

AN INVESTIGATION INTO ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE
ACADEMIC WRITING STRATEGIES FOR BLACK STUDENTS AT
THE EASTERN CAPE TECHNIKON

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
doctor of philosophy in applied linguistics in the faculty of arts, University
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WESTERN CAPE

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KEY TERMS

Eastern Cape Technikon

ESL

Academic Literacy

Writing

Strategies

Genre

Xhosa

Cohesion

Coherence

Demonstratives



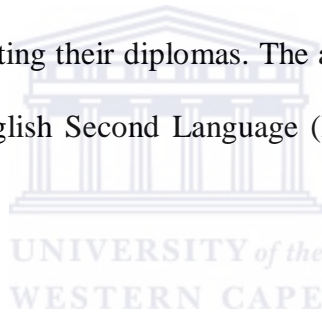
ABSTRACT

An Investigation into English Second Language Academic Writing Strategies for Black Students at the Eastern Cape Technikon

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This study has been prompted by the negative remarks that lecturers make concerning the academic performance of students and the number of years they spend at the Eastern Cape Technikon before completing their diplomas. The aim of this study was to identify the kinds of strategies that English Second Language (ESL) students use to cope with English language writing tasks.



Academic writing requires a conscious effort and much practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. Black students at tertiary institutions in South Africa face additional difficulty, especially when they have to deal with writing in English which is an unfamiliar language to them. This presents them with social and cognitive challenges related to second language acquisition. Since the black students do not often consider the social contexts in which L2 academic writing takes place, models of L1 writing instruction and research on composing processes are often found wanting in their L2 writing pedagogy. In this study, I argue that language proficiency and competence is the cornerstone of the ability to write in the L2 in a fundamental way. L2 writing

instructors should take into account both strategy development and language skill development when working with black students. This is critical in South Africa considering the apartheid legacy and the deprived social conditions under which black students often live and acquire their education.

Therefore, using critical discourse analysis and aspects of systemic functional linguistics, this study explores errors in written cohesion and coherence in relation to L2 writing strategies used by black students at the Eastern Cape Technikon. The study focuses on errors in the form of cohesive devices of referring expressions using topic development used by students. The aim was to explore the strategies used by black students to write coherent academic texts. Further, the study intends to scrutinize the grammatical devices of reference, through analyzing the forms of cohesive devices and theme development. A focus on the writing process as a pedagogical tool enables me to explore the relationship between the quality of students' academic writing and coping strategies used, and come up with a model of L2 writing (coping) strategies for academic writing at the Eastern Cape Technikon. I investigate the L2 writing process adopted by competent and non-competent black students in the process of producing coherent academic texts by comparing strategies that the two groups of students adopt.

DECLARATION

I declare that *An Investigation into English Second Language Academic Writing Strategies of Black Students at the Eastern Cape Technikon* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other University, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Baba Primrose Tshotsho

November 2006

Signed.....



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Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
CA	Contrastive analysis
CALP	Cognitive and academic language proficiency
CDA	Critical discourse analysis
ESL	English second language learning
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
EA	Error Analysis
ECT	Eastern Cape Technikon
ESL	English second language learning
LANTAG	Language plan task group
L1	First language or Mother tongue
L2	Second Language
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
ND	National Diploma
NDoE	National Department of Education
PANSLAB	Pan African Language Board
PRM	Public Relations Management
SAALT	South African Association of Language Teachers
SALA	South African Linguistics Association
SFL	Systemic functional linguistics

Chapter 1

General Introduction and Background to the Study

1.0 Introduction

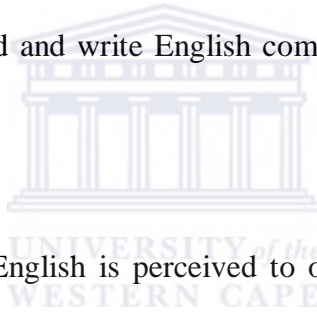
This study is an investigation of English Second Language (ESL) academic writing strategies for black students at the Eastern Cape Technikon. This chapter includes the statement of the problem, the research objectives, the scope and limits of the study, a brief introduction to the methodology used, and the general chapter organisation of the thesis.

