential part of that. Since there is no such thing as an unbiased book (Klein, 1985), critical pedagogy helps to unpack and reconstruct knowledge that has always been regarded as infallible or ‘common sense’.

Critical pedagogy is an approach of teaching that examines power imbalances and oppressions and it aims to liberate the oppressed and engage with them in their own liberation (Freire, 1985). In my opinion, the teaching of literary texts with an emphasis on social justice issues cannot succeed without critical pedagogy. Appleman (2009) believes that the teaching of literary texts create an ideal platform for learners to not only learn reading but to also resist those hegemonic powers that seek to subjugate them. This shows the relationship between reading and interpretation. The CAPS document states that interpretation without the learners’ own comments does not teach them much and that “it is not about right or wrong...[but] about searching for what is meaningful to the reader” (DoBE, 2011, p. 12). Critical pedagogy is what informs the language teacher in teaching literary texts and is an essential theory in this research because it gives foundation to the question of how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice in primary language classrooms.

2.3 Literature review

2.3.1 The discourse of justice and beyond

The definition of justice has been contested for a long time. In *The Republic*, Plato (370BC, as cited in Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007) overhears a conversation between Cephalus and Socrates about what they believed to be justice. It is clear from their argument that their definitions of justice depended on their contexts. Cephalus believed that justice was paying back a debt, an expected answer from a merchant (Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007). Socrates, from the same conversation, held two views. Firstly, he asserts that justice, at its best, should do no harm and secondly, it should be the preoccupation of every citizen, irrespective of their social standing. Capeheart and Milovanovic (2007) point to a significant issue in early Greek civilization. The Greeks believed in democracy and equity. However, the fact that they still had slaves and gave no rights to women makes their claim of democracy ironical. Plato's notion of justice had the embodiment of wisdom, courage and moderation (Zajda, Majhanovich & Rust, 2006). However, his idea of justice may be considered flawed because he views justice in an idealized way which puts emphasis on the individual with little regard or emphasis on how the institutional inequalities exist to keep the subordinates perpetually so.

Many of Plato's ideas influenced Aristotle but differed because of their backgrounds (Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007; Zajda, et al., 2006). Aristotle's idea of justice was based more on political equality rather than economic equality. Their differing views of justice are a testament to the notion stated above, that the definitions of justice or social justice tend to be contextual and varied. While writers like Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke viewed justice from a "natural law" discovered through enlightened reasoning (Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007 p.14), they had a distinct perception of what that natural law pertaining to the nature of humanity meant. Hobbes, for example, believed human beings to be inherently warlike, whereas Locke observed the opposite, stating that human beings were inherently aware of the rights of others and sought to not infringe on them. These different views reflect the individual and the societies in which they lived. Aquinas, a religious monk and priest would invariably gravitate towards religion's sense of justice. His perception would be

feasible if it had not completely disregarded the glaring unequal distribution of resources in society, even during his time. Nevertheless, these interpretations of justice are relevant to this research because it through these different perceptions that we can inductively carry out research into the experiences of primary school teachers in teaching literary texts in language classrooms. They are also imperative because the Greek philosophers and the latter writers had a great influence in the modern understanding of social justice. There is no attempt here to seek an all-encompassing and definite truth of what justice is but to move towards understanding the need for social justice dialogue in education.

The concept of social justice was first used in the 19th century when scholars and philosophers began to question injustices in society that had become commonplace (Zajda, et al. 2006). The preoccupation of these modern thinkers centered on two concepts of justice, namely distributive and retributive. Distributive justice is the “allocation of material or human resources towards those who by circumstance have less” (Rawls, 1971, as cited in Lambert, 2018, p. 228) and Capeheart and Milovanovic (2007) assert that distributive justice was not merely about the fair allocation of resources but of burdens as well. The second type of justice is retributive. This is the “recompense... the dispersing or receiving of reward or punishment according the deserts of the individual” (Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007, p. 3). These two principles of justice manifest themselves in education through its political and historic nature.

Earlier in the research, I paid significant attention to the legacy of Apartheid. I also gave expression to the difficulties the education department faced as a result of these inequalities. Vally, Motala and Ramadiro (2010) state that social justice issues such as, poverty, race, class and gender, among others, affect education. Education is invariably linked to the socio-political nature of the context under which it is situated. It is therefore not surprising that despite the 28 years of democracy in South Africa, many of the still dysfunctional schools are former blacks-only schools or schools in rural areas, as explained earlier.

2.3.2 Social Justice in education

Why is there a need to include social justice in education and to what extent must it feature in primary school language classrooms? Unfortunately, to a very large extent, these questions add to the complication of social justice education rather than make it clearer. While some view social justice in education as a way to identify barriers within and outside the classroom (Sleeter, 2014), others view it as means to invite discourse on racial inequalities (Thomas-Fair & Michael, 2005; Bonica, 2014). It therefore becomes clear that social justice in education means various things under different contexts. These difference in understandings shape the conversation regarding the extent to which it can be featured in primary school language classrooms, since it cannot be quantified. Despite these different notions of what it is or what it could be, various researchers (discussed below) agree that we live in an unequal system of domination and oppression that favours one group's ideologies over another.

Radolph and Johnson (2017) define social justice as “the equitable sharing of social power and benefits within a society” (p. 100), much like earlier mentioned definitions of justice. Herring (2017) follows along those lines and defines it as a belief system based on equity, human rights, and fairness for all (p. 2). On the other hand, Bell (2007) defines social justice as both a goal and a process. As a goal, social justice education entails full participation in societal change by learners and teachers despite their diverse natures; as a process, it is “democratic and participatory, respectful of human diversity and group differences and inclusion and affirmation of human agency and capacity for working collaboratively with others to create change” (Bell, 2007, p. 4). With this understanding, social justice is about people and embracing the differences of people. For every citizen to have opportunities to participate equally and democratically in societal decisions remains the basic principle of social justice.

In an educational sense, social justice is exemplified in decolonised schools, teaching done by decolonised teachers who make use of decolonised pedagogical practices (Freire, 1996; Kanu, 2009), and emphasising cultural, economic and psychological freedom. Freire (1996) states that a decolonised curriculum is fundamental to realise the goals of social justice education. Da Cruz (2017) seeks to promote the movement

away from textbooks and rote-learning to creating a socially just syllabus. This syllabus allows teachers to create a democratic and participatory environment in the classroom. Radolph and Johnson (2017) state that a change in pedagogical practices requires a deconstruction of institutional power relations, developing pedagogy that allows learners to view the world from an alternative point of view, and developing ways to make learners put into action what they have learned. Therefore, social justice in education can only be deemed achieved when there is equal opportunity and equitable access (Nieto, 2006).

Social justice education is the conscious process of empowering learners and teachers in the pursuit of unearthing oppressive power systems in society against marginalized groups; it seeks to provide all learners with opportunities of being full participants in the constructions of knowledge while remaining vigilant to the hegemonic processes that declare dominant discourses as 'natural' or 'common sense'; it does all this while emphasizing the power of the learners and teachers to effect change in society (Hackman, 2005; Carlisle, Jackson & George, 2006; Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2000; Da Cruz, 2017; Picower, 2012). It also does this while instilling hope in what learners can do to create cultural awareness (Da Cruz, 2017). Nieto (2006) cites three components in the success of a socially just education. Firstly, he asserts that student should be provided with the necessary resources for them to learn to their full potential (equitable distribution). Secondly, he argues that teachers need to draw on the existing competencies of learners (talents, knowledge, strengths), and finally, he urges teachers to create an environment which is conducive to critical thinking and agency (Nieto, 2006). These components summarise the main philosophy of social justice education.

Other researchers have articulated other principles to give teachers foundational bases for the implementation of teaching for social justice. Hackman (2005) develops her definition of social justice from Bell (2000) and includes agency and empowerment in learners. She contends that social justice education is not only about accepting differences and embracing diversity but "pays careful attention to the systems of power and privilege that give rise to social inequality, and encourages students to critically

examine oppression on institutional, cultural and individual levels” (p. 104). In applying social justice to education, Hackman provides five essential components. These are: content mastery (factual information, historical contextualization, and a macro-to-micro content analysis); critical thinking and the analysis of oppression; action and social change; personal reflection; and awareness of multicultural group dynamics (Hackman, 2005, p.104-108).

Carlisle, et al. (2006) offer a model of teaching social justice education in different contexts, but is detailed enough to be useful tools in the classroom for teaching and evaluation. Their proposed principles stem from their research project conducted at an elementary (primary) school in America that catered for Latino and African American learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The principles are: inclusion and equity, which focuses on the treatment and acceptance of different group identities; high expectations, where teachers must be aware of the contexts under which they work and draw “on this knowledge to create the core teaching practices necessary for effectiveness in diverse society” (p. 59); reciprocal community relationships, and the involvement of parents and community; a system-wide approach, which involves the alignment of policies and procedures to create a socially just environment; direct social justice education and intervention, involving the advocacy of a social justice agenda across the curriculum and faculty. These principles highlight the perspectives of Smith (2018) and Picower (2012) that the socio-political and socio-economic aspect of a community play a significant role in learners’ achievements.

Hytten and Bettez (2011) in their pursuit to understand education for social justice, suggest these seven skills: promoting a mind/body connection; conducting artful facilitation that promotes critical thinking; engaging in explicit discussions of power, privilege and oppression; maintaining compassion for learners; believing that change toward social justice is possible; exercising self-care; and building critical communities. Similar to Hackman’s (2005) five essential components for social justice education, these skills move from micro to macro solutions of engaging with teaching for social justice. It is clear that the seven skills are neither a step-by-step guide, nor a curriculum

reform for teaching for social justice. Despite the attempt by Hytten and Bettez (2011) to present them as practical manifestations of social justice teaching, they do not address pedagogy, i.e. how can social justice be taught? This struggle to move from theory or philosophy to practice in social justice education has been the main focus of those who advocate for social justice in the language classroom. While many teachers understand what to do, they still struggle with how to do it. These struggles and some solutions to them will be discussed later in this chapter.

In the South African context, for example, the system of apartheid created separate education systems which gave advantage to white children in the country and inferior education to black children (Kanu, 2009; Soudien, 2007). The history of education in South Africa has been interlinked directly with the history of its politics. Education constantly falls victim to the state of power at the time and in South Africa has since resulted in one curriculum change after another. Early participatory researchers in Africa viewed education as a means to liberate rather than oppress. The early African writers pursued education (Paustian, 2014), even if it was colonial, to fight that same colonial system from which they had been taught. Education in South Africa, even to this present day, still bears some remnants of colonialist and apartheid ideologies (as discussed in the previous chapter). Although no longer overtly divided by race, as it was during the previous tyrannical regimes, the class divide about who gets better education seems to have widened even further (Spaull, 2012).

Badat and Sayed (2014) outline the difficulty of promoting social justice in education in South Africa post-1994. Among the main issues of contention was the increasing financial divide that had led to the unequal distribution of resources and the lack of qualified or specialised teachers. In their noble pursuit to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights” (Constitution of South Africa, no 108 of 1996 p.1243 Preamble), the Department of Basic Education has not managed to realise its ideal, despite the fact that it is on its third curriculum since 1994. Some scholars and analysts (Spaull, 2012; Morrow, 2007) agree that the issue is far beyond the class divide, or underqualified teachers and access to resources. Spaull (2013) and van der Berg (2007) believe that

the root cause might lie in primary school education, with Fleisch (2008) going as far as calling it a crisis. Furthermore, Müller et al (2018) note that “the experiences of teachers should play a pivotal role in working towards a decolonized curriculum” (p. 87) and questions about knowledge construction need to be asked.

At the heart of the perpetuation of social injustices is the construction of knowledge. Sensoy (2017) and McLaren (2009) define knowledge as a social construct infused with ideology. This socially constructed knowledge is reflective of the values and interests of those who produce it; it also involves understand the meaning given to situations (Sensoy, 2017). Sensoy (2017) and McLaren (2009) both present different but complementary types of knowledge. Sensoy (2017) describes the five types of knowledge as a) personal and cultural knowledge, b) popular knowledge, c) mainstream academic knowledge, d) school knowledge, and e) transformative academic knowledge. Sensoy (2017) echoes Freire (1996) that teachers who engage in social justice education should engage these different knowledges. One knowledge is not necessarily better than the other. Picower (2012) believes that part of the goal of social justice education is to “allow students to apply their academic knowledge to work toward changing social inequality and oppressive systems (p. 7). Since learners are not empty vessels waiting for the autonomous teacher to impart knowledge onto them, moving from one form of knowledge to another emphasises the role of teachers as collaborators and partners with learners (Freire, 1996). Furthermore, Banks (1993) believe that an important goal of knowledge is to free learners from the bonds of cultural and personal knowledge and grow towards encompassing other knowledge systems and ways of being.

McLaren (2009), on the other hand, focusses on three types of knowledge - a) technical knowledge which can be measured through exams and tests, b) practical knowledge which can be acquired through describing social solutions historically and developmentally, and c) emancipatory knowledge “helps to understand how social relationships are distorted and manipulated in relation to power and privilege” (p. 64). The first type of knowledge combines personal, cultural, popular knowledge with academic and school knowledge. The second type of knowledge is a feature of

transformative academic knowledge and it “enlightens individuals so they can shape their daily actions in their world” (p. 64). While the two types of knowledge are essential in realising social justice education, they are incomplete without the third type of knowledge, emancipatory knowledge. Teachers need to understand that knowledge is neither neutral, objective nor universal (Sensoy, 2017), and an awareness of this makes emancipatory knowledge essential in making learners understand the unequal power relations in society, and become aware of hegemonic discourses that legitimise some knowledge and not others.

Furthermore, if teachers are to successfully engage with social justice issues in literary texts, they need to understand that knowledge does not exist in isolation of the society that created it. Knowledge is as political as is education. Like justice or social justice, it does not emanate from some natural law which gives power to the strong and subordinates the marginalised (hooks, 1994, Capeheart & Milovanovic, 2007). Seeking to question and debate existing knowledge systems does not mean replacing one ideology with another. It means transforming mindsets so that the oppressed are not integrated into the societal structures under which they find themselves. Rather, they are empowered to “transform the structure so that they can become beings for themselves” (Freire, 1996, p. 55; hooks, 1994). To help draw nearer to this debate, teachers need to engage learners in critical thinking. Sensoy (2017) makes it clear that critical thinking is not merely about having an opinion. Rather, “it results in an informed perspective after engaging new evidence” (p. 33) and viewing information from a different perspective and an alternative viewpoint.

2.3.3 Social Justice in Literary Texts

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian writer, narrates instances in her life when a single story distorted her image of the world. She would later say, having stayed in America after some time, that she understood why Americans had a fragmented image of Africa as colonial literature of Africa depicted it as “a place of beautiful landscapes, and incomprehensible people fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves, waiting to be saved by a kind white foreigner” (Adichie, 2009). Adichie (2009) explained that when she began writing, she depicted characters

that “had blonde hair and blue eyes” because those were the people she encountered in literature but realised that “children are vulnerable in the face of a story”. The South African education curriculum and syllabus have, over the years, tried to introduce new and ‘relatable’ literary texts in language classrooms because the Education Department, like Appleman (2009), believes that children “should see themselves in the literature they read” (p.85). Most children in South Africa cannot see themselves in literature underpinned by colonial ideologies.

And yet, according to Kanu (2009) and Ntshemereirwe (2016), much of the South African curriculum still bears remnants of colonial ideologies. A dominant western culture has used literature to subtly indoctrinate minority learners into its ideology, giving them the impression that they do not exist in literature and thus undermine their identities and indigenous knowledge systems (Zamudio, Russell, Rios & Bridgeman, 2011). Learners need to be taught to think critically about the literature that they read because “colonialism is situated in the psyche and we cannot create decolonized minds without decolonizing the minds that run them” (Dei & Doyle-Wood, 2009, p. 165). Reading is an essential aspect of teaching social justice education in primary school language classrooms because it is through reading that learners and teachers may confront social justice issues in literary texts. This research views reading as an imperative skill in language classrooms because it is the door through which critical analysis may be realised.

Naiditch (2010) states that reading is an interactive process, and therefore a social process. Fairclough (1989) saw language as a form of social practice/process. Both assertions point to a significant idea that since language and reading are social activities, they cannot exist outside of society’s ideologies. Therefore, the teaching of social justice issues using literary texts is the social responsibility of all activist teachers (Moloi, 2019), and “teachers must participate in the struggle to keep education public and to push for greater justice and democracy in the system” (Picower, 2012, p.5). In keeping with Freire’s libertarian education (1985), the teacher and the learner share in the process of reading and learning literary texts using critical pedagogy; the teacher becomes the mediator in the production and analysis of

knowledge and uses the power of language to critically analyse the world to make constructive and positive changes (Herring, 2017; Freire, 1996; Naiditch, 2010). The teacher views learners as subjects and active participants in the reading process. The Naiditch (2010) study outlines how teachers can practically execute the reading and analysis of literary texts using critical pedagogy.

