

Difficulties In Teaching And Learning Sepedi Home Language Proverbs In A Classroom Of Novel Literature

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate challenges in teaching proverbs in novels of Sepedi Home language in literature classroom. This study used the qualitative approach, which focuses on understanding people's beliefs, social background, life experiences and people's attitudes and behaviours. The study used semi-structured interviews for both the teachers and the learners to collect data. The study's findings revealed that learners have difficulty understanding proverbs in novels because their parents do not help them with proverb usage and explanations, and thus teachers struggle with teaching because learners have no idea what proverbs are because they do not use them at home or anywhere else on a daily basis. The study recommends that parents should make an effort to educate their children proverbs at home in order to improve their reading abilities and comprehension of the novel's proverbs. This will make it easy for kids to learn proverbs in school. Again, the CAPS documents should be reviewed so that teachers can independently teach proverbs to help learners recognize them in literature.

Keywords: Sepedi Home language, literature, proverbs and novel.

Introduction

For learner's critical thinking development, Literature in teaching and learning is essential. The outcomes of literature for the development of the critical thinking has been touched by various researchers, (Alvarez, Calvete, & Sarasa, 2012; Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014; Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016) Literature usage in EFL classroom has revived teaching in the last few decades. To explain the benefits of integrating literature in the language classroom, scholars speaks of the literary text as an effective stimulus for learners to think critically

and express their feelings and ideas in a non-native language. Thus, according to Lazere (1987), literature is an academic subject that can come closest to encompassing the full range of mental traits currently considered to comprise critical thinking. It helps learners to question and explore the world around them and opens horizons of possibility (Langer, 1997: 607). Along the same line, Ghosn (2002) agrees that literature brings changes into learners' attitudes towards the world.

Literature has many components like proverbs, idioms and other areas. It is important to look at the importance of the proverbs because they are useful in learning a Novel. Murodilloyevna (2022) says that proverbs are widely believed to play an important role in language education as part of the acquisition of cultural knowledge, figurative understanding and communication skills. Proverbs exist in every language community and constitute a very important category in African folklore. Malatji (2019: 1) adds that The Sepedi Proverbs consist of the wisdom and the experience of life. These proverbs teach youth about unity, respect, love, caring, support and trust. The themes of African proverbs include power, death, marriage, wealth, etc. A particular culture's choice of proverbs tells something about that culture. Hussein (2009:97) is of the view that in Africa, proverbs help to make interpretations of our everyday existence through dialogue and individuals' collective wisdom, which is transmitted from one generation to the other, providing insight into how people live and behave. Consequently, Mokitimi (1997: xi) stresses the role of proverbs in shaping a given society's worldview. According to Mokitimi (1997: xii), proverbs are a rich source of African religion and philosophy, they contain and point to a deep spirituality, as well as theological and philosophical insights.

The researchers examined the significance of teaching Sepedi proverbs in literature, particularly novels, so that they might be used for their intended purpose. The problem with life is that you find people using something for this while it was meant for that because of lack of insight and information on exactly why that thing exist. When proverbs are misused or abused, language is no longer decorated but contaminated and congested. A person that does not know how to use the proverbs is like the one that does not know how to use a knife, he/she will hold it in a wrong side and it will cut the hand. Proverbs are very important in literature in a way that, language users should know them and use them appropriately. It will be difficult if you know them and do not understand them properly, because they communicate hidden information. Adedimeji (2007) says that a proverb can be used in variety of discourse situations with different intentions, meanings and moral significance. Every aspect of life has a proverb associated with it. This body of knowledge develops as we go through life because other people have experienced the life we are currently living and have chosen that we should be aware of how to live and avoid the mistakes they have made in the past.

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate difficulties in teaching of Sepedi home language proverbs in literature classroom at Moutse West circuit, Sekhukhune District, Limpopo province.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a qualitative technique, which allowed participants to share their lived experiences with the problems affecting learners' interpretation of proverbs in a novel during Sepedi Home Language teaching and learning.

PARTICIPANTS

Researchers chose five Sepedi Home Language teachers and five learners in grade 11 classroom whom are studying Sepedi Home language. Researchers catted seventy small pieces of paper, wrote one to seventy, mixed them in a box, and informed the learners that those who picked out numbers one to five would participate in the study. Researchers inform them that individuals who pick up between seven and seventy will not be able to participate in the study. This is referred to as basic random sampling. By employing this method, all learners will have an equal opportunity to participate in the study. The five teachers picked by the researcher are teaching Sepedi Home Language in grade 11.

DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews used on both teachers and learners. Open-ended interview questions were accepted as way of giving a direction to them. Researchers recorded the whole interview and later transcribed it to allow interpretation. An interview guide was developed to ensure that all the aspects of the interview are exhausted.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers group the responses according to the objectives and questions, which were collected from learners and teachers interview. Thematic analysis were used to analyse data. Qualitative explanations were provided to outline the common ideas from participants.

THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to investigate difficulties in teaching Sepedi home language proverbs in literature classrooms. The findings of this study were reviewed and presented based on questions and replies from teachers and learners. The following are the discussions from both teachers and learners.