1.1 Background to the study

There is a growing concern about the falling standards of academic writing among students in South Africa's tertiary institutions. The problem is particularly marked among black students whose home language is neither English nor Afrikaans, the languages used as media of instruction in such institutions (Banda, 2004). One finds that these students have not yet reached adequate proficiency levels that would enable them to cope with written English as used in academic discourse. Studies have shown that this lack of English language proficiency by black students in South Africa affects their academic performance (see Mc Laughlin, 1987).

The lack of academic writing proficiency means that black students often experience difficulties with their studies at tertiary institutions. In South Africa, there is no institution offering tertiary level education in an African language medium.

Therefore, it could be argued that the medium of instruction often bars African students from obtaining a proper educational qualification (Van Zyl, 1994). However, black parents in South Africa prefer English as a medium of instruction for their children because of its lure as the main language of Science and Technology, its efficiency in providing communication across linguistic and cultural barriers in Africa and its international applicability. They feel that its removal or its weakening will not be in the best interest of black education or black advancement (Dyers, 2001; Chick and Mwashu, 1992; De Klerk, 2000). Parents perceive English as a passport to socio-economic mobility for their children. However, black students and their parents usually end up disillusioned because, for students to make it in a tertiary institution, they have to be able to read and write English competently, which normally not the case.



Heugh (1993) argues that English is perceived to offer rewards in terms of higher educational opportunities, power, and money. However, these rewards remain a dream for the majority of black students since the use of English as a medium of instruction is not always satisfactory and many pupils do not understand the contents of each lesson due to their incompetence in English. Van Zyl (1994) revealed that the 1991 census statistics showed that 49% of black youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years could not speak, read or write in English.

There are other problems, though (other than? Associated with?). According to Myles (2002: 2), “the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually

learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience.” Myles (2002) further argues that writing involves composing, which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing. Writing is best conceptualized as a series of activities ranging from the more mechanical or formal aspects of ‘writing down’ on the one end, to the more complex act of composing on the other end (Omaggio, 1993 cited in Myles, 2002).

This study argues that in general, it is the act of composing that creates problems for black students, especially when writing in ESL in academic contexts. Formulating new ideas can be difficult because it involves transforming or reworking information, which is much more complex than writing a narrative (cf. Myles, 2002). By putting together concepts and solving problems, the writer engages in “a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text” (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987 cited in Myles, 2002: 2). Indeed, academic writing requires conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. However, students writing in their L2 also have to acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques, and skills, compared to students writing in their native language, (L1). For South African black students, this usually means having to deal with teachers who may or may not get beyond their language problems when assessing their work. Although a certain amount of consciousness-

raising on the part of the readers may be warranted, students want to write close to error-free texts and they enter language courses with the expectations of becoming more proficient writers in the L2. These expectations are usually never met and the black students end up frustrated.

1.2 Statement of the problem

From the forgoing introduction, it has emerged that many black students do not have writing skills in ESL as they enter tertiary institutions. However, this does not mean that they do not have any writing skills. The problem is that their purposes for writing are sometimes not the kind valued by Western academic communities (Gee, 2000; Myles, 2002). The nature of academic literacy often confuses and disorients students, “particularly those who bring with them a set of conventions that are at odds with those of the academic world they are entering” (Kutz, Groden & Zamel, 1993: 30). In addition, the culture-specific nature of schemata (abstract mental structures representing our knowledge of things, events, and situations) can lead to difficulties when students write texts in L2 (cf. Myers, 2002). As Kern (2000) notes, being acquainted with how to write a ‘summary’ or ‘analysis’ in Mandarin or Spanish does not necessarily mean that students will be able to do these things in English.

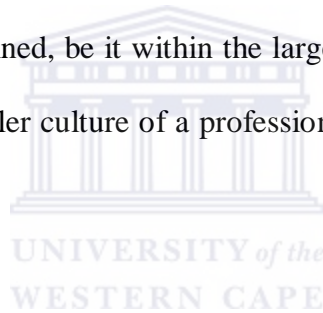
As a result, any fitting instruction must account for the influence from various educational, social, and cultural experiences that students have in their native language. According to Myles (2002), these experiences include textual issues, such as rhetorical and cultural preferences for organizing information and structuring

arguments (contrastive rhetoric), knowledge of appropriate genres, familiarity with writing topics, and distinct cultural and instructional socialization. In addition to instructional and cultural factors, L2 writers have varying commands of the target language. The variation in the command of the target language affects the way structural errors are treated from both social and cognitive points of view.