The University of Colorado in the United States of America initiated a project, Teaching Tolerance, that encourages reading groups with a special emphasis on literary texts that deal with social justice issues (<https://www.colorado.edu/libraries/2021/04/28/cu-boulder-announces-buffs-one-read>). Their aims and views are similar to that of Naiditch (2010), in their view of reading as a social and communal activity. Their decision to involve parents in the process emphasises Smith's (2018) assertion that families and the involvement of parents are key to academic success. The project emphasises the importance of choosing literary texts that speak to social justice issues because it is through these interactions that learners are taught critical thinking and can recognise injustice and address it (Contreras & Delacroix, 2017). The reading project by the University of Colorado introduces excellent pedagogical practices for language teachers, however, it should be noted that it does not specifically address the issue of teaching literary texts in English to second language speakers. It also presumes that many parents and other community members would be literate enough to help the learners with the reading. The socio-economic and literacy issues play a vital role in understanding why the Teaching Tolerance project would be a great challenge in the communities from which this present research generates its data. Nevertheless, teachers can still use ideas from the project as a means to engage further with social justice issues in literary texts.

Perhaps, before one can begin to engage with reading groups, or ways to engage learners with social justice, there needs to be a clear agenda from the onset. Choosing social justice-oriented texts helps the teacher to guide learners towards critical analyses of representations in texts, while paying attention to the presentation of mainstream knowledge as neutral, universal, and objective (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). Additionally, this is also an opportunity for teachers to use issues in literary

texts to guide learners through self-reflection of their socialization and possible prejudices (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). Engaging with learners beyond textbooks and school knowledge makes it possible for them to see these issues when they encounter such situations outside of the classroom (Da Cruz, 2017). Some of the key issues with which language teachers could engage using literary texts include poverty, race, class, education, ageism, child labour, gender inequalities, sexual orientation, and domestic violence, among others. Books such as *Nervous Condition* by Tsitsi Dangarembga are excellent examples of texts with clear social justice issues, even at a primary school level. It is a story of a girl who lives in a society where the education of women is not taken seriously. Although she is raised as a middle-class child, she still witnesses the gender inequalities prevalent in her society (Dangarembga, 2004).

Choosing literary texts with a clear social justice agenda helps to address a single issue or multiple social justice issues. According to Glasgow (2001), good books should “unsettle us, make us ask questions about what we thought was certain; they don’t just reaffirm everything we already know” (p. 54). This may certainly count as criteria for the selection of literary texts in primary school language classrooms. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, similar to *Nervous Condition*, offers teachers an array of issues with which to engage learners in primary school. The story of Scout Finch and her brother as they go through the summer gives us an insight into the American South (Lee, 2002). While the story has clear racial tensions that lead to the arrest and subsequent death of an African American man, there are also issues of injustice and gender inequality. Learners could relate to Scout and Jem by seeing the world through the eyes of children their age. The figure of Atticus Finch, Scout’s father, as the typical representation of a heterosexual white male is also an area of discussion, especially in light of Adichie’s (2009) comment on how literary texts can perpetuate the stereotype of an African needing to be constantly rescued by a white man.

According to Shupak (2015) it is important to make learners aware of how inequalities exist on a large scale. This can be achieved by choosing texts that not only look at individual oppression but systemic or institutional oppression. Shupak (2015) also echoes Freire (1985) that not only is teaching political, but the teaching of literature is

political. By making the connection between literary texts and social change, teachers need to engage pedagogical practices that make explicit links between literary texts and the world around the learners. Herring (2017) makes it clear that good intentions alone will not emancipate learners from marginalized groups, especially when they continue to experience misrepresentations of their social identities in literary texts. Not explicitly naming issues, or resisting to challenge injustices in texts, reproduces and affirms the very power imbalances social justice education seeks to eradicate (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014; Picower, 2012). Consequently, the burden of the realization of social justice education hinges on teachers as curriculum reforms and pedagogical practices are ineffective without teachers who put these into practice.

2.3.4 Teachers' engagement with Social Justice Issues in Language Classrooms

Social justice education is necessary in a language classroom because we all are products of the society in which we live (Hardiman & Jackson, 2009). To expand on this notion, Sensoy and DiAngelo (2014) clarify the relevance of engaging in social justice teaching for the following reasons: although we are individuals, we still belong to socially constructed groups; these social groups are not valued equally; the unequal valuing of these groups means that some get better access to resources than others; social injustice is not made up but is a reality in our society; the unequal power relations are constantly enacted at micro and macro levels of society; and through our socialization, we are complicit in these unequal power relations (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). These views make social justice education a necessity and are echoed throughout this chapter by various researchers. They are what gave birth to Freire's (1996) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, they took bell hooks (1994) on a journey to conscientise learners about the injustices in society, and have propelled other scholars to reimagine an education that is emancipatory, democratic and transformative (Glasgow, 2001). Beyond this, they are to teachers a call for action, both within and beyond the classroom (Picower, 2012).

This research views teachers not only as agents of change but as activists who are constantly aware of the political nature of education and knowledge. This term is

borrowed from Picower (2012) who saw the classroom as a place where democracy and emancipation can happen and lead to social change in and outside of the classroom. While some critics might feel that children in primary schools are not emotionally and/or mentally ready for critical discourse, the activist teacher must advocate for the full inclusion of all and needs to think, speak and act critically and consciously (Herring, 2017 p. 5). Much of the onus on teaching for social justice is dependent on the teacher and many studies have concentrated mostly on student teachers (Pillay & Wasserman, 2017) and novice teachers (Priestly, Biesta & Robinson, 2015; Barnatt, Mcquillan, Terell, Cochran-Smith, Shakman & Jong, 2009). This is not surprising because the focus of these studies is to ascertain how social justice courses at universities are making an impact on teachers' practices. Piedrahita (2016) disagrees with this model, stating that to expect teachers to work as activists in their early stage of teaching is unrealistic. Taylor and Otinsky (2007), however, do not think it is unrealistic but focus on the challenges associated with the implementation of social justice principles.

Interestingly, research carried out by Priestly, et al. (2015) and Taylor and Otinsky (2007) bear similar observations. Both studies report on the difficulty preservice and novice teachers experience in engaging with social justice issues in language classrooms. Far beyond this issue though, is the white teachers' attitudes towards confronting injustices towards minorities. This discrepancy in teachers' intentions and actions is best exemplified in a study carried out by Pillay and Wasserman (2017). In their study, they examine what students in a South African university say about teaching for social justice and what they actually do. The purpose of their study was to use literary texts as means to empower student teachers to become agents of change in their future classrooms (Pillay & Wasserman, 2017). In their endeavour to do so, they used two novels, two plays and two films. The main issues through which they engaged the student teachers were gender, race and class. They chose to treat these separately instead of collectively and they used literary texts to tackle these issues because "they [literary texts] are able to capture realities of concepts... in a way that theoretical discussions of the same concepts may not" (Pillay & Wasserman, 2017, p. 32).

Some of their observations showed the discrepancies they had set out to examine. These include the unwillingness of the student teachers to mix with other races. Many of the African student teachers felt that they were not taken seriously or treated with inferiority by their counterparts. Additionally, when confronted with racial issues for example, they were unwilling to engage with racial tensions in reality, despite their willingness to do so in literary texts. Another interesting observation came from an African student teacher who did not view literary texts in IsiZulu as literature, an issue raised earlier by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986). Similar to the observations of Priestly, et al. (2015) and Taylor and Otinsky (2007) in separate studies, Pillay and Wasserman (2017) also encountered a white student teacher who did not understand why apartheid was still an issue years after it had ceased to exist. All these contradictions endorse the premise of praxis; teachers need to reflect on their practices and unless these contradictions are confronted, injustices are perpetuated (Pillay & Wasserman, 2017, p. 37). There is always a danger that teachers may try to avoid difficulties or unpopular attitudes rather than face them (Griffiths, 2003).

Piedrahita (2016) presented a paper wherein he looked at teachers' professional developmental programmes. In it he stated that professional developmental programmes should: a) provide teachers with opportunities for collaboration and dialogue in an effort to empower them; b) provide teachers with many opportunities to engage and understand the concepts related to social justice teaching; c) provide teachers with assignments to help them develop social justice principles to address institutional inequalities; d) devise programmes where teachers can engage with marginalized communities (2016, p. 208). What Piedrahita (2016) advocates for is a community of teachers who work together to establish a curriculum that speaks explicitly to social justice and develop pedagogical practices that motivate learners to aspire to move beyond grammar in the language classroom to become citizens concerned with social change. This is the conviction of Picower (2012) who believes that teachers acting individually cannot exert the necessary pressure to affect change on a systemic level.

Teachers need to exercise great agency in how they carry out the difficult task of making critical thinkers of learners in a primary school language classroom. Agency can be defined as “the way in which actors critically shape their response to problematic situations” (Priestley, et al., 2015, p.189). Priestley, et al. (2015) view agency not as something one has but something that one does, which complements social justice as it is seen as something that is done. Agency and the focus of the activist teacher begins with teachers understanding that we all live in a society that is structured in ways that make us collude in systems of privilege and oppression, and recognises that education is inherently political and can neither be neutral nor value-free (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Picower (2012) goes as far as to say that social justice education is not fully realised until the teacher and the learner move from the classroom to the community to engage in further action since teacher activists want to transform their immediate space and the broader community. Since it all begins in the classroom, teachers must utilise language classes to advocate critical thinking and enact social justice education.

The first order of importance for the activist teacher is to reject the ‘banking system’ as presented by Freire. The teacher is not just a depositor of information but an equal participant in the process of learning and knowledge making. He or she must create a democratic environment in the classroom where learners are given the opportunity to freely express their views. The language classroom, through the teaching of literary texts in a primary school, is a good place to introduce and maintain a critical thinking perspective in learners. The CAPS document notes that while some literary texts might be for entertainment purposes, some “serious writers create [literary texts] because they have ideas, thoughts and issues and principles, ideologies and beliefs that they most want to share with to reveal to their prospective reader” (DoBE, 2011, p. 12). It is with these ideas and perspectives of the writer that the activist teacher engages learners.

It is incumbent on teachers to “create for [learners] democratic and critical spaces that foster meaningful and transformative learning” (Glasgow 2001, p. 54). As already stated, social justice is not merely a theory of study but a process and a lifestyle, a

goal to which the activist teacher must aspire, it is an action (Griffiths, 2003). Teachers need to examine their own prejudices and admit that all of us are “complicit in the system of oppression and privilege” (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014, p. 2). It is not enough to know and mention social justice issues but teachers must be prepared to discuss and grapple with uncomfortable truths and realities in order to create a meaningful educational experience for learners. This interaction is not only in the classroom but must extend out to the community so that learners, from as early as primary school, can be taught that they can effect change in the broader society (Picower, 2012). This interaction between the teacher, learner and community is central to this research because prejudice is a learned behavior (Glasgow, 2001) and we are all products of our societies. This trinity of teacher-learner-community in learning, interacting, questioning, unlearning and activism is at the heart of this research and at the heart of understanding the experiences of primary school language teachers.

Teachers who wish to teach for social justice in language classrooms understand that education, language and pedagogy are political (Freire, 1996). Hines (2007) discusses the role of the teacher in engaging with social justice issues in a language classroom. Firstly, teachers need to open up spaces for counterhegemonic views of why certain ‘truths’ exist in society. Secondly, they need to engage texts with the understanding that there are no universal or simple conclusions to questions and issues that emerge from texts (Hines, 2007, p. 136). There is no simple conclusion because texts are not necessarily clear windows into reality, but pieces of art fashioned by the author and meant to convey a particular message (Hines, 2007; Department of Education, 2011). These messages are value-laden and may carry hegemonic discourses that may prove harmful to the identities of marginalized groups (Picower, 2012; hooks, 1994; Hines, 2007).

Having established the complexity of teaching for social justice in terms of the teachers themselves, we now begin to see how they might engage with social justice issues in the language classroom. There are three areas of reference under which teachers may engage with social justice in the classroom: knowledge construction, positionality and safety or comfort (Banks, 1993; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014; Da Cruz, 2017). Since

knowledge as socially constructed discourse has been discussed earlier in the chapter, we now move to positionality and how it affects teachers' engagement with social justice issues in language classrooms.

Banks (1993) defines positionality as social positions and frames of reference from which we derive our knowledge, thus making the assertion that all knowledge is partial because it is influenced by our cultural values and beliefs (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). Freire's (1996) ideology is for the critical social justice teacher to narrow this positionality between the teacher and the learner so that they can be co-creators of knowledge. In the banking system of education, the teacher as the autonomous being does not communicate the information to the learners, nor does s/he consider indigenous knowledge, s/he seeks merely to fit learners into "the world the oppressors have created" (Freire, 1996, p. 57) and not question it. Whether teachers or learners in places of privilege admit it or not "much of the oppression is invisible to and denied by those who benefit from it" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014; hooks, 1994)

Initially, teachers might introduce some guidelines or mediatory tools to help the process of the discussion on social justice issues. These guidelines are helpful for the teacher and the learners to understand the perimeters within which the discussions will take place. Examples of these guideline may include, but not limited to: everyone must feel safe to express their opinions, everyone and their opinions should be respected, all should be given an opportunity to share, there are no right or wrong answers, all can share their personal feelings and experiences, among others (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014; Da Cruz, 2017). These guidelines are meant to create a balance in the classroom so that learners from dominant groups and learners from marginalized groups get to share their experiences. The South African classroom is complex in this regard because in a school with predominantly African learners, then they are dominant (in regards to population and power at a micro level) and in a school that has predominantly white learners, then they are dominant (in regards to population and power at both micro and macro levels). While the guidelines are meant to create a balance in opinions, the power relations mentioned above already prove problematic, and the dominant voices tend to hold more weight.

It is these inevitable unequal power relations that compelled Sensoy and DiAngelo (2014) to re-establish reformed sets of guidelines to aid in the engagement of social justice teaching in a language classroom. Their goal was to clarify how the common guidelines perpetuate the unequal power relations they meant to eradicate, and to disrupt the power that they hold (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014). The reestablishment of the common guidelines is not meant to limit learners' voices in the classroom, rather they give more voice to marginalized voices hence creating democratic consciousness among the learners (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014; Da Cruz, 2017). The new guidelines are not meant as a replacement of the old but modified versions of them. These include: learners should be able to differentiate between opinion and informed knowledge; they must admit the limit of their knowledge; they should pay attention to triggers and defensive reactions and use those as motivators to gain more knowledge; they must recognise their social positionality and how that affects the discourse in the classroom; there needs to be a differentiation between safety and comfort; and all learners should identify their learning edge and go beyond it (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014).

The component of safety in the classroom has been discussed as essential to ensuring that learners do not feel victimized or excluded from discussions (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 1997). Sensoy and DiAngelo (2014) do not view safety or comfort as a necessary feature in the engagement of social justice issues. They provide the example that despite evidence in history that society has always favoured heterosexual white males, they could, ironically, claim to be attacked in discussions where this is pointed out in the classroom. It is true for white children as it is for children of colour that they internalise messages about themselves in relation to their social identities from a young age and they perpetuate these messages through their play and talk (Hyland, 2010). The revised guidelines assist the learners to look at how their conditionings influence the way they view people different from them. To assist practising the revised guidelines, Sensoy and DiAngelo (2014) offer the following as conversation starters: "I'm really nervous/scared/uncomfortable to say [X], but . . .

From my experience/perspective as [identity], . . . I'm afraid I may offend someone, and please let me know if I do, but . . . It feels risky to say [X], but"

With the understanding of possible guidelines on how teachers may engage with social justice issues in a language classroom, we explore ways in which they may use literary texts to teach for social justice.

2.3.5 Teachers' use of Literary Texts to Teach for Social Justice

As I stated earlier, teachers must reject the banking type of education to fully realise social justice education. In this section, I discuss some of the difficulties that teachers encounter when they begin to teach for social justice. Educational researchers on social justice acknowledge that it is challenging to move from the philosophical to pedagogical practices of social justice in literary texts. Part of the problem with moving from theory to practice as articulated earlier is two-fold. Firstly, social justice education seems like too broad a concept to tackle (Barnatt, et al., 2009). It requires that the teacher teach beyond the planned curriculum and in much of the research, there is no content on how it may be carried out. Secondly, teachers in South Africa, like in many countries have to consider standardized exams with a curriculum that is already overwhelmingly unreachable due to various reasons in primary schools (Sensoy, 2017; Soudien, 2007; Morrow, 2007). As a result, teachers find themselves teaching for exams with little time for critical thinking. Nevertheless, there are many examples offered by the researchers that show teachers grappling with social justice education using literary texts.

Behrman (2006) has acknowledged that critical literacy, like social justice education, is more of a theoretical foundation than a teaching methodology. According to him, critical literacy complements social justice education in helping learners understand how language is used in texts and to what extent the literacy choices made by the author affect how they view the world. Language has been regarded as a powerful tool, both for oppression and emancipation. This became clear when African writers gathered in Kampala, Uganda in 1962, the first historical gathering of African writers.

In his essay *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o reflects on how that conference made it clear that the African writers who wrote in English were taken more seriously. Despite this, the overarching question was, "What is African literature?" (wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 6). In a micro context of the language classroom, this question may be translated to: "Whose ideologies are promoted in the use of this language?". This connection between language and power is engaged with, in this research, through an aesthetic lens, as in, not the language spoken but literary devices used to convey oppression and domination.

McLaren (2010) articulated that a decolonizing pedagogy means developing a language of critique, challenging individual and institutional hegemonic practices (p. 89). It is through critique, stemming from critical theory, that teachers can expose perceived everyday truths with a more rational knowledge of that world (Thompson, 2017). This form of knowledge is meant to not only bring comprehension, but to transform. Transformation in this regard includes decolonizing teachers who partake in decolonizing pedagogical practices (McLaren, 2010). Freire (1996) explains that social injustice annuls education and knowledge as processes of inquiry. By exposing learners to literary texts, teachers also expose learners to ideologies embedded in those texts and learners view them as essential in learning about themselves and the world around them (Short, 2011). While Thompson (2017) introduces critique as a form to view hegemonic discourse, Short (2011) offers inquiry to view literary texts as art and as a tool of learning. It allows learners to offer their interpretations and ask why some knowledge is acknowledged and celebrated, and others not.