Teachers' perspectives on the difficulties of teaching and learning proverbs in a novel

Teacher 1

The difficulty is in the fact that most learners find it difficult to comprehend the novel if I do not explain the proverbs that are there in it. The other difficulty is unstructured proverbial

usage, because many of our learners appear to enjoy the proverbs and try to use them but incorrectly.

Teacher 2

The challenge is that proverbs are difficult to understand, whether in a novel or not, thus my objective is to ensure that the learners understand the proverbs correctly. I spent extra time finding and discussing proverbs in a novel so that my learners could understand the story.

Following the above responses from teachers, there is a challenge because learners are discovered not to understand the proverbs at all, particularly when they are found within a novel. The greatest issue becomes the fact that the learners fail to understand the novel because their understanding is influenced by the existence of proverbs that they do not understand. Teachers acknowledge that their learners are finding it difficult to learn Sepedi proverbs, which demonstrates how difficult it is to teach Sepedi proverbs. They also acknowledge that the proverbs in the novel are difficult to identify, which causes the learners who are supposed to be taught them to not be familiar with them. The ones that are attempting to use them, find themselves using them inappropriately because they don't know them. Maredi (2021) suggests that the department of education have to rearrange the skills of the Sepedi Home Language in CAPS document in order to permit teachers to teach proverbs and idioms without integrating them into specific skills because teachers must teach learners proverbs and idioms independently so that they can extract them from poetry, novels, drama, and other written texts.

Teacher 3

Proverbs, as one of the aspects of Sepedi language, continue to be an important feature of a language that should be used. Proverbs are necessary in a novel because they enrich it.

Teacher 4

Proverbs are still extremely important, and they make teaching Sepedi Novel more enjoyable. The CAPS document does not allow us to teach proverbs in class independently. I believe that teaching learners' proverbs and their meanings would make it easier for them to recognize them when reading their novels. That method of teaching language structures and conventions separately must be governed.

Teacher 5

Some of the proverbs confuse me when they are used in an incomplete form; I can't identify them in sentences when they are used in a novel. Sometimes I cannot explain some of the proverbs I identify.

Despite the fact that it is a challenge that learners are having trouble understanding the proverbs in novels, the teaching of proverbs is still important because they are one of the key components of the Sepedi language. The teachers concur that proverb teaching is necessary,

and they concur that proverb usage is necessary for the novel to be rich. Therefore, it is generally acknowledged that proverbs are of utmost significance. They make Sepedi teaching more exciting and enable teachers to be resourceful for their learners. Rustemova, (2023) adds that there is a need for the use of proverbs in teaching English in a secondary school. This then stresses the fact that proverbs needs to be taught to the learners.

Learners' perspectives on the difficulties of teaching and learning proverbs in a novel

Learner 1

Proverbs are difficult for us to understand since we do not use them in everyday conversation, so it is difficult for us to understand them inside the Novel.

Learner 2

To understand a proverb, a teacher must explain every sentence in the novel as well as the proverbs employed. The greater issue may be a failure to fully understand the meaning of specific words or proverbs employed within a Novel, because most of us do not understand the Novel's vocabulary.

Learner 3

I love proverbs when my teacher explain them. The difficulty is that we as learners do not understand the difference between proverbs and idioms. The teacher would repeat the proverbs and ask for an explanation, but no one from our class would appear to understand.

Learner 4

I do not understand what proverbs are because we are never taught anything about them. Whenever I read a novel and come across a difficult phrase to comprehend I will just assume is either a proverb or an idiom. The worst part my parents also do not understand them so I end up not reading my novels.

Learner 5

When I read, I have no trouble understanding my novel because I always underline proverbs, idioms, and difficult words and ask my teachers and parents at home. I also have the Marema-ka-dika textbook to help me define proverbs and idioms.

Learners state unequivocally that they are unfamiliar with proverbs since they do not utilize them when speaking. This alone demonstrates that pupils are not encouraged to learn proverbs from home. Most learners are confused about proverbs, which is why they are challenged in this area. Learners appear to be enthusiastic about learning about proverbs in the classroom. This indicates that teaching them will be fruitful because they are eager to learn. Teaching proverbs will provide positive benefits if the activity is combined with encouraging parents to incorporate their children in the use of

proverbs. This means that education will begin at home. Learning proverbs will help learners develop positive morals. Halis (2014) reveals that for the students to develop in their thinking and imagination and to enrich their vocabulary, they should be introduced to proverbs. The introduction will result in the learners being exposed to the proverbs and therefore knowing them.

CONCLUSION

According to the comments of the teachers and learners, the researchers discovered that at schools, most learners have difficulties grasping the meaning of proverbs, especially when they are found within a novel. Proverbs are very significant in schooling since they serve to ensure that the language is growing. When it comes to learners' comprehension of the use of proverbs, parents should collaborate with teachers to teach proverbs to their children so that they may grasp them in their novels. Mokong (2018) looked at the indigenous African perspective derived from Sepedi idioms and proverbs and emphasised that the best teachers are the parents, and the importance thereof is indicated by the situation that the learners find themselves in.

If students do not understand the meaning of a certain proverb in a novel, they may miss the plot. Understanding proverbs can help students understand literature and read more effectively. instructors should teach learners proverbs independently so that they can extract them from a novel, which will obligate the department of education to reorganize the Sepedi Home Language teaching and learning skills to allow instructors to teach proverbs without integrating them into specific skills.

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