Focusing on L2 writing strategies in relation to referencing, this study gives insight into the problem of developing a distinct construct of L2 writing in South Africa's social contexts.

Therefore, this study investigates L2 academic writing competences of black students at Eastern Cape Technikon focusing on their L2 writing strategies with regard to coherence and the forms of cohesive devices. Specifically, focus is on the referring expressions of the black student's written academic texts. It is hoped that a study of coherence and cohesive devices will provide insights into why certain black students' academic texts are perpetually incoherent. As Halliday & Hassan (1989: 48) note, "an important contribution to coherence comes from cohesion: the set of linguistic resources that every language has for linking one part of a text to another." A study on coherence and cohesive devices cannot be complete without looking at the overall organization of the text. In this regard, theme and topic development are also investigated.

Further, this study considers that academic writing, like other forms of writing, is a culturally and linguistically distinct form of discourse, making it a distinct genre. Therefore, a study of coherence in black students' academic writing entails a genre analysis of such writing. According to Bhatia (1993:3), a "genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs." For Eggins (2004:9) "the concept of genre is used to describe the impact of the context of culture on language, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals." Prior cultural knowledge of academic genre is very important to academic writing. Thus, academic writing is culturally determined, be it within the larger cultural context of a language or social group, or the smaller culture of a profession or academic discipline (Purves & Purves, 1986).



In short, the study of coherence of black students' academic writing entails an exploration of the stages the students use in producing such texts, as well as a study of the typical stages or moves in students' texts as they attempt to arrive at a genre goal.

The foregoing argument implies that a study of coherence of students' academic writing is also a study of text in socio-cultural context. Black students, in this regard, are not only faced with the problem of having to deal with ESL, but also they have to tackle a distinctive genre understood by an academic community, most of which

resides outside their speech community. And yet, there are black students who do well under such conditions. The question is, what strategies do such students use to write coherently despite the odds?

Clearly then, there is need for a comprehensive analysis of not only the processes that the students undertake before the actual writing, but also and the stages within the texts as the students attempt to arrive at the academic genre goals.

1.3 Aims and objectives

The general aim of this research was to identify the kinds of strategies that are critical in coherent English second language academic writing for black students in South Africa's multilingual contexts through:

- i) A network analysis of the L2 writing processes and practices adopted by competent and not-so-competent black students at ECT.
- ii) A linguistic, social context and genre analysis of L2 academic writing practices of the two groups of students focusing on cohesive grammatical devices of referring expressions and theme development.

Specifically, the study is limited to the following objectives:

1. To examine strategies that are used by the two groups of competent black students and not-so-competent black students ESL students at Eastern Cape Technikon, in copying with academic writing through a linguistic and semiotic analysis. This includes:

- (a) An analysis of the processes and discourse strategies adopted by the two groups of students including how they prepare, plan, draft, revise, organize and edit their L2 written work.
 - (b) An investigation of written texts as pertains the use of forms of grammatical devices of reference and topicalisation in relation between the two groups.
 - (c) Investigating the interactional and discursive practices at school and home as a way of evaluating the social order (network of practices). The social practices investigated include the English curriculum, classroom practices and teaching methodologies and students' socio-economic factors, as critical elements in addressing black students' L2 academic writing needs.
2. To reflect critically on the analysis of 1a, b and c in South African cultural contexts.
 3. To identify possible strategies past the obstacles, and thus outline L2 writing (coping) strategies considering the South Africa's multilingual context.

1.5 Research questions

This study aimed at answering the following research questions.

- i) What writing processes do black students adopt with regard to ESL academic writing?
- ii) Do competent black students adopt different writing strategies from not-so-competent students?

- iii) What segments and aspects of discourse are formulaic in black communities and schools?
- iv) What model(s) of texts exists in black communities and schools?
- v) Is there a differential effect in academic writing skills between those students who attended rural or township Department of Education and Training (DET) schools and those who attended white (Model C) schools?
- vi) What discourse strategies and practices are evident in black students' academic writing? Are they aware of academic writing as a specific genre?
- vii) Is there any evidence of a link between student discourse and network practices such as curriculum, classroom practices and socio-cultural practices?
- viii) How well are black students able to draw upon and combine available genres and discourses in the L1 and L2 in their academic writing?