Understanding the power of literary texts to direct our thoughts is to understand the power words have, as Shupak (2015) simply put it, "words are weapons" (p.1). To reiterate Adichie (2009), children are vulnerable in the face of a story. From this perspective, we can say that reading is a social process. Naiditch (2010) has cautioned teachers against teaching literary texts as though there is a singular truth to be uncovered and no other interpretations are necessary. The CAPS document for English home language learning states that teachers should read texts to learners in the classroom as much as possible (DoBE, 2011). They do this for language and

interpretive purposes. The document cautions teachers against providing their own interpretations of texts without having given learners the opportunity to be collaborators of that interpretation. The process of reading, according to Naiditch (2010), involves understanding and comprehending what is in the text; making connections with previous knowledge; and creating new knowledge (2010, p. 95). This initial stage ties in with Hackman's (2005) content mastery. Giving learners historical and contextual backgrounds to texts provides them with tools to base their interpretations on reality and not their teacher's perspective and opinion.

The desired effect of reading literary texts is to move beyond the surface content to the core where we find unequal structures that lead to social injustices. There are two processes that will be discussed here. The aim of these is to give concrete process that can aid the teaching for social justice in language classrooms and to prepare learners to think and act critically in an unjust world (Nieto, 2006). The complication of social justice education does not only lie in the definition but in its practice. Griffiths (2003) believes that social justice is an action that can go through various revision and does not necessarily need to have a final answer, it is dynamic and ever-changing (p. 57). Simply put, social justice is an evolving notion and not a normative process set in stone.

The first process is the initial reading process. Naiditch (2010) describes five steps in the reading for critical thinking process. The first step is to describe the content. Next, the learners, with the guidance of the teacher, identify and define the problem. Having identified the problem, learners move on to personalizing the problem as texts can only be meaningful if they are able to make it personal. The process then moves to not only discussing the problem but to finding alternatives to resolving the problem. In this process, the teacher is the facilitator and mediator, who guides the process and helps the learners become co-authors. This critical thinking process gives a firm foundation to the practical teaching of literary texts for social justice.

The second process in teaching for social justice is articulated by Bree Picower (2012) who provides ways of incorporating social justice education in the curriculum. Picower (2012) concedes that while Hackman's (2005) five components and Carlisle, et al.'s (2006) principles provide teachers with theoretical frameworks, they do not offer concrete tools to make social justice education a reality. According to Picower (2012), the six elements of social justice curriculum design will help teachers to lead learners to valuing themselves; through them, learners will respect the diversity of the world around them; they will understand the injustices and differentiated treatment of diverse people; and they will recognise ways in which ordinary people have addressed social injustices in society.

Element one: self-love and knowledge – provide learners with opportunities to learn about who they are and where they come from. This assists in creating a sense of pride in their cultures and heritage, among others.

Element two: respect for others – create a climate of respect for diversity by teaching learners to listen with kindness and empathy to the experiences of others. This also leads to the deconstruction of stereotypes and finding areas where diverse learners have shared struggles.

Element three: issues of social injustice – this element explores ways in which diversity has been used as a marker to perpetuate social injustices. This exposes learners to individual and institutional oppression, providing them with multiple perspectives of historical events, allowing them to draw their own conclusions.

Element four: social movements and social change – this element provides tangible models of what it looks like to stand on the side of justice. The teacher shares examples of people who have stood up against social injustices.

Element five: awareness raising – once learners have been exposed to the other elements, they can be helped to develop mindsets that they have the power to educate others as a stepping-stone to creating change.

Element six: social action – in this element learners identify issues they feel passionate about and learn the skills of creating change firsthand.

Table 1: Six elements of curriculum design by Picower (2012).

These six elements provide teachers with tools to teach for social justice. There are various ways that these can be exemplified in a language classroom. Element one for example, can be addressed through Hackman's first component of social justice education. According to Hackman (2007), content mastery is the first component in social justice education and consists of three principles: factual information, historical contextualization, and a macro-to-micro content analysis (p. 104). It almost seems redundant to say that a teacher needs to be familiar with the literary texts they are teaching. However, studies have shown that many teachers in South Africa do not know the content that they are teaching (Manyike & Lemmer, 2014; Spaull, 2012; Picower, 2012). When teachers have the confidence of content knowledge, they can, like the teacher exemplified in a study done by Hines (2007), forge "a conceptual framework for literary inquiry" (p. 127) and find alternative ways of critical and meaningful reading in the classroom.

Researchers like Hines (2007), Schieble (2012), Contreras and Delacroix (2017) and Herring (2017) have shown examples of how social justice education can be enacted in a language classroom. Schieble (2012) for example, does not only engage with critical race theory in literary texts but how whiteness is depicted. She regards the discourse of the power of whiteness as being invisible and normal, belying the historical privileges that are associated with it; this renders whiteness' power as stemming from natural law. This discourse situates whites as heroes and saviours, "as active agents of change" (Schieble, 2012, p. 217), thus "maintaining constructions of whiteness in a position of power" (p. 214). This echoes Adichie's recount of an Africa in ruins waiting for a foreign white saviour. Schieble (2012) notes that without a critical examination of whiteness in literary texts, teachers could further alienate the very learners they are trying to conscientise.

Richard, a teacher of literature (Hines, 2007), for example, chose a Marxist framework to inform how he approached teaching literature. Relevant to this study is an assertion made by Glasgow (2001) that the choice of literary texts should be taken seriously because "books can make a difference in dispelling prejudice and building community... with enthralling stories that make us imagine lives of others" (p. 54). The

chosen texts should compel learners to think critically about their prejudices and the prejudices of others. In South African primary schools, the choice of literary texts is left to the teacher because there are no common exams across the country. This means that language teachers have more autonomy in choosing texts. The Department of Education provides Readers for language textbooks as extra resources; these Readers contain poems, short stories, novel extracts and informational texts that teachers can use to enhance learning in the classroom. Whether the language teacher chooses the Marxist approach (Glasgow, 2001), using picture books (Herring, 2017) or reading groups that use Emily Style's "mirrors" and "windows" (Contreras and Delacroix 2017, p. 7), learners should be given the opportunity to interrogate, assess and review literary texts with a social justice agenda.

Gouthro, et al. (2011) explores pedagogical strategies that teachers in international language classrooms may practice to teach for social justice. Their perspective is that fiction is an excellent outlet to deal with issues that are seen to be hard to tackle. Thematic, genre-based and narrative fiction offer "portraits of society" (p. 2) through characters and conflicts which allow learners to vocalise "thoughts and concerns" (p. 2) that would otherwise remain private. These strategies also "offer learners a way to confront and evaluate how they view the world and interact with others" (Herring, 2017, p. 2). Herring (2017) used picture books to teach for social justice in a language classroom. The purpose of Herring's research was to analyse children's picture books to teach for social justice. In analysing *Sit-In* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, about people who stood up against injustice, learners in a primary school language classroom could challenge inequalities. Interestingly, Herring (2017), like Gouthro et al. (2011), recognizes that fictional characters, living fictional lives, in fictional places allow for the discussion of sensitive issues. This engagement with fictional characters leads learners to understand whose stories are being legitimized and whose are ignored. Such understandings have led to the development and research on knowledge construction.

Banks (1993) states that the teacher's use of participatory or critical pedagogy is to help learners understand how knowledge is constructed. The teacher and the learners

work together as collaborators in the generation of knowledge as opposed to having the teacher as an autonomous constructor (Freire, 1996). It would be beneficial for learners to be exposed to a range of literature stemming from colonial to post-colonial times. South Africa's history is overwhelmed with unjust laws and practices that still prevail today. Choosing literature that focuses on these time periods may help learners move towards a broader perspective of the history. Although these experiences might bear personal connections to the teacher, Gouthro, Holloway and Careless (2011) believe that "analyzing [social justice] themes through the experience and tales of fictional characters can create a safe environment for sharing thoughts and opinions that otherwise would be kept private" (p. 2). The use of fiction as discussed in Gouthro et al, (2011) is pivotal to this study because fictional literary texts have been seen to provide a glimpse into society and have also functioned as way to assimilate people into dominant cultures (Alexander, 2000; Adichie, 2009).

2.6 Conclusion

In this study, critical theory and critical pedagogy are seen as essential theoretical frameworks in understanding the relevance of social justice education. They promote the emancipation of education through learners and teachers. While there are components and principles established over the past decades on how teachers may teach for social justice, there exists a gap in practice. Teachers need to recognise and accept that we all are complicit in the system of oppression and domination. We all belong to social groups that have influenced how knowledge is constructed. Through that understanding, teachers can, as critical pedagogues, create spaces where they and learners are co-creators of knowledge. Language classrooms where literary texts are taught are often viewed as safe spaces to interrogate social injustices. Teachers may use various tools to engage with learners on issues of race, gender, and class, among others, and they may do so within a set of guidelines in place to balance out the dominant discourses of those who benefit from the system of oppression and privilege. Reading groups, different literary theories of reading, and picture books are some ways in which teachers may teach for social justice. While social injustices may be enacted within and around education, they exist in society, a society within which learners live, Therefore, social justice advocates call for social action. They declare

incomplete the work of the activist teacher without moving social justice teachings from the classroom to the communities in which they work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

From the outset, I sought to identify the social justice issues that language teachers foregrounded in their teaching of literary texts and to understand their reasons for such choices. Further, I sought to understand how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice and to consider how literary texts support the teaching of social justice issues in primary school language classrooms.

The intention of the study was never to prescribe how texts should be taught, nor was there an intention to solve problems that were identified prior to the research or those that might have arisen from the generated data. While the study is underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm, it is, essentially, critical research in that it has employed critical theory and critical pedagogy as its theoretical frameworks in understanding how teachers teach for social justice. However, the study aimed to explore and understand and was thus interpretive in its essential nature. The choice of an interpretive paradigm will be discussed in this chapter. Similarly, I will explain how qualitative research was essential in ensuring the authenticity of this research. To generate the qualitative data, a multiple case study was chosen as a research design. Through the use of document reviews, questionnaires and interviews, I could capture the rich in-depth descriptions required in qualitative research. Furthermore, this chapter will describe the teachers and how they were recruited and chosen to be part of the research. The data was analysed using thematic analysis and this process will be explained. Finally, ethical issues and limitations that have arisen from this research will be explained.

3.2 Research Paradigms

There are three main paradigms in the research sphere which researchers can use to conduct research into various phenomena: the positivist, the interpretivist and the critical paradigm. The positivist paradigm is characterised by the notion that it is through science that we can get a glimpse into human reality (Cohen, et al. 2005).

While the positivist paradigm works better in scientific experiments and causal studies, it is insufficient in dealing with the complexity of human nature (Cohen, et al. 2005, p. 8). In contrast, this study persists with the assertion that there is no objective reality or experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and that “situations are fluid and changing, rather than fixed and static; events and behaviour evolve over time and are richly affected by context” (Cohen, et al. 2005). In the light of this, it became clear that this research was interpretivist rather than positivist.

Studies conducted by Herring (2017), Picower (2012), and Carlisle, Jackson and George (2006), among others, have researched the use of literary texts to teach for social justice and have engaged with the topic in terms of the critical paradigm which uses action research. Action research not only seeks to understand the views of the teachers but engages them in the process of solving a predetermined problem (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While this research relies highly on the interpretations of the teachers, it does not seek to solve a problem with the teachers but seeks to understand. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) acknowledge that the socially constructed nature of the interpretivist paradigm means that there are multiple realities to capture and that researchers do not find knowledge, but construct it (p. 9). The experiences of language teachers are paramount in this research. However, there is no intention to engage in concrete processes of change as a direct consequence of the research, any occurrence of change as a result of the research would be consequential rather than intentional.

For the reasons given above, this study has chosen to use the interpretivist paradigm. Cohen, et al., (2005) have articulated that the interpretivist paradigm is concerned with the individual, and to understand their world from within. In this paradigm, the individual experiences of the participants supersede the theory. Theory is generated from the data and thus “becomes sets of meanings which yield insight and understanding of people’s behaviour” (Cohen, et al., 2005, p. 23). For this particular study, the interpretivist paradigm was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the research concentrates on the experiences of language teachers in primary schools, and the research is interested in how teachers experience their realities. Secondly, the

interpretive paradigm is interested in the individual and understands that people are neither governed by rules nor completely objective but are subjective participants in their own realities and therefore behave with purpose (Cohen, et al., 2005). Such principles of the interpretive paradigm align with the concerns of the study.

3.3 Research approach

This study uses a qualitative research approach. Cropley (2019) asserts that “qualitative research is based on the fundamental idea that reality is subjective” (p. 8) and its primary objective is to “understand, to describe, to interpret, to empower...” (Locke, 2019, p. 119). Every person has a subjective view of the world and makes everyday decisions based on the way they view the world and their realities. Cropley (2019) further states that “the task of qualitative research is to gain insight into these constructions of reality” (p. 11). This understanding of qualitative research drives the nature of this research. Although qualitative research has been criticised for being subjective and for focussing on the researcher’s point of view (Cohen et al, 2005; Starman, 2013; Cropley, 2019), I realised that the everyday realities of teachers is important for understanding, interpreting, and describing the data in this research. Herring (2017) acknowledges that much of the research that looks into social justice education concentrates on the theory of teaching social justice issues, but little research is available for how teachers actually teach social justice issues in the classrooms and what strategies they use. Through qualitative research, I generated textual data to explore how teachers understand their realities and their world. This is imperative to the research because the research seeks to understand how teachers engage with social justice issues in literary texts, including their strategies and pedagogy.

Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) have articulated that a basic qualitative study typically includes: (a) focusing on meaning, understanding and process, (b) purposeful sampling, (c) the data generation mainly uses words, (d) the analysis is inductive, (e) the findings are richly descriptive and categorised or themed (p. 48). It is with these guidelines that the research was conducted. Since the core purpose of this research was to explore how language teachers in primary schools use literary texts to teach

for social justice, I focused on how teachers make meaning of their experiences in language classrooms, how they construct their realities, and I engaged the teachers in the process of their interpretations.

Perhaps the most popular critique of the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative approach is also their greatest weapon: the researcher. Cohen, et al. (2005), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), Given (2008), Cropley (2019), Leavy (2014), among others, have labelled the researcher as the primary research instrument in any qualitative research. Although the role of researcher will be explained later in the chapter pertaining to issues of trustworthiness and rigour, the arguments regarding the researcher lie in their lack of objectivity and subsequent partial interpretations of the generated data. However, the interpretivist paradigm by its very nature rejects the notion that human behaviour can be governed and should be investigated in control settings (Cohen, et al., 2005). It also dismisses the notion of an objective reality (Cropley, 2019). While scientific methods of research may seem reliable sources of data generation and interpretation, they cannot capture the experiences, impressions, and inferences through which people construct their realities (Cropley, 2019). The issues cannot be ignored though and must be clearly addressed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), which I will do later in the chapter.

3.4 Research design

This study uses a multiple case study research design. According to Cohen, et al. (2005), a case study is “the study of an instance in action” (p. 181), Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defines it as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system (case)” (p. 37) and it depicts real people in real contexts and captures how they navigate their circumstances. Yin (2014) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 37). The basic premises of a case study are that it has rich description and captures a phenomenon in a natural setting. This understanding of the case study leads to the core reason for this research. Moving beyond a single case, I anticipated that I would generate better data by engaging in multiple case studies. In this way I was able to interpret and describe experiences of teachers who work under different circumstances.

The understanding of a multiple-case study is provided by Starman (2013) who asserts that it is a concurrent exploration of multiple cases. Although Sammut-Bonnici and McGee (2015) view the multiple-case study type of research from a comparative standpoint, they acknowledge that multiple-case studies offer better opportunity for analysis and in this research, and they offer multiple perspectives and contexts under which the teaching for social justice occurs. The teaching for social justice is included in the CAPS document (DoBE, 2011) as essential in teaching literary texts in primary school language classrooms, therefore, language teachers across different contexts have an opportunity to do so. I believe that a single case study would not be sufficient in capturing the phenomenon and could “fail to implement the rigor required to depict the uniqueness of a situation or a prevailing common behaviour” (Sammut-Bonnici & McGee, 2015).

This interpretive research uses multiple-case studies for two reasons. Firstly, case studies offer data that is contextually based, and offers as much as possible, the realities of the teachers. Secondly, as has been stated above, there is no such thing “as an objective reality” (Cropley, 2019, p. 9). The lived experiences of teachers as they navigate the teaching of literary texts in primary school language classrooms foregrounded by social justice issues, are a reality that can be best explored through narratives. Their realities and how they interpret them provided rich data for research and allowed for a comprehensive analysis of their situation and context.

Several researchers have outlined different types of case studies. For example, Yin (1984, as cited in Cohen et al., 2005) categorises them as a) descriptive (narrative accounts), b) interpretive (developing conceptual categories inductively in order to examine initial assumptions) and c) evaluative (explaining and judging). This research considers all three of these categories because the purpose is not merely to consider the experiences of the teachers but to see how they interpret those experiences and evaluate the case studies thematically to explain how the teachers view their use of literary texts to teach for social justice.

Those opposed to the case study style of research believe that most researchers ignore two significant issues. The first is the power of the researcher in any situation. They believe that the selection of information and even cases are reliant on the bias of the researcher. Starman (2013) believes that this bias or subjective view of the research can be positive when it provides an in-depth analysis into a particular situation (Starman, 2013). The second issue is that of generalisability. Although the issue of generalisability will be discussed later, it is important to note here that contexts are “unique and dynamic” (Cohen et al. 2005, p. 181). Case studies seek to interrogate those unique and dynamic contexts by providing rich and in-depth analyses of those situation to give validity and authenticity. In using a multiple case study research design, I was able to investigate multiple bonded systems through detailed, descriptive analyses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and I could penetrate the experiences of the teachers from within the contexts that they occur (Cohen, et al, 2005; Sammut-Bonnici & McGee, 2015).

3.5 Ethics

3.5.1 Informed consent

Cohen, et al. (2005) have listed three main ethical issues in social research, especially in qualitative research, namely, informed consent, confidentiality, and data handling. The complexity of consent is one that was dependent on the teachers. The teachers in this study are teachers who are over the age of legal consent and the consent for the research came from them directly, rather than through a mediator. According to Diener and Crandall (as cited in Cohen et al, 2005), informed consent has to do with “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions” (p.52). There are several main issues that articulate consent, however, only two apply to this study and will be elucidated. Firstly, it was important to acknowledge that the teachers were mentally and emotionally able to handle the scope of the questioning. Secondly, the matter of voluntarism was made explicit and emphasised so that the freedom of the teachers would not be infringed upon. This included them being privy to information such as their right to withdraw from the research and that they could refuse to take part all together.

Prior to initial contact with the participants of the research, I applied for ethical clearance with the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC). Once I received full approval, I began to set up meetings with the principals of the schools as the gatekeepers and with the teachers who were part of the sample demographic that I needed. Firstly, I met the principals of the participating schools to discuss the research and they willingly gave their consent. Secondly, even though eleven teachers were approached and initially showed interest in doing the research, only nine of the teachers signed consent forms and submitted materials used to generate data. Summarily, ethical clearance from the university, two gatekeeper consent forms and consent forms from the participants were obtained as permission to conduct the research.

3.5.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is imperative in research because it protects the rights of the teachers and protects the privacy of the data generated during the research. There are two areas of importance before, after and during the research. The first area is anonymity. There must be some level of trust between the researcher and the teachers. The researcher must preserve the identity of the teachers (Cohen, et al, 2005). To preserve the identity of the teachers, pseudonyms were used instead of their original names. The second area of importance in privacy is confidentiality. Protection of information is paramount. As the researcher, I was the only one who was aware of the identity of all the participants and the only one with full access to the research material.

3.5.3 Handling of data

The handling of data is also cause for discussion because if neglected, then the teachers' privacy could be undermined. Permission from the teachers to record the interviews using a digital recorder was obtained and is included in the informed consent forms. When transcribing the recordings, every effort was made to ensure that the primary material was as authentic as possible and captured the message that each participant wished to convey. The transcribed notes and other data did not reflect

the identity nor any identity markers of the teachers. This meant describing the teachers in generic terms. Even though the case studies took place in generally small schools and in a small community, the identity of the teachers as being part of the research was their prerogative to disclose.

3.6 Recruitment of participants

This study worked with language teachers in two primary schools in the Zululand District (AbaQulusi municipality) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Of the two primary schools, one is a public school and the other is an independent school. Only one language-subject was identified per teacher and this has meant that two language-subjects were considered for this research which are IsiZulu and English. Nine of the ten teachers are fully qualified and registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE), whilst one is a student teacher learning remotely at a South African university. The teachers are not representative of the population, but their experiences and interpretations are relevant because they serve the same communities, despite their private/public status. Once the proposal was passed, I set up meetings with the teachers and met them in person and explained the study to them. I then formally requested that they participate in the study. Once the research commenced, only seven English teachers took part in the research. The sample size was seven female English teachers.

3.7 Sampling

In the use of the multiple case study, this research used purposive sampling to select the teachers for this research. Cohen, et al., (2005) assert that purposive sampling is when the researcher chooses a sample for a specific purpose and “it is deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased” (p. 201). The bias in the sample exists to serve the purpose of the research. For me to be able to respond to the research questions and meet the objectives of this research, purposive sampling was necessary because it “is used to investigate what is [...] interesting, irrespective of how frequent it is” (Gomm, 2008, p. 153). The use of purposive sampling in this research is important for two reasons. The language teachers in primary schools were chosen because they

would be able to respond to the research questions and provide information in ways that capture their experiences in teaching for social justice using literary texts. It also allowed for the analytical induction of data (Starman, 2013).

The sample of this research had initially consisted of eleven teachers of whom one was a student teacher. However, early in the research the student teacher expressed that he had not taught literary texts at all so he would not be able to participate in the research. Another teacher withdrew from the research at the beginning, citing workload challenges and two others withdrew without explanation. However, the COVID-19 pandemic was at play and many obstacles starting arising in the lives of many people, including the participating teachers. The research sample at the end consisted of seven language teachers.

3.7.1 Brief overview of the sample schools

A brief description of the sampled schools is that one school is a Christian faith-based independent school with a Catholic ethos and the other is a secular government school.

School A

The Catholic independent school (referred to as School A) has predominantly African learners averaging 400 in total and 17 permanent teachers, with an average teacher-learner ratio of 1:30. The learners are from the neighbouring townships, suburban areas and farms and the majority are from middle to upper class families. However, many children are in single-parent homes while many more are raised by their grandparents. The school comprises of staff of various racial groups, with the majority being Afrikaans speakers. The school has both girls and boys and enjoys high academic standards and achievements. Sport is encouraged and the school boasts three national players in rugby. English is the language of learning and teaching.

School B

The second school (referred to as School B) is a secular government school in a middle to lower class community. It comprises of 643 learners with 20 teachers. The teacher-learner ratio is 1:40 on average. The learners and teachers at the school are predominantly African and Coloured. School B historically catered for Coloured learners. The school caters for children in the surrounding townships. It comprises of staff of various racial groups with the majority classified as Coloured. The school does not emphasise sports, however, there is netball and soccer available for learners to play. The academic status of the school can be described as average and it does not feature in the top achievement list at municipal or district level. The language of learning and teaching is English.

These schools were chosen for several reasons. They are relatively small in numbers in terms of learners and this is in contrast to other schools in the area that have much larger numbers. The schools have a similar vision of seeking to provide quality education for learners in the area. Although situated in different parts of the area, they face similar challenges: high levels of unemployment, grandparents-headed households, lack of parental involvement and they serve children from marginalised backgrounds. While *School A* is independent and might have more resources, this research considers the views of van der Berg (2007) and Soudien (2007), that resources do not necessarily equate to quality education. Incidentally, despite the independent-school status of *School A*, it is classified as a low-fee school in relation to other schools associated with the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA). While both schools in their Codes of Conduct state their acceptance of learners from different religious, racial, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds, there is no social justice education policy explicitly stated.

3.7.2 Table of the schools and participants (pseudonyms)

Name	Grades	Years in profession	Subject language	Race	Gender
SCHOOL A					
Anne	4 & 5	10	English (FAL)	White	F
Nokukhanya	6 & 7	5 months	English (FAL)	Black	F
Charlotte	7	6	English (FAL)	Indian	F
SCHOOL B					
Ayanda	5	15	English (HL)	Black	F
Annika	4		English (HL)	Indian	F
Emily	5	14	English (HL)	Coloured	F
Elizabeth	7	26	English (HL)	Coloured	F

Information about the teachers that is relevant to the research has been captured in the table above. The sample comprises seven female teachers. The racial demographic of the teachers, as self-identified by them, is made up of one White, two Black, two Indian and two Coloured teachers. Both schools teach English as either a Home Language (HL) or First Additional Language (FAL). The years of experience of the teachers varied with an average of 10 years between them, one being a novice teacher with 5 months of experience during the time of the research.

This research concentrated on primary school language teachers in the intermediate phase, who teach English and IsiZulu. This then excluded foundation phase teachers and Afrikaans teachers.

3.8 Data generation strategies

To capture, as authentically as possible, the teaching experiences of the teachers, documents in the form of lesson plans from the teachers, semi-structured questionnaires, and semi-structured open-ended interviews were used to generate data. This gave teachers the opportunity to authentically express their 'truths' or

realities. These instruments of data generation provided sufficient sources of information in the analysis of data with detailed and rich descriptions (Sammut-Bonnici & McGee, 2015).

3.8.1 Document review

Shupak (2015) states that “capacities of literary work to engage students in learning about systemic racism and other forms of oppression can remain dormant without teaching strategies that are appropriate for mobilising [social justice issues]” (p. 120). In this regard, teachers need to “provide students with the conceptual tools necessary to critique and engage society along with its inequalities and injustices” (Shor, 2008, p. 298). To see how this is exemplified in the classroom, I requested the teachers to provide three previously used lesson plans that show how they teach literary texts. The purpose of this was to give me an indication of how the teachers approach teaching literary texts, and whether social justice issues are foregrounded. They were an appropriate introduction to examining what they teach and to some degree, how they teach. Additionally, they provided me with an opportunity to examine these documents before providing questionnaires.

Rapley and Reese (2018) state two ways that documents can be used in qualitative research. The first is the documents as “docile container(s)” (p. 378) and the second is documents as part of the research. This research situates the documentary data as active agents in data generation. The lesson plans provide a window into the classroom of the teachers, one which cannot be achieved by questionnaires and interviews alone. The lesson plans are context-based, meaning they reflect the perceptions and interactions of the teachers. Through the review of lesson plans, two research questions were answered. Firstly, I was able to see what social justice issues language teachers in a primary school foreground in their teaching of literary texts. Secondly, the document review provided information on how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice in primary school language classrooms. Using the document review instrument, I was able to note key concepts that arose from the lesson plans of the teachers and was able to determine which ones were relevant to the research and which ones were not.

3.8.2 Questionnaires

Although labour intensive and time-consuming (Mathers, 2007), these instruments are vital in providing the rich description required in qualitative research; they also provide fitness for purpose in the interpretivist paradigm. Anonymous and semi-structured questionnaires are an ideal way of getting honest responses from teachers because they are answered away from the researcher and can therefore generate more personal information. The interpretivist paradigm notes that teachers are subjects, not objects, with an understanding of their realities. While Mathers (2007) notes that open-ended questions can make data analysis difficult, he also acknowledges that they do not constrain the teachers to single answers and are able to fully express themselves should they wish to do so. This is essential in addressing the issue of questionnaires being labour intensive and time consuming.

Similar to Mathers' (2007) argument about the use of questionnaires in qualitative research, Cohen, et al (2005) also state that answers are hard to compare, they are time consuming and participants might not be able to articulate their thoughts in ways acceptable to the researcher. I bore all this in mind, and I looked to Cohen, et al. (2005) to try and mitigate these challenges. To follow the steps presented by Cohen, et al. (2005) in ensuring the credibility of the questionnaires, I began by going through the questionnaires with each teacher to make sure they understood what was expected of them. I proceeded to go through the questionnaires after they had been answered to confirm with the teachers if they were pleased with how they had articulated themselves when answering. Having verified responses, I began to analyse the data through coding and theme development. This is discussed later in the chapter.

3.8.3 Interviews

In chapter two, when discussing an extract from Plato's *The Republic*, we see a conversation going on. Conversations, or rather dialogues, are ways in which humans gather information about one another and share their experiences. They also share how they experience the world, how they feel, act, and develop (Brinkmann, 2014). Brinkmann (2014) states that conversations are "a rich and indispensable source of

knowledge about personal and social aspects of our lives” (p. 278). It is this conversational concept that developed into the interview as we now know it. Interview, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2008), “is an interchange of views about a theme of mutual interest” (p. 278). This rich source of information gathering was employed using face-to-face interviews.

Face-to-face interviews provide more thoughtful and insightful details into the experiences of the teachers (Brinkmann, 2014). The insightful details do not only serve the purpose of data generation but are also concerned about life, and life is a social encounter (Cohen, et al. (2005). Face-to-face interviews are an excellent way to generate high quality data (Mathers, 2007) and Cohen et al., (2005) regard them as social encounters that are not part of life but ‘life itself’ (p. 256). The inherently personal nature of interviews makes them an ideal instrument of data generation for this research because they could capture, as accurately as possible, the real impressions of the teachers, in their own words. Part of the strength of face-to-face interviewing is also its biggest challenge. While the teachers had a platform to “speak their truth” as it were, there was also the challenge of interpretation.

To enable me to capture the experiences of language teachers who teach for social justice using literary texts, I employed face-to-face interviews with each of the participating teachers. Each interview lasted for approximately an hour. The teachers elaborated on many of the points raised from the questions which led to the structure of the interview changing to be more conversational. I had envisioned this happening, thus leading to the decision to have semi-structured interviews. In conducting the interviews, I followed the steps given by Brinkmann (2014). These are: a) give your whole attention to the person; b) listen, do not talk; c) never argue, never give advice; d) listen to what they want to say, what they do not say and what they cannot say without help; e) summarise what has been said; and f) give assurance of privacy and confidentiality (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 280). I noticed that when following these steps, the interviews yielded positive and informative results.

According to Brinkmann (2014) there is no such thing as a completely unstructured interview and inversely, there is no such thing as a structured interview (p. 285). If I am to better capture the experiences of language teachers from their perspective, the interviews had to be structured in ways that allow them to have a voice. Ultimately, the interviews were able to help me answer the research questions.

Although there is a close relationship between questionnaires and interviews, the use of both determines consistency and trustworthiness in the responses of the participants. I noted earlier that the most ideal tool for data generation in these cases would have been observations. However, the limitations of Covid-19 made it difficult. The research relied heavily on the responses of the participants and not the researchers' observations, therefore the use of both allows for better triangulation of data. Furthermore, questionnaires tend to be less invasive than interviews but do not compel the respondents to provide extra information. Interviews are more engaging and provide the interviewer more opportunity to delve deeper into the research questions. Interviews, therefore, completed what had been lacking in the questionnaires.

3.9 Data analysis: Thematic analysis

In typical qualitative research, the process of analysis of the data is inductive. This means that I generated data and built concepts and themes from the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The main principle of analysis in qualitative research is to relate theory to the data generated and examine the correlations and differences. The data analysis process was engaged throughout the data generation process. After receiving the lesson plans from the teachers, those documents were analysed by identifying themes and applying interpretations to those themes. The same process was applied for all the data generated from the questionnaires and interviews.

Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun (2017) have outlined two procedures to conducting thematic analysis. The first approach is underscored by coding reliability and the second approach is more flexible on coding

and themes and is suitable for a more qualitative approach. The latter was used in this research as it allows for the inductive analysis of data. This means that although I went into the research with theories of social justice education in mind, I looked at the data to understand the teachers' meanings and interpretations, and, from that, I generated the themes (Gomm, 2008). Terry, et al. (2017) discusses the "theme development process" (p. 23) and I will now outline how I used it in my research.

3.9.1 Familiarisation and coding

These two processes involved reading the textual data several times to familiarise myself with it while making casual notes. This first step helped me to note whether the textual evidence responded to the research questions and objectives or not. After receiving the lesson plans from the teachers, I began to identify obvious social justice issues raised during the lessons. After noting down those issues, I began to look for obscure or inconspicuous ways in which the issues could have been addressed. From these observations and analyses, I began to form themes that could have helped to meet the objectives of the research and answer the research questions. It became clear from the lesson plans that there was more emphasis on language use and language learning rather than an exploration of social justice issues arising from the various literary texts. This then made questionnaires and interviews a necessary next step in generating more data. These instruments dealt explicitly with the teachers' understanding of social justice in education. They provided better opportunities for me to get themes and codes to help answer the research questions.

3.9.2 Theme development

After re-reading the textual data, I began to form themes from the patterns that arose from the data. While coding forms part of the first stage of theme development, it was also used here for the formation of meaning. According to Cohen, et al. (2005) "coding is an ascription of a category label either decided in advance or in response to the data that has been collected" (p. 283). Coding sounds so similar to theme formation that even Terry, et al. (2017) acknowledges that the distinction is often very blurred. However, they have simplified it by asserting that coding helps to find "evidence" for

the themes in the research (p. 19). Since this research is concerned with social justice issues that teachers identify as being imperative when teaching literary texts, the themes that I identified correlated with the research questions. Specifically, the themes identified a) which issues teachers foregrounded in their teaching of literary texts; b) what specific issues were chosen; c) how teachers used literary texts to teach for social justice; d) how literary texts supported the teaching for social justice. These themes were identified in the lesson plans, questionnaires and interviews.

3.9.3 Reviewing and defining themes

Terry, et al. (2017) view this part of the process as “a quality control exercise” (p. 29). In this step, I reviewed the data to make sure that it was in line with the purpose of the research. In defining and naming themes, I began putting together the data into an interpretative narrative to capture and represent the views of the teachers. As mentioned earlier, the lesson plans yielded some information about teachers’ use of literary texts in teaching for social justice, however, the identified themes from these were further supplemented by the themes identified in questionnaires and interviews. During the process of reviewing the data, it became clear that other issues raised by the teachers hindered their use of teaching for social justice. These challenges raised by the teachers formed part of new themes that arose during the research that social justice issues went beyond those found in literary texts. Interestingly, many of the issues brought forth by the teachers were those raised by scholars and social justice educational activists, as discussed in chapter two.