1.6 Justification

Most students at the Eastern Cape Technikon are ESL speakers. They come from the rural areas where there are neither libraries nor reading material. It could be argued that they only use English in a classroom situation, usually for writing purposes. However, they use their mother tongue in their classroom discussions of academic work although the assignments are given in English. Since language acquisition is developmental, such students do not have the requisite experience in ESL. This lack of experience in ESL hampers their academic performance, particularly because they are expected to write in English. Additionally, they experience linguistic difficulties such as in 'grammar' and in terms of choice of genre since most of the textbooks at tertiary level are written exclusively in English. The fact that the medium of instruction is also in English seems to worsen the problem.

As elaborated in Chapter 6, this study is cognisant of the fact that there are other issues that could affect students' academic writing skills such as qualification of the teachers of English, inadequate resources in rural or township schools and the teaching methodologies. These relate to what Fairclough (2001) calls the social order or network of practices. There is no doubt that improvement in the network of practices would help improve their academic writing. Other strategies of improving academic writing would include improvement on methods of teaching black students skills and strategies and how to combine the different genres and discourses (some of which may be in their mother tongue) available in South Africa's multilingual contexts. I

am not aware of any study that has systematically investigated the academic writing of black students in South Africa.

This study also suggests strategies that can be used to improve academic writing skills of students in what I consider a unique way of combining second language learning theory, systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). This will not only be one of the few studies that have used SFL in a sustained manner in recent times, but also to have used the SFL concept of “Wave of information” to analyse text arrangement in spoken and written discourse (cf. Martin & Rose, 2003; Eggins, 2004). The concept is elaborated on in Chapter 3. Most other studies have used contrastive analysis (CA) and error analysis (EA), or modified versions of these two tools in their analysis of student academic writing. This study, therefore, goes beyond both CA and EA to account for writing strategies used by ESL students (see Chapter 6). It is aimed at giving a comprehensive perspective on why certain students excel while others fail in multilingual contexts by looking at the value, attitudinal, ideological aspects of academic writing.

Therefore, the significance of this study has implications for ESL academic writing, not only in South Africa, but also in Africa as a whole where the ex-colonial languages are still being used as languages of learning and teaching.

1.7 Scope and limits

This study was carried out at the Eastern Cape Technikon where the majority of students are from the township and rural schools, and a few from urban and former white or coloured schools. The focus was on the writing skills of students because writing is an integral part of tertiary education. The study focused on linguistic aspects of coherence, cohesion and textual aspects of students' written academic discourse.

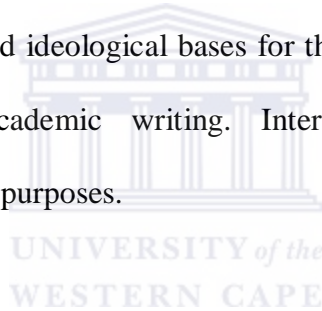
1.8 Methodology

This study has both empirical and theoretical components comprising a literature study that covers ESL academic writing, aspects of South African language policy, and planning on one hand, and systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) on the other hand. The writer's personal experience in teaching English and her daily exposure to the problems encountered by students in English at Eastern Cape Technikon also contribute to the research.

The methodology adopted in this study, therefore, centered on this dual approach of empirical evidence and theoretical exposition. The primary aim of the empirical part of this study is to profile the L2 academic writing strategies of students at the Eastern Cape Technikon focusing on rhetorical and argumentation structures. The idea was to compare and contrast the strategies used by the competent and the not-so-competent students.

Using purposeful sampling procedure (cf. Coyne, 1997; De Vos, 2001; Du Plooy, 2002) the following data collection techniques were used:

- i) Document analysis: These including the analysis of students' written essays, National Curriculum Statement (2003) and Eastern Cape Technikon curriculum documents
- ii) Interviews including semi-structured interviews with selected learners, teachers, government officials, lecturers and parents. The interviews were aimed at obtaining personal and in-depth information on academic writing strategies and to gather insight on the values, attitudinal and ideological bases for the choices the respondents make regarding academic writing. Interviews were also meant for triangulation purposes.