3.9.4 Producing the report

In this process, I created a link that showed the relationship between the theories that underpin social justice education, the literature review of teaching literary texts foregrounded by social justice issues and the data generated from the research teachers. It is here that I began to draw conclusions to help answer the research questions and meet the purpose and objectives of the research. After the completion of the report, the teachers were debriefed as a group and we had a discussion on the

impact the research had on them. The feedback was done orally as the teachers expressed their reluctance to be given a written report.

3.10 Storage of data and disposal of data

The guidelines for the storage of data and maintenance as per the research policy of the University of KwaZulu Natal are as follows:

It is the responsibility of the researcher to arrange for safe storage of all data on which research is based.

Electronic data sets should have adequate arrangements for back-up.

The primary data should be stored in the school in which the project is based. The intention of this is to ensure safety and integrity of the data set. The overall responsibility for this rests with the Dean and Head of School.

Data on which any research publication is based should be retained in the School for at least five years after publication.

(POLICY ON RESEARCH ETHICS, RESEARCH POLICY V) REF: CO/06/2906/07, 2014, University of KwaZulu Natal).

Taking the above into account, the research data has been stored in the supervisor's cupboard and will remain there for five years. When a period of five years has elapsed, all primary materials will be shredded and sent for recycling.

3.11 Trustworthiness

According to Cohen, et al (2005) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the concept of validity in qualitative research takes on the nature of trustworthiness. This concept is aimed at ensuring that data in research is captured in the most accurate way possible. The interpretation of data throughout the whole research needed to represent, as accurately as possible, the interpretations of the teachers and their realities. Cohen, et al. (2005) state that trustworthiness can be defined in terms of dependability, confirmability, credibility, transferability (p. 152) as well as reflexivity (p. 141).

3.11.1 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research replaces the positivist notion of reliability. It is the extent to which the same study could yield similar results in another context (Cohen, et al. 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this research, dependability relied on triangulation to reflect the cases as authentically as possible. The use of lesson plans, questionnaires and interviewing as data generation instruments ensured that the teachers had ample opportunity to express their views and experiences. They were telling their stories; they were expressing their own realities to the researcher. The power that they had in telling their own stories limited the researcher bias because the evidence spoke for the teachers. They used their own voices to tell their own stories.

3.11.2 Confirmability

Confirmability in research relates to whether the results of the study match the data (Cohen, et al., 2005). This is to ensure that the data generation and the report of the findings are aligned to the interpretations of the participants and not what the researcher would like them to be. To ensure confirmability in this research, I employed self-reflexivity and member-checking. Self-reflexivity supported by transparency and evidence-based interpretation is the first step (Aurini, Heath & Howells, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) defined reflexivity as an “awareness of the influence the researcher had on what is being studied” (p. 59). Cohen, et al., (2005) also assert that “researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching” (p. 141). Researcher bias in qualitative research is invariably present, however, it is vital to the integrity of this research to limit it so that it does not influence how the research data is analysed. This happens with an awareness of positionality. Positionality has been defined as the way in which we reflect our identities (Locke, 2019), and researchers must examine their power positions and how that might affect the research.

When I set out to research, I remained as honest and accommodating as I could be with the participants. I followed their timetables and contacted them only when they were available. When analysing and reporting on the data and findings, I was conscious of my expectations of an ideal situation and reverted to the participants in

every aspect of the data generation to make sure I captured their experiences accurately. Reverting to the participants was part of member-checking.

3.11.3 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings match the researched phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This can may be achieved in two ways: triangulation and member checking. These function metaphorically as inspectors in the research to ensure correct data capturing and validation throughout the whole process of research. In this research, to ensure credibility I used triangulation. It is “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen, et al. 2005, p. 112). Different data generation instruments have been used in this research to generate more data and capture the case studies as authentically as possible. This methodical triangulation is not meant to give credibility to the data (Cohen, et al. 2005), this will be done following the assertion of Stake (2011) that the triangulation should happen consistently throughout the research.

In this research, the use of open-ended questions in questionnaires, recorded interviews and lesson plans from the teachers captured the authentic nature of how the teachers experience their realities. Credibility was established in the data analysis process; the teachers were given an opportunity to go through the transcripts and validate whether the transcripts captured what the teachers meant. The use of transcripts is favoured by many researchers but Bailey (2019) cautions against the complete reliance on transcripts as authentic instruments to prove trustworthiness and rigour. He saw transcripts as forms of re-presenting the views of the teachers and it “transforms, decontextualizes and flattens the original utterances” (Bailey, 2019, p. 101).

To counter this, I transcribed the interviews as soon as they were administered. This helped to not only capture the audio but other nuances observed in the body language, movements, the venue and how familiar the teachers are with the concepts under study, as well as their general interaction with the researcher. The data generated from

this research is textual, that is “people being studied communicate the way they understand the world” (Copley, 2019, p. 11). As articulated above, the task of qualitative research is to gain insight into these constructions of reality. The use of several data generating instruments meant that the findings could be accurately described, and the interpretations of the research could be backed by evidence. This ensured that there was “a complete and balanced representation of the multiple realities in and construction of a situation” (Cohen, et al., 2005 p. 108).

3.11.4 Transferability

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) define transferability as the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied to other situations (p. 253). This replaces more traditional notions of generalizability. To make transferability possible in this research, I have generated multiple forms of textual data and used in-depth descriptions of the generated data. I have also engaged with a multiple case study to engage with teachers who teach under different contexts.

3.12 Limitations of the study

At the beginning of 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) had been informed of a virus emanating from the Chinese town of Wuhan. When the Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, congratulated China for their diligent work in curbing the virus in his 30 January 2020 address, he could not have imagined the total havoc this virus would cause on the world as we know it. While he was quoting numbers in single digits in different countries at the beginning of 2020, the pandemic at the time of this report had infected over 93 million people and caused over 2 million deaths worldwide (<https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/>). This meant lockdowns and shutdowns for many countries, including South Africa. Schools were closed as the government tried to slow down the spread of the virus. This proved challenging to my research because it meant that I could not access some materials needed and it also meant restrictions to access of the participants. I could not observe the lessons being taught, as I initially planned to do, and this was a real hindrance to getting a firsthand account of how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice.

The sporadic closure of schools meant that access to teachers became even more difficult. Both schools had cases of possible cases of the coronavirus and had to close. This meant that there was a long gap between the different stages of data generation. This made it difficult to create a coherent process of data generation. While the teachers were not hesitant in meeting up with me, it meant that the interviews had to be conducted outside the school premises, at the teachers' personal times. However, despite the limitations, mostly unforeseen, the research was undertaken successfully.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the research paradigm, research approach and research design used in the study. It has also provided information on the participants and ethical issues that arose to carry out the research. Ways in which the sample was chosen and how the participants were recruited have also been discussed. It has outlined the various data generation instruments used in the research, and explained thematic analysis used to analyze the data in this research. An explanation on how the research has dealt with maintaining rigour and trustworthiness has been provided. In addition, it has explained the limitations that arose from the research, as well as ways that the data will be stored and secured.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

At the beginning of this research, I was already aware of the many challenges that teachers in South African primary school language classrooms faced, based on published literature. These challenges were well documented by Morrow (2007) when he examined the work that teachers do and what was expected of them in terms of the Norms and Standards. Some of the issues contributing to the challenges teachers face are: a) the lack of policy implementation due to poor management, b) teachers' unwillingness and/or competency to implement these policy changes, and c) the inflated work of teachers (Morrow, 2007). Over and above these systemic issues, teachers also work with the challenges of HIV/AIDS, poverty, lack of functioning and maintained schools, among others. It was with the above understanding of teachers that I began my research in seeking to understand how they use literary texts to teach for social justice and was able to obtain a better understanding of how the participating teachers in this research navigated their way around the system to advocate for social justice in education.

The data to be discussed was generated using document reviews of lesson plans from the participants, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. These multiple sources of data will be indicated and discussed simultaneously when describing the data instead of treating them as separate entities. Seven female participants, teaching English home language in the intermediate and senior phase, from two primary schools contributed to this research. The schools chosen were different in many ways. I chose these seemingly extremely different schools because much of the literature on social justice, especially that presented by Hackman (2005) and Picower (2012), indicates that content mastery and competence are sufficient in advocating teaching literary texts for social justice. Firstly, one is an independent school, and the other is a government school. Secondly, while only less than 6 kilometres away from each other, the differences in the schools in terms of resources and building maintenance are obvious. An in-depth look at the differences between the schools have been discussed

in detail in Chapter three. Using the theme development process (Terry, 2017) to analyse the data, I noticed that despite the structural differences between these schools, the approaches, and attitudes of the teachers towards a social justice-oriented teaching and curriculum were the similar. All indicated a desire to see the teaching of languages more oriented towards teaching learners to think critically. These similarities and differences are discussed further in the chapter.

As noted earlier and in the previous chapter, although the schools are seemingly different, language teachers' approaches to teaching literature were noted as being similar. Common themes which will be discussed in this chapter run through the responses of all the teachers, irrespective of the school they are from. For example, the teachers had a similar view on social justice, they used the same approaches to teaching literary texts and they all did not regard resources as a big hindrance to teaching for social justice. When looking at their challenges, there is a pattern in both schools. These issues were mainly: learners not reading enough, learning barriers related to language acquisition and the curriculum. It was from this discovery that I decided to present the data without separating the teachers according to school but as a group of individuals working at primary schools.

In the previous chapter I discussed methods of data generation, in this chapter I discuss the data generated from the used instruments. This chapter begins with the introduction of the participants and provides a summary of social justice issues that they foreground when teaching literary texts. A detailed description of the finding will then follow. I will discuss the teachers' understanding of social justice. This will be followed by their approaches to teaching literary texts.

4.1.1 Summary of the data generated

		Lesson plans: Social Justice issues identified			Questionnaires: Social Justice issues identified	Interviews: Social Justice issues identified
		1	2	3		
1	Annika	Not submitted	Not submitted	Not submitted	Ageism, racism	Religious expression
2	Emily	Environment	Nil	Nil	Poverty, racism	Disability
3	Elizabeth	Moral dilemma	Class	Bullying	Race, culture, gender, disability, social status	Equitable distribution of wealth, culture
4	Ayanda	Nil	Cultural diversity	Nil	Gender, disability, race, poverty	Disability, sexual orientation, gender, religion and
5	Charlotte	Poverty	Racism,	Disability	Gender, race, culture, economic and social status	Class, religion, race, disability, race
6	Nokukanya	Gender	Racism, abuse of power by police, child abuse	Nil	Race, gender, economic status	Disability,
7	Anne	Nil	Nil	Nil	Race, culture, gender, disability and social status	disability

4.2 Teachers' understanding of teaching for social justice

The teachers' definitions and understandings of social justice were, interestingly, a reiteration of what is in the literature. They emphasised equality and equity in opportunities as being fundamental to realising social justice. In her questionnaire, Ayanda said that she understood social justice as *“socio-economical or social inequalities as a result of unfair distribution of power and resources.”* Nokukhanya added to this and asserted that *“social justice is when everyone has equal rights and opportunities regardless of their differences.”* Although the teachers quote a 'universal' understanding of social justice, they were consistent in their perception of social justice. Emily in her interview stated that *“social justice is equality for all. For me, it's a society where there is no discrimination based on your colour, your creed or your gender. It's equality all around, and fairness.”*

Perhaps the most interesting response is from Elizabeth who asserted that social justice is equal opportunity but it was unrealistic. *“It is unrealistic because not all people see an opportunity... the link between skill and opportunity is missing. So that's what I mean when the state and the person are answerable in addressing social justice issues.”* She put the responsibility of realising social justice on both the individual and the state. If people do not use the skills that they have, then they lose the opportunity to improve their lives. On the other hand, if the state does not provide people with opportunities to use their skills, then the quality of life does not improve. This view is shared by Smith (2018) who examined the political nature of education.

Firstly, Smith (2018) states that equality of opportunity “means that everyone has the chances to enter in any occupation... [and] the same opportunities to succeed” (p. 7). Secondly, he believes that education is invariably linked to politics. Those in power determine the role of education and the purpose it should serve in society. While some believe that poor education leads to or exacerbates poverty, some believe that the poor are so because they have not used the educational opportunities available to them. The view held by Smith (2018) is that people should have the opportunity to succeed through their own merits and not because they have better educational opportunities as a result of their socio-economic backgrounds. This view is also held

by the teachers who took part in this research. They acknowledge that the current system of education in South Africa “*does not always allow for children from previously disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their situations because of their backgrounds*”. Those in School A, according to the teachers, were “*more likely to get into better high schools*” and have “*a higher probability of successful future opportunities*”, because many of their “*parents could afford it*”, while those at School B would have to attend “*any school they get into*”. This is in itself acknowledged by all the teachers as a social injustice.

Barnatt, et al. (2009) believed that while social justice as a concept is widespread, it runs the danger of existing in name only because it was “undertheorized and vague” (p. 347). When examining the lesson plans and interviews of the teachers, the concerns of Barnatt, et al. (2009) became clear. While 6 of the 7 teachers fervently stipulated that they made “*conscious*” decisions to teach for social justice, this was not reflected in the lesson plans or interviews. Radolph and Johnson (2017) believe that the proper implementation of social justice in education must include a curriculum that enables it. Since none of the teachers mentioned the curriculum as a hindrance to teaching for social justice, it suggests that they have found ways to negotiate the curriculum in order to find the best way to use literary texts. Lacking however, is the examination of social injustices (Taylor & Otinsky, 2007). Yet Hackman (2005) asserts that it cannot be achieved without a teacher who can master the content and use it in ways that increase the learners’ academic knowledge and examining systems of oppression. According to the teachers, content mastery “*does not easily translate*” to or lead to either “*critical thinking*” or “*teaching for social justice*”. They cite two main issues that hinder the transition from content mastery to critical thinking and critical analysis of power. These challenges are: “*learners’ reading*” and the “*language barrier*”.

4.3 Barriers to teaching for social justice

4.3.1 Reading

In their interviews, all the teachers cited reading as an essential component to teaching literary texts. The teachers said that not only do learners “*not read enough books*”,

they also “do not understand what they are reading”. In School A, the school has a library and every class has a “library period” where every learner must take a book to read. The teachers in this school find that although learners are afforded this opportunity, many of them take books that are below their age level. This results in poor reading and vocabulary. School B, however, has an even bigger challenge. They have no library, and the language teachers have to collect their own books. This means that there is little opportunity for children to read literature that is outside of the syllabus at school. All the teachers in school A emphasized reading for both the teacher and the learner. It is important to note here that all the teachers who participated in the research had set textbooks and readers provided by the curriculum, however they have found these to be insufficient in engaging with social justice issues.

Three of the teachers believe that teachers should choose literary texts that learners can relate to.

I think, like I said before, looking at the children that are in front of you, taking a text that applies to the child in front of you. Not, for argument's sake, a William Shakespeare in an African environment. I would, as a child, be wondering what the teacher is talking about (Emily).

The teachers must also read; they must know what to tell the children. Then you can get your kids to read. Then you expose them to authors, the different authors... and also the teacher should read stories to the children, that's really important because when the teacher reads stories, not only does it form a bond with the teacher but opens up a new vista (Annika).

The highest point of teaching was reading. If you don't read, you can never foster a love for reading to anyone and unfortunately a lot of the teachers are not reading and I can hear it from the way they speak (Elizabeth).

It was clear that the teachers knew that they needed to know their learners in order to find books that appealed to their learners and their contexts. They also recognised that reading to learners could open up new worlds to learners and forge a connection between the teacher and the learners. It was also pointed out that teachers,

themselves, needed to be role model readers to their learners, something that might not be happening. It became clear that reading was necessary for social change. Naiditch (2010) discussed the importance of reading for social change. He articulated that teachers should allow learners to create their own meanings from the texts they read through understanding, interpretation and reconstruction. He saw it as essential that teachers create an awareness in learners about how reality and society were social constructs. He asserts that, firstly, learners need to understand what is present in the text, this is reading for comprehension. Secondly, they need to awaken learners' prior knowledge, this is reading analysis. Lastly, through synthesis, teachers facilitate in creating new knowledge (Naiditch, 2010). All seven of the teachers acknowledged that learners struggle to “*read for comprehension*”. They all also stated that poetry was the “*most difficult*” type of literary work to be understood by learners. They all attributed this to the language barrier. This is understandable as learners in both schools are learning English as a home language even though they are not English home language speakers. This will be discussed further in the next section of this chapter.

Bonica (2014) has stated that beyond just summarising, learners need to understand the deeper meaning of texts. This echoes the sentiments of all the writers and theorists of social justice education. She continues to say that “successful literary interpretation is dependent upon the integration of comprehension of the text itself, the intent of the author, the experiences of the reader, and those societal constructs that could be related to text” (2014, p. 2). The notion of meaning-creation is fundamental in deconstructing and identifying biases in literary texts. We see from the above statement that the learning and teaching of literary texts for social justice is a process, a journey that the teacher takes the learners through. When not done adequately by the teacher, or not understood sufficiently by the learners, then the process of understanding, interpretation and construction, as presented by Naiditch (2010) will remain incomplete – a missed opportunity.

The process of understanding, interpretation and construction does not seem to manifest itself really well in any of the responses of the participants. All the teachers seem to stop at analysis and there is little evidence of reconstruction, or synthesis.

The Grade 7 teachers noted in their lesson plans that they have either “*whole class discussions*” or “*group discussions*” for learners to analyse the texts. Thereafter, “*questions about the texts are answered individually*”. The lessons from all the teachers show this pattern. This could be attributed to the teachers’ emphasis on reading for comprehension. Except for grade 7 teachers, all the other teachers stated that on average 75% of their teaching of literary texts is focused on reading and language. The purpose of this paper is not to examine the language barrier; however, it came up often during the data generation process and could therefore not be ignored. Overall, it was clear, that language issues are social justice issues.

When asked what they actually teach when teaching literary texts, apart from reading, the answers varied.

Punctuation. I find that if children are not able to understand the punctuation sign, they do not understand what they are reading. It helps them to express the reading and understand the context of the text. And when they read, they should be able to apply that punctuation (Ayanda).

Well, firstly I want to introduce them, right. Second, I focus on teaching them to appreciate language, and I like them to understand, say, the witty part... and also, I want them to understand when you teach a poem, why does the poet use that word? And what’s the underlying meaning and why did he choose that word and not this word? (Annika)

The statements above show teachers’ understandings that issues such as punctuation and language appreciation are important aspects in teaching a text. Their statements also indicate a bigger problem with teaching for social justice to second language English speakers. This issue was elaborated upon in Chapter two. However, the overarching dilemma in these schools is how to move beyond teaching grammar and punctuation and get to a point where critical thinking is foregrounded. None of the teachers gave a response to how they transition from language and grammar to analysis of texts. Ayanda’s belief that understanding punctuation makes learners better readers stems from years of experience, however, her lesson plans do not

correspond with her claims. In her interview, she proclaimed herself as a sort of advocate for social; justice, especially in cultural and gender equality issues. This does not appear in her lesson plans. There is only a vague mention of a discussion on cultural diversity. This brings to question the notion of teacher agency. Ayanda is at a school where she has the power to choose texts and align her lessons in that way, but she had not done so. Having never observed any of her lessons, it would be an injustice to speculate.

Nokukhanya and Anne, who are both from school B, said that they were guided by “*the textbook*”. They mainly focus on “*structure*”, “*terminology*”, “*characters*”, and general “*literary analysis*”. Their main focus is micro and macro analysis of texts (Hackman, 2005). They provide the facts of the texts and make some attempt at analysing what messages might be embedded in the texts. However, this is hindered by the literary texts at their disposal.

In 2014, Manyike and Lemmer focused on challenges in language education in South Africa. Examining the *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS), they noted that “few South African learners (6%) were able to read at an advanced level: 71% were able to reach a rudimentary level of reading and attain the Low International Benchmark” (p. 255). Although that study was conducted in 2011, there is little evidence of any improvement. This point is proven true by research done by Moloï in 2019 on dysfunctional schools. According to that report, 80% of schools in South Africa were dysfunctional. Manyike and Lemmer (2014) noted that some of the factors identified for the underachievement in PIRLS were lack of or poor literacy resources at schools and learners’ homes, as well as overcrowded classrooms.

School B, with its profile of lack of resources and large classes, seems to prove challenging to the teachers interviewed as they felt they could achieve better if they had the necessary resources.

There’s no library in this school, even though in every class we’re supposed to have a reading nook where we have books where the kids can go and read them, but we don’t have that. I have had two Grade 7 learners that when they’re

reading, they can't read the language; they can't deal with spelling, they can't read the basic words (Nokukhanya).

There are children that come from other countries who speak French, for example, rather than English and Zulu. I had a child who spoke French only and the only thing I could manage to teach her was to read stories so that I could... she could get used to the language, the sound of the language, develop a love for reading, because if she can't read, she probably can't understand the concepts in other subject (Ayanda).

The two teachers recognised that a lack of resources was not their only challenge. They had to teach learners who could not read or recognise words and who faced language challenges beyond the challenges that other learners faced. Despite these challenges, Ayanda tried reading stories to the French learner to help the learner hear and love the language and love reading. Ayanda hoped that the love of reading would enable access to the learner in other subjects as well. Interestingly though, aside from the lack of resources, School A and School B face similar challenges.

According to data generated from the teachers, only one teacher was consistent throughout the research in terms of following the whole process presented by Naiditch (2010). Elizabeth, from School B, showed evidence of understanding, interpretation and construction in the teaching of literary texts through all the generated data sources. It is difficult to ascertain how effective these are in the classroom as I had not conducted any observations, however this generated data could indicate the possibility of a language education that has at its core the move towards creating critical thinkers within the framework of social justice education.

4.3.2 Language

The second barrier identified by all the teachers in teaching literary texts is that the majority of the learners they teach are not native speakers of English. School B's

learner demographic is largely homogenous, with mainly IsiZulu speaking learners. School A has a majority of African learners with some Indian, Coloured and learners from other African countries. This means that the majority of their learners, similar to School B, are non-English home language speakers and struggle with the language. Due to the historical background of both schools (mentioned in chapter three), they teach English as a home language, which seems to present an even bigger challenge for the teachers and the learners. All teachers, except those in Grade 7, emphasised language learning and reading. It became clear that the language barrier is a big influence in the struggle for social justice in education.

The grade 7 teachers in both schools asserted that they concentrate more on engagement with the “*story*” than “*language*”. For example, according to Charlotte, learners already “*have knowledge of figures of speech*”, so she does not go into detail with the language aspect of literary texts. Elizabeth concurs, saying that language is generally repetitive from the previous grades and “*all I’m doing is maybe using a bigger word or different vocab but it’s basically the same thing.*” It is interesting because while the lower grades seem to struggle with making the textbooks they use more relevant to social justice, the Grade 7 teachers assert that the majority of their comprehension exercises and literary texts mostly deal with a social justice issue in one form or another. Despite this, language acquisition remains an issue.

Exacerbating this language barrier is the fact that many children do not have the opportunity to engage with the English language at home. Despite most learners having access to social media platforms and traditional media, they speak to their parents and friends in their mother tongues, whether it is IsiZulu or Afrikaans. Some teachers, especially in School B, noted that many parents, guardians and grandparents do not know English and are therefore not able to help the learners improve. One teacher from School B has said that they used code switching in teaching English to try and bridge the language gap between English and IsiZulu.

Because sometimes, I know I should be teaching in English but I see in their eyes that they don't understand what I'm saying so I switch to Zulu. Sometimes, for some of the terminologies I would switch to Zulu... even the Coloureds in our class, they know Zulu more than they know English, and they are mixed Zulu, so they just speak that language (Nokukhanya)

Nokukhanya reflects her internal dilemma, believing she should not be code-switching but needing to do it to enable understanding in her learners. She is able to read and understand her learners and seems to know their linguistic backgrounds. She wants them to understand and thus code-switches, even if she thinks it is not the correct thing to do. Manyike and Lemmer (2014) discuss the many challenges in the language in education discourse. One of those challenges is the fact that learners are taught in a foreign language that is not the home language of the majority of the learners. They state that "South Africa is a linguistically diverse country whose history of language policy and practice in education has been shaped, at times violently, by ideological and political interests rather than pedagogical consideration" (Manyike & Lemmer, 2014, p. 251). This language education issue cannot be excluded from this research because all the teachers have mentioned the language barrier as one of the reasons for not being able to fully engage with social justice issues. They admit that the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) is an excellent document, however, to implement it in an imperfect system is nearly impossible. This has affected primary schools in South Africa in several ways. It is also a strong factor in deciding if and how social justice issues will be considered in literary, or even other, texts.

Manyike and Lemmer (2014) discuss results of the school-leaving examinations that reflect an underachievement among African learners. These, according to them, "have been attributed to language related difficulties" (2014, p. 251). In light of this, the teachers' challenges do not exist in isolation and perhaps social justice cannot be realised in an environment where learners can barely speak or write the language of teaching and learning. Paradoxically, two of the teachers who teach IsiZulu and Afrikaans in addition to English face the same challenges in those classes that they face in English classrooms. This paradox is also observed by Manyike and Lemmer

(2014) when looking at the PIRLS results which indicated that learners who were tested in African languages scored worse than those who were tested in English and Afrikaans. The second paradox in these two schools is the home language debate. In School B, learners learn their home language from Grade R whilst the learners in School A only learn it from Grade 3 and yet both schools struggle with the same language problems. This opens up the possibility that there is more at play in schooling than is evidenced at face value. Other factors seem to serve as barriers to teaching and learning in general and not just to reading.

Naiditch (2010) explains reading as an interactive process that should move “beyond surface level of reading into a more critical perspective” (p. 94). In a situation where learners in Grade 7 cannot even speak or write in the language of instruction, then the reading process is interrupted and hugely undermined. A Grade 4 teacher in School A emphasised teaching “*reading for enjoyment and appreciation*” whereas the Grade 5 and 6 teachers put emphasis on “*comprehension*”, “*language*” and “*punctuation*”. The Grade 7 teachers emphasised “*comprehension*” and “*analysis*”. It would appear that teachers in the higher grades plan their lesson with the belief that many concepts were covered in the lower grades, however, in reality the learners still struggle with English language acquisition. Despite the challenges in reading and the language barrier, teachers were still willing to and wanting to engage with social justice issues when teaching literary texts.

4.4 Social justice and literary texts

4.4.1 Enacting a critical pedagogy with challenges

The two Grade 7 teachers, although from different schools, had consistent and similar responses in all the instruments used for data generation. Charlotte is an Indian-Coloured teacher in her seventh year of teaching and Elizabeth is a Coloured teacher with an experience of over 23 years. Despite the differences in their ages and teaching experiences, both teachers seemed to approach the teaching of literary texts in the same manner. These approaches were obtained from their lesson plans and interviews as sources of information, not from any observations. Charlotte presented lessons from the textbook whereas Elizabeth used material from other resources.

They both chose poems that looked at poverty and class. They both indicated a whole class discussion with the learners before learners answered questions about the poem. They both sought to use the experiences of the learners to make them understand the poems better. It is important that they chose poems that opened up possibilities to talk about social justice issues. It is equally important that they enabled learners' responses prior to assessment.

I should indicate here that the analysis of data generated from the lesson plans was limited because only Elizabeth provided extensive lesson plans. She indicated what specific matters would be discussed and also included the questions with which the learners would engage. The challenge to this research as indicated before is that teachers had had a meeting with the researcher regarding social justice issues. Therefore, many of them attempted to incorporate it into their teaching. Consequently, lesson plans are an inadequate perception of their classrooms. This challenge is addressed and minimised by the information collected in interviews and questionnaires.

And yet, when asked which literary texts proved challenging for the learners to grapple with, all the teachers indicated poetry. These are some of their responses.

Poems... no. They enjoy short stories because some poems... they don't really understand. A few who would actually be able to get it, but then you have to repeat it all the time and ask them to find the words. Then they can understand (Charlotte).

Poems, they are way above the children's understanding and level. So I try to find some as current that are out there... if it's African, it is very morbid. So then I have to rely on traditional English ones and some are totally mixed (Elizabeth).

I'm gonna have to say poetry. I love to teach it but, I have to say, it's so difficult for them to understand. I love teaching it but I also don't because it is very difficult for them to understand it. So when it comes to rhyming, things like that, and the lines, they really struggle (Anne).

It becomes clear that while teachers may themselves enjoy poetry and even enjoy teaching it, they recognise the difficulties of their learners in understanding the words, content and figurative language of the poems. However, they have to teach poetry because it is part of the English syllabus. What must be realised that while teachers grapple with learners' basic understanding of poems, the issues of social justice become secondary.

Anne draws from her own educational experiences when she teaches poetry.

Well, I always take from my experience. You must start from yourself for them to grasp and comprehend what you are teaching. And also with children, if you want to make them aware of something, you have to awaken their awareness.

The statements above reflect the need to start with the teacher's knowledge and experience so as to teach learners. There is also a reflection of the need for teachers to teach so as to open up learners' minds to issues. The teachers also emphasised reading as essential to foregrounding social justice issues when teaching literary texts. The data shows that all seven of teachers say they use whole "class discussion" as a way to engage with learners on social justice issues. However, this is not seen overtly in their lesson plans. Nevertheless, they note that they rely on the questions asked in the textbooks. The teachers do not formulate their own questions, so there cannot be any conclusive indication of whether or not there is synthesis between the discussions and what the learners understood. There is also no indication if social justice issues are considered in the questions. Emily related the problem of time when engaging with these issues. Like Annika, she felt that teachers had too much to deal with outside of teaching. They both felt the pressure to teach for exams, and this, they believe, made it hard to truly engage learners in critical thinking about social justice issues.

To ascertain if teachers plan to incorporate social justice issues in their literature lessons, teachers were asked to submit lesson plans of lessons they had taught either recently or in previous years. This was meant to help me examine how they foreground social justice in teaching literary texts. Prior to acquiring the lesson plans, the teachers received a summary of my research objectives and questions. As a result, four of the seven teachers presented lesson plans that had clear social justice issues. It was unclear whether this was intentional or a true reflection of their classrooms. Nevertheless, their resources were consistent with what they had indicated in their interviews. All the comprehension exercises and extracts were from the textbooks and prescribed readers. Several contradictions appeared where a teacher said that she always made a conscious decision to teach for social justice but it did not appear in her lesson plans. While examining this contradiction, it became apparent that teachers, especially in School B, relied heavily on textbooks. Despite the reliance on textbooks, the language teachers engaged with learners using different texts such as poems, short stories and plays.

Well in English, I teach using the textbook. It usually guides me, and if it is to come out in a test then that's when I will add. If I feel they need to learn something, then I will add. [...] because I teach Life Orientation, I get a lot of my texts from there... the whole thing is basically about social justice (Nokukhanya).

Nokukhanya indicates a reliance on a textbook but the textbook seems to be a Life Orientation text that deals with social justice issues. Ayanda provided a lesson plan on an animal story called *A Legend of a Dream Catcher*. It is interesting to note two of her objectives: 1) *to be able to identify values, phenomenon and themes that appear in the text*, 2) *how these values impact and inform culture and society now and in the past*. She planned these aims in conjunction with the objective that outlines the characters, plot and setting of the story. She and Elizabeth gave the most consistent responses of all the participants. Her lesson plans, her questionnaire and interview have the constant themes of the girl-child education and cultural diversity. She used

these themes to get the learners to question not only their own identities but their family's cultural beliefs.

Most of the time they would say “[Miss], that happens at home. My mom would always say I must wash dishes but my brother eats and leaves.” They experience it (social injustice) they just don't have the technical term for it. But what they are not taught is that that should not be happening, so they see the opposite, the injustice of it. We stand to teach that this should not be happening, we should be like an instrument to correct what has been done wrong at home so as not to perpetuate it (Ayanda).

In her questionnaire Ayanda wrote that she foregrounds, among others, issues of gender inequality, disability, racial discrimination and poverty when teaching literary texts. She outlined four ways to engage with literary texts to empower learners.

They (teachers) must show reading enthusiasm,

They need to develop a skill of how to teach reading,

They can empower them by also participating in reading,

It provides learner to use words effectively in different contexts.

Such ideas could support the ideas related to engagement with social justice issues in literary texts. Such initial ways into literary texts could assist in opening up discussions about social justice in learners' lives.

4.4.2 Teachers and their hunt for literary texts

“I think by choosing, first of all, an appropriate text for that child, and also perhaps just talking to the children, you know, making them aware like, if you choose a poem where slavery is there, for argument's sake, making the child aware, you know. Most children nowadays know what slavery is, but just making them aware [about] modern day slavery. It still exists, so social justice, although many people are fighting for it but there is still so much discrimination.” (Emily)

Emily reflects the need for both finding appropriate texts and talking to learners about social justice issues still prevalent today. All the teachers in School A lament the lack of literary texts that teach for social justice in the prescribed texts. According to them, there is “*very little to work with*”, if any at all. Elizabeth said that she compiled a book of different stories that she had found online. This was the pattern in School A. Teachers in School B, since they rely heavily on the prescribed textbooks and the Readers (anthology of various texts), usually only came across a text with a social justice issue once a term. While the Grade 4 to 6 teachers think that there is about 20% of texts that have social justice content, the Grade 7 teachers put the percentage to an estimate of about 75%. It is counterintuitive for the Department of Basic Education to prescribe textbooks and Readers that have very little social justice content when it is part of the aims and objectives of CAPS. The teachers explain their experiences of social justice issues in texts:

Well, it really depends what the literary texts are. Well, if I can be honest with you, in our textbook, there's not many texts that will show, maybe, gender or equality, you know, something or anything like that (Anne).

“It's hidden, you have to look. It's not readily available like texts, you have to search for it.” (Emily)

“Not a lot in texts but a lot depends on the teacher” (Elizabeth)

The comments above provide insight into teachers' experiences of texts and they note that texts do not offer opportunities to engage with social justice issues and if present, it needs very close examination of the text to find it. In other words, it is not overt. However, participant Elizabeth points out the importance of the teacher, while recognising that texts in use are not chosen for the social justice content.

Six of the seven teachers in this research believe that much of the responsibility in realising social justice in education is dependent upon the teachers. In their opinions, teachers should provide the material, experiences and platform necessary to achieve

this goal. Of the six, three believe that the way in which the Education Department does things is problematic. Nokukhanya spoke about how difficult it is to help learners with learning barriers.

The teachers are great; they try their hardest but the system is not great... and then some kids have learning disabilities. We always make sure we recommend [them] to a specialist in the Department, but then you know the Department, it could take months before they come and see the child, and a whole year has gone because no one has been here to assess the child who has a learning disability (Nokukhanya).