The methodology used in this study is discussed in full in Chapter 4.

1.9 Ethics statement

I obtained permission from the Ministry of Education in South Africa to allow me to interview teachers and students. I also got permission from ECT to allow me to collect written texts, and observe students and to interview lecturers. Care was taken to avoid any forced responses, and those that did not want to participate were not forced to do so.

1.10 Chapter layout

Chapter 1 gave the background to the study and described the nature of the problem. The problem was identified as the falling standards of academic writing amongst black students in South Africa whose home language is neither English nor Afrikaans. The Chapter also presented the justification of carrying out this study as well as a brief introduction of the methodology used in this study..

Chapter two (2) focuses on ESL academic writing in South Africa. The chapter discusses the South African language policy, and the language situation considering the situation that although South Africa has 11 official languages, English has become the de facto language of higher education.

In Chapter 3, the focus is on SFL and CDA which form the conceptual and analytical framework used in this study. The chapter explains how SFL and CDA are used in this study to examine the written text as well as to explain the social process and social structures through which individuals create meaning in their interaction with the text.

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology composed of both qualitative and the quantitative strategies.

The findings of this study are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 deals with the analysis of student essays. Here, the discussion focuses on coherence, cohesion and

thematic analysis. Coherence focuses on aspects such as contextualization of the topic, sentence and paragraph unity, colloquialism and direct translation from mother tongue. Cohesion focuses on referencing, conjunctions, exemplification, verb forms, spelling and prepositions. Thematic analysis focuses on themes, conjunctive cohesion, reference chains, lexical cohesion, cohesive characterization and register analysis.

Chapter six (6) discusses the results from the interview data. As elaborated elsewhere (see section 4.0), the study is not designed to find a cause-effect relationship. Thus, the interviews are meant to deepen our understanding of the problems associated with academic writing in a second language. In this regard, the interviews further give insights into observations and phenomena discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the study and discusses recommendations.

In the following chapter, ESL academic writing is discussed against the backdrop of the language situation obtaining in South Africa's multilingual context.

Chapter 2

ESL Academic Writing and Classroom Practice in South Africa

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant in understanding the research problem. The focus of the chapter is ESL academic writing, classroom practice and aspects of language policy and planning in South Africa.

2.1 Literacy as a social practice

Researchers argue that literacy is understood to be either autonomous or ideological. The autonomous model of literacy sees literacy teaching and learning as the mastering of the basic technical skills that control spelling, writing and how to write simple sentences. In this model it is suggested that literacy is learned in the early years then used and re-used to serve whatever purpose people may have. However, literacy in this context does not take into consideration the social context and meaning associated with it.

Street (2001) has challenged this view of the autonomous model of literacy by arguing that literacy is implicated in social experience and behaviour. Street (2001) goes on to say that literacy is used in different literacy events which are the occasions on which literacy is used in social contexts. Furthermore, literacy is beliefs, values

and ideologies that determine the meaning associated with literacy practices and that it also serves an important social purpose. Language is used to shape these beliefs, values and ideologies.

Street (2001), therefore, proposes the ideological model of literacy which suggests that there are many literacies. In this view students learn to recognize a range of literacy practices which are to be understood within other social practices and are learned in order to satisfy the needs of particular literacy events. Furthermore, students learn literacy best and in the most productive ways when their interest in meaning and purpose in language are actively engaged.

It is for this reason that literacy is implicated in social experience and behaviour and is used in a range of literacy events. According to Heath (1983), literacy events refer to occasions on which literacy is used in social contexts. Therefore, literacy events involve concepts and social models regarding the nature of the event that make it work and give it meaning. Literacy events are values, beliefs and ideologies that determine the meaning associated with literacy practice. Language is used to shape these values, beliefs and ideologies. When we teach language, we teach meaning, values and knowledge. We also teach the linguistic structures like grammar in which these are realized (Christie, 2005). The foregoing discussion implies that language, or the knowledge of how language is used in different contexts, is fundamental to the study of literacy events. Through learning literacy during the schooling period, students learn to handle aspects of written language in different ways creating

subject-specific literacies (Christie, 2005). A connection between home and school promotes the development of literacy (Kucer, 2005).

The current study has been influenced by the ideological model of literacy in which literacy practices are seen as socio-practices and analysed in social contexts. This combines systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA), two of the analytical and theoretical framework approaches adopted in this study.

2.1.1 Home influence on literacy

Students' home experience impacts on literacy. Literacy stresses the relationship between reading and writing. Reading and writing are part of the literacy practices within the community. Communities use literacy to produce, consume, maintain and control knowledge of their own culture. Social groups and events form the basis of written language. Literacy of an individual reflects groups' norms, values and behaviours. Discourse, which is a coherent language, is used to express these norms values and behaviours. The degree to which the individual is able to successfully negotiate the use of various literacies in various contexts reflects the groups' membership and the degree to which these multiple literacies have been developed within the group at home. This means that individuals acquire literacy at home. According to Francis (2000), the initial stages of literacy in the home situation are acquired through narrative genres such as folktales. These folktales are told and retold by members of the community to children. Children get to know the specific language used in telling folktales through listening to the elders. After having

mastered the language used in folktales, they also engage in telling these folktales. The problem is that in African communities, folktales do not seem to feature strongly in rural homes anymore because the elders no longer tell these tales. Gough (2000) and Gough and Bock (2001) argue that folktales (that is primary discourse) could be used as stepping stone to academic discourse (that is secondary discourse) since children get to learn the specific language of folktales. In other words, the staged development of the narrative in African praise poems or folktales, for example, could be a good starting point to teaching the staged and goal oriented purposeful activity that is academic genre (Martin, 1984).

2.1.2 Literacy and school

Good educational practices need to build on what students already know from home since the development of schooled literacies has part of its roots in the home literacies (Street, 2001). Home and community practices should be used as building blocks of academic literacy. However, this is not usually the case because the school introduces students to a way of speaking and writing unfamiliar to them. For example, the school introduces the unfamiliar and deliberate use of language in written text using specific, often opaque, language use (Kucer, 2005). These texts are in the form of essays. Students are expected to construct coherent texts, a demand far removed from their everyday language use. It is usually the middle class, whose verbal behaviour and life-style approximate that of the school, that benefit in this regard. The social group is critical to determining whether the home literacy practices match those demanded by the school system. However, there is no doubt

that African students from the low social groups in rural areas could benefit from the knowledge acquired from home literacies in the form of folktales.

It is evident from this study that it would be incorrect to suggest that all black students are equally disadvantaged. Sometimes there are differences that are observed in students' academic writing which are brought about by differences in their home literacies. In homes that are in urban areas, reading materials such as books, magazines and newspapers are easily available. Children read books even before they start schooling. By the time they start schooling they are already socialized on how to interact with language. As argued above, when school literacy is paralleled to home literacy, students are able to make progress in their school literacy development. On the other hand, there are no reading materials in rural homes. Parents do not buy books, magazines and newspapers because of poverty. In fact, children from the rural areas do not get exposure to reading materials before they start schooling. So there is no home literacy which helps them to develop literacy and to interact successfully with language. They only get exposure to books when they go to school (Banda and Kirunda, 2005; Leibowitz, 2004). Therefore, it is argued that the rural African student is not only the most poverty stricken, but also the most vulnerable to disease and other social injustices and the most educationally deprived.

2.1.3 Primary and secondary discourse

There is a link between people's perceptions of primary discourse and secondary discourse and academic literacy development. Discourse according to Gee (1990), is a socio-cultural determined way of thinking, feeling, valuing and using language in different contexts in the day-to-day lives of people. Primary discourse is knowledge or language which is picked up in face-to-face interaction. On the other hand, secondary discourse is a specialist discourse. It requires a degree of expert knowledge and language. In this case, it is something that is learned more through social institutions such as schools than acquired at home. Although these discourses are different, there is a continuum from primary to secondary discourse. The primary discourse forms the framework for the acquisition and learning of secondary discourse, which is important for academic literacy (Banda and Kirunda, 2005). Children read, write and think in the way that reflects their social identities and experiences. Teachers need to encourage the use of background knowledge of primary discourse by students when writing texts (Kucer, 2005). This could be through exposure to narratives (Francis, 2000) or oral tradition such as folklore and traditional praise singing (Gough and Bock, 2001).