She says that over and above the lack of resources, this dysfunction in the Education Department makes their work difficult. Interestingly, two of the teachers in School A believe that the problem is the public and private (independent) school model.

I still feel that government should invest in their teachers so that they are on par with the independent school teachers and the gap will be totally [closed]. Quite honestly, our education in South African for me is unfair. I will take Covid as an example. Right now, the independent schools, most of their children are being taught online and our government school children are not being taught until the teachers go back to the classroom (Emily).

Emily believes that there should be one education system and the 'bimodal' (Spaull, 2012) one that currently exists can be eradicated if educational success was based more on the child's ability and not on what the parents can afford. She also suggests a sharing of resources; wealthy schools could donate to less privileged schools. She notes:

If our education system is not streamlined and fair, and we are not seen as one, and the children in our country seen as a child that needs to be educated, not a poor child or a rich child or a black child or a white child, they are all seen as children and they all need to follow the same system of education.

It is clear that Emily understands social justice in real terms and wants a good, fair, equitable education system for all learners. Charlotte identified the binary in the education system and said she used it as an opportunity to teach about social injustices. The community where the school is based is about 5 km away from town, so the learners are aware of the differences between their community and the 'town' (suburban) community. Emily believes that if we were to improve the system then learners would see the benefits of school and *"if the system is the same... we might get better leaders, better children coming out. With our Maths and Science and English, we are very poor in our country, and it comes from this injustice of private and public schools."*

[lack of resources] *It perpetuates oppression, unfortunately, because of the large number of children living in rural, or a large number of children living with a lack of resources. It perpetuates it, but the only person that can get you out, no I mustn't say the only person, but the people that have the power to get you out of that situation are actually the teachers (Elizabeth).*

The teachers could recognise inequalities and injustices present in their midst. They recognised how having resources supported education and how a lack had negative consequences. They also believed that the Department of Education failed to support schools and learners in need. Elizabeth, while recognising how injustice was being perpetuated, equally recognised the role that teachers play in making a difference.

Ultimately, it became clear during the interviews that teachers believed that certain texts could be used for social justice teaching and not others. Their claims that the texts were not readily available point to this. However, the truth might be more complex than that. Anne was the only teacher who readily admitted to not focusing on social justice unless it is something expected from the texts, and she was also the only one who admitted to being *"uncomfortable"* in engaging with social injustices due to her identity as a *"white female, middle-class teacher"*. Thomas-Fair and Michael (2005) believe that teaching for social justice is not merely a matter of literary texts that hinder it, but the experiences of both the learners and the teacher as well. Anne's fear to

engage in social injustices means that her learners hardly get an opportunity to discuss the systems of domination and oppression, systems which inherently affects them.

Additionally, even with the best books, without the teachers' understanding of themselves as critical pedagogues or activist teachers, then social justice in education remains inactive and unrealised. The results of not realising teaching practices that are predetermined by social justice education are a perpetuation of the notions that the poor are so because they do not have a will to succeed (Smith, 2018) or that "differences in educational accomplishments are predisposed by geographic locality and socio-economic causes" (Thomas-Fair & Michael, 2005, p.8; Kiske & Ladd, 2005). Simply put, an unemancipated pedagogy and teaching practice produces unemancipated learners and thus perpetuates the systems of oppression.

4.5 A learning community: teachers as agents of change

hooks reminds us that "*we are called to renew our minds... so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity*" (hooks, 1994, p. 34). In Chapter two, I indicated that this research viewed teachers who partake in social justice education as activists. For these teachers, activism begins with understanding social justice education and then moves to engaging with critical discourse. The general analysis of the data in this research indicates that teachers either cannot or do not exercise their agency. This observation is based on four matters: a) teachers find it difficult to teach for social justice. Many have indicated the need to be taught the pedagogy of social justice; b) Teachers in School A do not choose their own literary texts. They teach what is set out in the curriculum. Although teachers in School B have opportunity to select literary texts, they have lamented the seeming lack of availability in social justice content; c) All teachers seem to concentrate more on language and grammar rather than the analysis of social justice issues; and d) many of the teachers do not seem to have taught or engaged with literary texts over and beyond what is expected in the curriculum.

A comment made by Emily during our interview about other teachers highlighted an issue that Picower (2012) believes hinders the realisation of full-scale change in teaching for social justice. Picower (2012) believes that collective rather than individual effort was necessary in advocating for social justice education, therefore, teachers acting on their own may not be able to create systematic change. All the teachers interviewed in School A said that they always made conscious decisions to teach critical thinking with a social justice agenda (even though they did not use these exact terms). However, they reflected that there does not seem to be any communication among the language teachers to foster a common goal to achieve the level of critical thinking that is conducive to teaching for social justice. This lack of communication can also be seen in their pedagogical approaches. When one looks at the lesson plans, it is clear that the teachers are not guided by any theory of teaching for social justice but only do what they individually believe to be right.

This lack of collaboration between the language teachers, even those teaching the same grade, in terms of seeking to teach a socially just curriculum, is clear in their responses when asked their opinions on whether other teachers foster critical thinking in their classes. Four of the teachers, from both schools, believe that other teachers do not foster critical thinking and social justice teaching in their language classrooms. Their reasons for this belief vary.

I think some [teachers] expect learners to automatically know and only some would put in the effort and time engaging the learners. They expect too much (Charlotte).

And I find many teachers, if I may say, (hesitates), many teachers, especially the white teachers, are afraid... they don't feel comfortable teaching it. So, my strong feeling is that the white teachers are afraid to talk about social justice issues. Perhaps if they had a majority of white children in front of them, they would. (Emily)

I have come to the conclusion that, let me say, English speaking teachers, have an expectation that all the kids that come to an English medium school should

know English already, and they should be adept at the curriculum. When it comes to poetry, they don't explain what the poem is about. It's like, "read the poem and answer the questions." (Nokukhanya)

The statements above indicate that the participating teachers make assumptions about each other and what each is doing in their classrooms. They also have ideas about what teachers of different race groups and home languages are doing. Emily, especially, notes the fear of white teachers to approach social justice issues but believes they would have had they had a homogenous class of white learners to teach. What the statements reflect is an understanding by teachers, rightly or wrongly, that other teachers cannot and do not engage with social justice issues because of who they are. However, Charlotte recognises that teaching texts with a social justice agenda, is hard work.

Anne, a white teacher in her early thirties, has admitted that she had never considered teaching for social justice, nor had she made conscious decisions to teach learners critical thinking. She provided lesson plans on teaching poetry and a short story. Although she writes that she discussed the poems and the short story with the learners, she does not write what the discussion points were. Since no social justice issues were implicitly or explicitly indicated, I can only conclude that that they were not foregrounded in teaching these literary texts. In her interview she admits: *With English, I can't say that there's ever been a part where I thought, "I have to talk about gender or poverty, at least not often"*.

She also admits later in the interview that she was uncertain about teaching for social justice as she felt that she would not be able to answer questions that learners might ask. This is not to say that she completely disregards social justice issues. For example, she shared her personal story of her child who is physically challenged. This, she said, has made her aware of how important equality is in social justice because she did not want her child to feel that it was wrong to be different. If she were to foreground social justice in teaching literary texts, she said that she would prioritise

disability. She also stated that she is conscious of the differences between her culture and the cultures of the learners in her class. However, she is constantly worried about offending the African learners, which I believe hinders the success of any efforts to teach for social justice.

It is not surprising that teachers are uncertain or afraid to teach for social justice. As stated earlier, the readily available material on social justice education remains heavily theorised, even though there is some information on classroom practice. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) have provided three angles teachers may utilise in guiding learners. First is the critical analysis of mainstream knowledge and how it is represented. Second is the critical analysis of the learners' own socialisation within the structure of privilege and oppression. Thirdly, teachers guide learners and offer them tools to analyse and challenge the hegemonic discourses which perpetuate the ideologies and knowledge systems of the dominant while invalidating the knowledge of the oppressed. It is through these angles that critical pedagogues can develop strategies in their classrooms to teach for social justice (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012). The question which may arise here is, when are teachers supposed to teach for social justice? Ideally, the answer should be all the time or at least, as often as possible. However, only Grade 7 teachers stated that they teach for social justice almost all the time, while the other teachers are either guided by the textbooks or do it at random times, if at all.

hooks (1994) asserts that "the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy (p. 12)." It is in the classroom that change can occur in a fundamental way. When teachers are willing to transgress and direct their teaching to a "practice of freedom", they emancipate learners and move away from the banking education and do not teach content that is detached from reality (Freire & Ramos, 2009). Teaching language or any content without bringing in realities is emptying words of their "concreteness and [they] become a hallow, alienated and alienating verbosity" (Freire & Ramos, 2009, p. 167). I would suggest here that the lack of a comprehensive social justice agenda in teaching literary texts in both schools and the lack of collaboration between the teachers runs the danger of maintaining the culture of domination and helps perpetuate an unfree world (hooks, 1994).

When teachers claim to teach for social justice without critical pedagogy and critical theory in mind, without engaging the learners' critical thinking, without acknowledging learner differences, without acknowledging that education is neither neutral nor value-free, without acknowledging that education is political, then the consequence is leading the marginalised to adapt to the system of domination and oppression, and falling prey to hegemonic ideologies which make it easy for them to be dominated. It also vital for teachers to be aware of the communities in which they work. While School A and School B cater for different sectors of the community, they face similar barriers to teaching for social justice. However, Sleeter (2014) believes that after identifying and challenging the barriers within and outside the school, the teacher needs to recognise "the resilience and knowledge students bring and becoming allies, rather than antagonists of these students' families" (p.2).

Even in a slightly homogenous context of a community, teachers may still engage with learners regarding their power relations and they can establish relationships with those that seem powerless (Sleeter, 2014). I have note earlier in this chapter that there does not exist any collaboration between the language teachers in terms of promoting social justice in education, not even between those working in the same school. From the teachers' lamentations on the lack of parental involvement, there is also no collaboration between the schools and the community. Sleeter (2014) and Picower (2012) believe that teachers should also work outside of the classroom and identify community-based organisations to deal with school issues or develop community-school projects. Beyond the sporadic communication with the Departments of Education and Social Development, there appears to be little else taking place in community development with the purpose of strengthening and building communities.

The battle to teach for social justice does not only lie with the teachers. The resources that teachers have at their disposal play a major role into how they may teach to emancipate. Lack of resources here does not mean 'not' having teaching aids, it means not having enough suitable content to teach for social justice. Six of the seven teachers say they do not have enough material to teach for social justice. They have

to look online or in other texts to find stories and poems that engage with social justice issues. Ayanda mentioned that the texts have to be clear or explicit about the issue because second language speakers struggle with ambiguous or hidden messages in texts. Six of the seven teachers admit that they had not been taught to teach in critical ways and any social justice teaching they do is based on their personal beliefs and perspectives. This factor feeds into the already existing problems with critical thinking. If not done right, it could: a) lead to further simulation (Simonds, 1993) replacing one oppressive ideology with another (hooks, 1994) or b) it might cause a cultural clash for learners and might therefore prove challenging to apply outside of the classroom (Rezaei et al. 2011).

Priestly, Biesta and Robinson (2015) identified teachers as an essential resource to the schooling system, and thus have the capacity to make a change in the outcomes of the learners and how they view the world. It would be a dangerous endeavour for the teacher to impose his or her own ideals on the learners instead of being a facilitator of knowledge. While the teachers from both schools could identify a social justice issue that they especially foreground (or would like to foreground) when teaching social justice issues, they did not believe there is a hierarchy of oppression (Lorde, 2010) present in their educational lives. They have accepted that all structures of oppression have to be examined in order to stay true to the principle of social justice education (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2014), but, besides Ayanda, all teachers seemed to view themselves as '*classroom agents of change*' rather than activists within and outside the school. Some teachers seemed not to understand the ideological purpose of schooling but tended to contain it to a sociological landscape; this in turn made them focus more on short term aspirations which saw them caught up in day-to-day planning (Priestly, Biesta & Robinson, 2015).

When teachers were asked about their own schooling experiences and being taught literary texts, they believed that, at least at one time in their schooling lives, they had a teacher who inspired them because the teacher taught them literary texts in exceptional ways. They said that they drew from these experiences to teach literary

texts. However, upon further examination, it became clear that they admired how the teachers taught and not necessarily what they taught.

Although the literature on social justice in education does not focus on time as the main factor in either making social justice teaching possible or in hindering it, three teachers mentioned it specifically. One of the teachers mentioned the amount of administrative work that teachers have to do, which takes away from their teaching time. The other two referred to the Covid-19 pandemic and how the national lockdown meant that they could no longer teach extra material but teach for testing.

All the teachers believe that the teaching for social justice should happen across all disciplines, and should be cross-curriculum. While Emily believed that the teaching for social justice should start in Grade 1, Elizabeth believes that learners in Grade 5 would actually be at a better cognitive level to engage with social justice issues. They both teach at School A where there many learners from affluent backgrounds. This, they believe, means that learners are not often exposed to many social injustices, therefore the teacher needs to awaken that awareness.

I think from Grade 1 because the Grade 1s are aware. We think they're little, they don't know, but if the Grade 1 teacher teaches them in a language that is appropriate to them, they'd be surprised to see that children are actually aware of what social justice is (Emily).

[learners and social justice] *So they know it, they just can't put a label on it. (Ayanda)*

"I would say from Grade 5, they would be ready to talk about these issues" (Elizabeth).

While there is no 'right' time to talk to learners about social justice issues, it is imperative that it is taught. It becomes clear from the time frames decided by the teachers above, that clear understandings of what comprises social justice may not be present. The youngest child has experiences and learns what helps and hinders themselves and others. That child has already started thinking about social justice.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented an analysis of the findings of the research conducted in two primary schools, involving seven language teachers. The main objective was to determine which social justice issues they foreground in the teaching of literary texts. Moreover, I wanted to examine how they engage with these issues using literary texts and to find out how the texts they are currently using support the teaching for social justice. In presenting the data, I reported on what teachers understand by social justice. Although their opinions and definitions were varied, they carried the same idea: justice is about equal opportunity for all. Two barriers to the teaching of literary texts foregrounded in social justice emerged as reading and language acquisition. Teachers in both schools believe that these barriers have hindered creating and constructing meaning from texts. Although teachers believe that they are agents of change, there is a lack of collaboration between the teachers and a lack of collaboration with the communities in which the schools are situated. This chapter has also reported on the teachers' difficulties in trying to locate texts that support teaching for social justice. The data generated indicates that the teachers were willing to teach for social justice but lacked the resources and/or the pedagogy and/or the will to enact it.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I analysed my finding on how teachers foreground social justice issues when teaching literary texts. The data was generated from teachers in the intermediate and senior phases in primary school language classes. In this study, the aim was to understand what social justice issues teachers focus on in teaching literary texts. I also wanted to understand why they chose certain issues over others.

Social justice education is deeply embedded in the Constitution of South Africa and in the CAPS document. Given the historical oppressive and dominant ideology of South Africa, it is not surprising to note the prominence given to it. It is from this background that I formulated the objectives of this research.

Social justice education looks ideal on paper, and many researchers, discussed in chapter two, attest to this. Therefore, the main purpose of this research was how this was enacted in the language classroom. The education system in South Africa was very segregated during the time of apartheid and the schools that took part in this research were deeply affected by this segregation. To a large degree, both schools still bear the legacies of apartheid, as previously discussed.

In this chapter, I will provide a summary of the main findings and explain the extent to which they respond to not only the existing literature, but to the objectives of the research. I will also deliberate on the effects or the consequences of critical theory and critical pedagogy in relation to the findings. Additionally, I will examine the effectiveness of the data generation strategies and whether or not the results yielded were beneficial to the study. This research focused on the professional practice of seven teachers in terms of how they teach for social justice. I examined their lesson plans and had face-to-face interviews with them. Through these insights, I was able to reflect on the professional practice of the teachers and on my own practices. I will discuss how their insights might apply to how teachers approach the teaching for social justice.

The Covid-19 pandemic presented the biggest limitation to this research. However, there were other ways of mitigating this and these will be elucidated. I will conclude by providing suggestions for further research in engaging with the teaching for social justice in primary school language classrooms.

5.2 Study summary

In trying to understand how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice, I focused on two areas of discussion: learning barriers and pedagogy. I chose a multiple-case study approach so that I could generate data from multiple participants who practice teaching under different contexts and with different experiences. For the theoretical framework used to underpin issues of curriculum and pedagogy as the foundations for my research, I applied critical theory and critical pedagogy. These theories were used with an interpretivist paradigm and I was guided by the existing literature on social justice education. To generate the data, I collected lesson plans from the teachers to use as documentary evidence. I also generated data through questionnaires and interviews with all the participating teachers.

5.3 Main findings

5.3.1 Teachers' understanding of social justice

This research was conducted in schools that teach English Home Language to a majority of learners who are non-native English speakers and this presented several issues, two of which I focused on in the discussion of the findings. Firstly, learners had little opportunity or apparent desire for independent reading and were therefore falling behind in language acquisition and literacy. Secondly, perhaps as a result of the latter, there are many issues identified by the teachers as language barrier issues. Learners were identified as not being able to understand the nuances of the language which greatly hindered the teaching of literary texts, as these are often embedded with figurative meaning. Nevertheless, some teachers seemed to have made some effort in foregrounding social justice in their teaching of literary texts.

Teachers who participated in this research had a common understanding of what social justice was. They all related it to fairness and equal opportunity (more in terms of access rather than success). Although they worked under different circumstances, they identified similar issues that they foreground when teaching literary texts. However, many of them relied heavily on prescribed textbooks. In this sense, they found the teaching of social justice to be more effective in subjects or learning areas like Life Skills/Orientation and even Mathematics.

5.3.2 Reading and language barriers

All the teachers believed that reading is paramount in the teaching for social justice. If learners do not understand the deeper meaning expressed in the texts, then they are not able to understand the discourse of social justice. Some teachers used these factors - lack of reading and language barriers - as opportunities to engage with teaching social justice. It was important to note that teaching for social justice and teaching social justice are different. In this regard, teachers stated the different ways that they could teach for social justice across different subjects, not only in English, however, they were text-specific when dealing with way of examining social justice. They seemed to believe that reading for the sake of language was more important than reading through a critical lens. This was ascribed to the learners in their classrooms as they mainly teach learners who are non-native speakers of English and this fact served to create many of the challenges that they encountered.

5.4 Theoretical implications

All the teachers agreed that there is a need for teaching that emphasises social justice and moves away from the banking system of education. The use of critical theory in this study was essential because it is the foundation for teaching for social justice. As a theoretical foundation, it supported the analysis of the data in examining how teachers might have been inadvertently informed by it. However, the tenets of critical pedagogy were not seen in the activities or practices of the teachers. They all spoke about and showed a consciousness towards social justice teaching, however, what seemed to be lacking in their responses was a substantial use of critical pedagogy principles. While the theory was relevant to this study, the link between the theory and the teachers' practices was not seen. All the teachers admitted that while they had been exposed to various educational theories, they had little to no encounter with critical theory nor critical pedagogy.

5.5 Professional practice implications

The findings of this study have two implications for my future practice. Firstly, it became clear to me that, despite CAPS emphasising social justice in education, it offers very little in terms of methodology for those teachers who are meant to implement it. Nevertheless, the teachers in this study might not have consistently taught social justice due to various constraints which they outlined, but there was some visible effort from them to teach for social justice. This distinction was fundamental in responding to the research questions. It also reiterated my personal obligation as a language teacher to bring social justice into the classroom, and enacting it through the curriculum.

Secondly, the results also suggest that the teaching for social justice using literary texts in primary school language classrooms using literary texts is feasible but challenging. The challenge of the lack of reading materials, as discussed in the previous chapter, means that learners are not able to consistently engage with literary texts and are therefore heavily reliant on the teacher. The teachers also have a limited range of texts available with which they could engage with social justice. For that reason it becomes important that teachers from different schools need to collaborate in pursuing teaching for social justice because they may share resources and ideas on pedagogy.

Two things are fundamental in engaging with social justice in literary texts. Firstly, the teacher must acknowledge that there is widespread social injustice. Secondly, the teacher must reflect on her pedagogy when engaging with social justice issues. In so doing, teachers reflect on whether they are perpetuating the banking system of education or teaching an emancipatory education. An awareness of these two allows the teacher to move from educational theory to actual practice.

5.6 Limitations of the study

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic that spread worldwide, South Africa had to be under extreme lockdown, meaning that schools and other businesses had to be closed indefinitely to deter the spread of the virus. This inevitably affected this research. The

objective was to explore how teachers foreground social justice issues using literary texts. I had already identified observations as the best way to understand this phenomenon. However, the necessary precautions to curb the spread of the virus had to be followed and observations in the classrooms were not allowed. This resulted in the research relying heavily on the responses of the teachers and not on my observations. Due to the constraints, there were also gaps in the timeline of generated data. Consequently, I generated data months apart, and this gap created a certain lack of continuity in the responses of the participants.

5.7 Possible areas for future research

There is available research on the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) in South Africa which suggests that learners ought to learn in their mother-tongue in order to understand English or any foreign language better. There is also a plethora of research which reported on the abysmal state of South African government schools. What appears to be lacking is an in-depth discussion on teaching for social justice in public schools. Proceeding from this research, an Action Research study using a critical paradigm could be set up to assist teachers in normalising teaching for social justice. This research has shown that teachers are aware of teaching literary texts with a social justice agenda, but lack the pedagogical information required to do so. Therefore, action research could assist in closing the gap that exists between theory and practice.

5.8 Conclusion

The intention of this study was to examine how primary school language teachers foregrounded social justice in their teaching of literary texts. The qualitative research indicated that teachers faced numerous challenges in teaching for social justice. The literature reviewed in this study indicated that the teaching for social justice was possible under any context. It also indicated that much of the research, especially in South Africa, was lacking in terms of the practicality of teaching for social justice. The research that is available on teaching English second-language speakers focused more on reading for comprehension and not for critical thinking. This was also the experience of the teachers involved in this study. Furthermore, the socio-economic challenges of the learners from the community in which this study took place meant that many parents were not involved in the education of their children.

While access to education in South Africa is not the big issue it used to be following the new dispensation, there is little doubt that there are many other challenges in education. The ones identified in this study are systematic problems more than anything else. The lack of access to a library in one school and the lack of training for teachers on addressing social justice in education are the main issues that came up in the research. This research has recommended that education programmes at universities equip students with tools to engage in the teaching for social justice, not only in language classrooms but across the curriculum. The other recommendation is to create a culture of reading in learners from a young age, something that can only be possible if there is access to books. One thing remains certain, for social justice in education to prevail, activist teachers must collaborate with one another and share their vision and resources. This collaboration must also include the parents and communities where the schools are situated. Without this, social justice education will remain hypothetical and theoretical, and education will fail to emancipate and liberate learners.

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APPENDIX A
ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

07 October 2020

Miss Keneiloe Rosetta Modise (217043864)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Miss Modise,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001962/2020

Project title: Using Literary Texts to Teach for Social Justice in a Primary School Language Classroom.

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 17 September 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 07 October 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,


Professor Urmilla Bob
(University Dean of Research)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

APPENDIX B CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

INFORMED CONSENT

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Dear Colleague

My name is Keneiloe Rosetta Modise from the Language and Media Studies specialization in the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am a M.Ed student and may be contacted at new number and keneiloermodise@gmail.com.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research into how intermediate and senior phase language teachers teach literary texts foregrounded by social justice issues. The aim and purpose of this research is to understand how language teachers in primary schools teach literary texts with emphasis on social justice issues. The study is expected to enroll eleven participants in total, 6 in one school and 5 in another, within the same district. It will involve asking teachers for lesson plans that describe teaching literary texts foregrounded by social justice issues. Secondly, teachers will be asked to fill in a questionnaire. Thirdly, I will conduct a series of face-to-face interviews with the teachers. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be six weeks.

I do not envisage any risks to you or your institution. I hope that the study will benefit teachers by making them aware of the benefits of teaching a social justice education in literary texts. I hope it will also begin a dialogue with the participants on how a focus on social justice issues can enhance the quality of teaching literary texts in primary schools.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number _____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact me (please see details above), my supervisor, Prof Ansurie Pillay, or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The details are provided below:

Prof Ansurie Pillay
Tel: 27 31 2603613
Email: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001, Durban, 4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Please be assured that participation in this research is voluntary and that participants may withdraw participation at any point, and that in the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss or other benefit to which they are normally entitled.

Please note that there are no material incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study. I would be pleased to provide you with a summary of my findings at the end of the study, should you wish to receive it.

All information will remain confidential and your identity will be protected at all times. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms will be used. All data will be stored in a locked cupboard in my supervisor's office for a period of 5 years, after which all data will be destroyed.

CONSENT

I _____ have been informed about the study entitled **Using Literary Texts to Teach for Social Justice in a Primary School Language Classroom** by **Keneiloe Rosetta Modise**.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at _____

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact the supervisor, Prof Ansurie Pillay or the Research Ethics Committee as follows:

Prof Ansurie Pillay
Tel: 27 31 2603613
Email: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Private Bag X 54001, Durban, 4000
KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable (choose what is appropriate for your study)

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO
Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO
Use of my photographs for research purposes YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

**Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)**

Date

**Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)**

Date

**APPENDIX C
GATEKEEPERS' LETTER**

Gatekeeper Letter

SCHOOLS' LETTERHEAD

The Principal
]Address
Date

Dear Sir Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, **Keneiloe Rosetta Modise**, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, enrolled for a Master of Education Degree (Language and Media Studies) request permission to conduct research with teachers at your school. In conducting the research, I will request to speak to intermediate and senior phase (Grades 4-7) language teachers, seven teachers in total. The research will involve me asking:

- 1 What social justice issues, if any, do language teachers in a primary school foreground in their teaching of literary texts?
- 2 Why are specific social justice issues chosen to be foregrounded by language teachers teaching literary texts in primary schools?
- 3 How do teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice in primary school language classrooms?
- 4 How may literary texts support the teaching of social justice issues in primary school language classrooms?

The topic for this study is *Using Literary Texts to Teach for Social Justice in a Primary School Language Classroom*. The purpose of this study is to understand how teachers teach literary texts in primary school language classrooms and how they incorporate social justice issues in their discussions.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To establish whether teachers use social justice issues as forefront in their teaching of literary texts in language classrooms.
2. To identify the social justice issues, if any, that language teachers in a primary school foreground in their teaching of literary texts
3. To explore why specific social justice issues are chosen to be foregrounded by language teachers teaching literary texts in primary schools
4. To understand how teachers use literary texts to teach for social justice in primary school language classrooms
5. To understand how literary texts support the teaching of social justice issues in primary school language classrooms

Furthermore, I wish to bring to your attention that:

- The identity of the teachers will be protected in the report writing and research findings

- The teachers' participation will be voluntary
- Your institution will not be mentioned by its name, and pseudonyms will be used for all schools and teachers.
- Interviews will be voice recorded to assist in the accurate capturing of data collected but permission to do so, will be obtained first
- There is no financial benefit for the participants as a result of their participation in this study.

Should you have any concerns or queries about this study please feel free to contact me, my supervisor or the University Research Office, whose details are below:

Supervisor: Prof. Ansurie Pillay
 Tel no. 031 260 3613
 Email: Pillaya3@ukzn.ac.za

Research Office, Westville Campus
 Govan Mbeki Building, Private Bag X 54001, Durban, 4000
 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
 Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609
 Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

I hope my request will be considered.

Yours Sincerely
 Keneiloe Rosetta Modise

 e-mail: keneiloermodise@gmail.com

**SCHOOL.... LETTERHEAD
 GATEKEEPER PERMISSION**

I, _____, principal of
 _____ School do hereby grant

permission to *Keneiloe Rosetta Modise* to conduct research with intermediate and senior phase language teachers in the said School.

I understand that

- The identity of the school will be protected in the report writing and research findings
- The teachers' participation will be voluntary
- The institution will not be mentioned by its name, and pseudonyms will be used for the School and participants

- Interviews will be voice recorded to assist in the accurate capturing of data collected after obtaining permission from the participants to do so
- There is no financial benefit for the participants as a result of their participation in this study.
- Full consent will be sought from all participants, and in the case of minors, from their parents.

Your faithfully

NAME

DATE

SIGNATURE

[SCHOOL STAMP]

DOCUMENT REVIEW SCHEDULE

Document Review Schedule

1. Topic of project: Using Literary Texts to Teach for Social Justice in a Primary School Language Classroom	
2 Purpose of review:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather background information of what teachers understand as social justice in education; • To review strategies and methods that participants use in addressing social justice issues; • To provide surface information as a segue to the introduction of other research instruments which need and in-depth understanding of the topic. 	
3 Type of document under review: Lesson plan from a language classroom in a primary school.	
4 Topics to cover during the review:	
1.1.Type of text chosen	
1.2.Lesson objectives	
1.3.Resources used for the lesson	
1.4.Explicit mention of an SJ issue	
1.5.Implicit mention of an SJ issue	
1.6.Types of SJ issues mentioned	
1.7.Teaching strategies	
1.8.Activities planned for the lesson	
1.9.Assessment(s) planned for the lesson	
1.10. Challenges in teaching the lesson	
1.11. Additional information	

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH

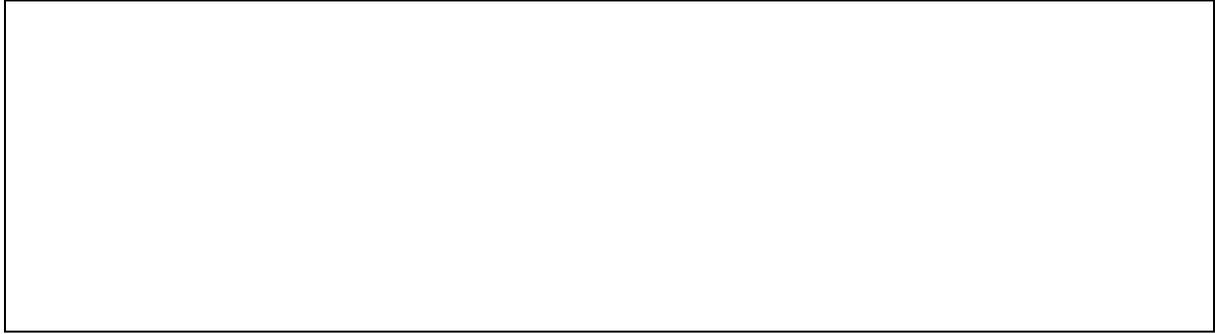
Questionnaire

Please answer the Questionnaire below as honestly as possible. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. There are only 'your' answers.

Grades taught:	
Phase:	
No. of years in profession:	
Subject language:	
1. List literary texts in your syllabus this year:	
2. Which ones are popular with learners, why?	
3. What are some challenges in teaching literary texts?	
4. What type of stories do you think should be read in your phase?	

5. In what ways can teachers empower learners?	
6. How can teachers use literary texts to empower learners?	
7. In what ways can teachers empower learners?	
8. What do you understand 'social justice' to be?	
9. What possible social justice issues, if any, can language teachers in primary schools foreground in their teaching of literary texts?	
10. Do you foreground any social justice issues when you teach literary texts? Please explain your answer.	
11. If you do, how do you choose which social justice issues to foreground? If you do not, why do you choose to stay away from social justice issues?	

<p>12. If you do focus on some social justice issues, please explain how you approach it and teach it to be included in your teaching of the literary texts. If you do not focus on social justice issues when teaching a literary text, how do you avoid the topic?</p>	
<p>13. In your opinion, could literary texts support the teaching of social justice issues? Please explain your answer.</p>	
<p>14. In your language classroom, how do you recognize learners' different ethnic, racial, geographic and family backgrounds?</p>	
<p>15. In your language classroom, how do you encourage learners to share their ideas?</p>	
<p>16. In the space below, please write a poem or any other written piece that reflects what you think teaching for social justice means.</p>	



Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It is sincerely appreciated

APPENDIX F
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR RESEARCH

Interview Schedule

Interviews will be conducted with all the participants of the research. Where possible, face-to-face interviews will be conducted, however, should the participants feel that it would not be to their best interest to have the researcher present, then telephonic interviews will be made. All the participants will be informed in detail about the nature of the research again and their autonomy pertaining to their participation in the research as per research ethics will be reiterated. The interviews will also be recorded on a tape recorder provided by the researcher. The following are a sample of research questions for the participants and may vary according to the participants' responses.

- 1. How long have you been a teacher?**
- 2. Which grades have you taught?**
- 3. Which language subject do you teach?**
- 4. What literary texts have you taught?**
- 5. Were texts prescribed or did you have a say in which literary texts were taught?**
- 6. Which literary text did you most enjoy teaching? Why?**
- 7. Which literary text did you not enjoy teaching? Why?**
- 8. Since we will be talking about the teaching of literary texts, what are some of your own experiences of studying literary texts at primary school?**
- 9. Please explain how your teacher education studies prepared you to teach literary texts.**
- 10. What would you consider the primary function to be of teaching literature?**
- 11. What are some of the challenges in teaching literary texts?**
- 12. When teaching literature, on what do you focus?**
- 13. Please explain the various activities you use when you teach a literary text.**
- 14. Which concepts do you think are essential or imperative when teaching literary texts?**
- 15. What do you understand by the term social justice?**
- 16. How do you think this concept may be used in teaching literary texts?**
- 17. Do you focus on any social justice issues when teaching literary texts? If so, how?**
- 18. What would you consider a challenge when focusing on social justice issues in literary texts?**
- 19. Would you consider the teaching of social justice issues necessary in primary schools? Please explain your response.**
- 20. When teaching literary texts, how do you ensure learners use critical thinking?**

- 21. How are learners of different ethnic, racial and geographic backgrounds recognized in your language classrooms?**
- 22. Would you say you have an idea about your learners' family backgrounds? If so, are you able to relate the literary texts to their backgrounds?**
- 23. How do you encourage dialogue, questions, interactive activities and discussion in your classrooms?**
- 24. We know that rote learning and memorization are not encouraged in schools, but do you think there is a place for them in some circumstances? Please explain your answer**
- 25. Would you say that your classroom is a safe space for learners to share ideas about literary texts?**
- 26. How do you make literary texts meaningful for all your learners?**
- 27. Different schools have different resources in terms of materials and in terms of personnel. How do you think resources privilege or oppress different schools? Do resources matter?**
- 28. Have you taught any literary texts that focused on overcoming prejudice or on building communities? If so, please explain how you taught it and how learners responded to it.**
- 29. Would you say that you are a teacher who focusses on social justice issues?**
- 30. In your opinion, how may literary texts support the teaching of social justice issues in primary school language classrooms?**
- 31. In which ways do you think learners can be taught literary texts better?**

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