According to Gough and Bock (2001) and Kucer (2005), becoming academically literate does not necessarily mean learning the secondary discourse types. Rather, development of academic literacy is more about the apprenticeship to Western rhetorical norms and ways of thinking, writing and talking than secondary discourses in general.

Gough and Bock, 2001) argue that secondary discourse types are dependent on well-established cultural institutions for their transmission and sustenance. If there is a poor environment for learning of secondary discourse types, it will lead to poor development of secondary discourse abilities as well.

As discussed earlier, it is the urban child that benefits from secondary discourse through exposure to facilities such as libraries and planned discourse found in several radio and television broadcasts. Most rural homes do not have televisions. Even if they could afford to buy a television, most rural areas are deprived of signals and electricity.



2.1.4 Translation as academic literacy mediation

Black students are well aware of their shortcomings regarding academic literacy and resort to all sorts of strategies to cope with academic tasks. One of the strategies in the L2 situation is to fall back on the mother tongue through literal translation. However, in literacy, it is important for a person to translate correctly from L1 to L2 (from English to Xhosa, for example) when writing academic texts. Students use translation as a coping strategy in their academic writing, but they do not have the skill to translate from the L1 to the L2. They are sometimes aware that translating from one language to another is risky and problematic and, moreover, their teachers are not trained to help them to translate well (Banda, 2003). Furthermore, they find it difficult to translating from one language to the other since they lack experience

and academic conversation with regard to concept formulation and logical thinking in their L1 and ESL. Teachers also need to be aware of social and cultural experiences that appear to block academic mediation from L1 to L2 and vice versa. These issues could also include textual issues and cultural preferences for organizing information and structuring arguments (Myles, 2002).

In order for students to be able to translate from L1 to L2 they need to be taught the basic language skills of transferring knowledge between languages to enable them to translate cognitive knowledge. They also need to have developed their L1 and L2 competences as well. The problem is that some students just swap labels between L1 and L2. Without transferring knowledge itself in swapping labels, concepts are confused as dictionary definitions are not always adequate to explain socio-linguistics and applied linguistics concepts (Banda, 2003). Translating by mere swapping of labels should not be encouraged as it gives the student the false impression that they understand the ideas and concepts involved, whereas this is not the case.

Translation, therefore, does not mean mere switching of labels for the same concept. It involves translation of socio-cultural and cognitive academic skills as well (Banda, 2003). Translation as academic mediation can be useful only when it is done properly. It also has to involve transformation and reconstruction of knowledge, which enables the transfer of cognitive skills from L1 to L2 and vice versa. This requires constant conscious effort and practice in composing, developing and

analysing ideas in addition to linguistic skills in both L1 and L2. These skills have to be taught in a school situation.

2.2 English as the medium of instruction

In South Africa, although the White Paper on Curriculum Framework for General and Further Education and Training suggests that mother tongue instruction in the early years of schooling is appropriate for cognitive development, parents see English as an access to better education, and prefer it as a medium of instruction from grade R (National Department of Education, 1997).

Cummins, (1976,1981,1983,1996) and Krashen (1980,1981,1998) hold the view that L2 language students who have acquired concepts and knowledge in their L1 should be able to transfer this knowledge to English without having to relearn the concepts, as long as they have the relevant vocabulary. Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins (1988), Ramirez and Ramey (1991) agree that students who do not speak the language of learning are at a disadvantage. Research surveys conducted by Macdonald (1990) revealed that children are inadequately prepared for the transition to learn 10 subjects in grade 5 in English after having been taught in the mother tongue in grades R – four (4). Heugh (2005) suggests that African students should have at least six years mother tongue education before switching to English medium of instruction. It is argued that even six years will not solve the problem. As Banda (2004) argues, the problem is more than an issue of language change, it is about literacy deprivation in the homes and communities. The argument here is that lack of literacy materials and

libraries, poor school management and ill-qualified teachers will only lead to poor results even if instruction is in the mother tongue.

Students also realize that English language proficiency is essential for a person to be successful in the global village and in order to be proficient in academic writing (Chaka, 1997). Unfortunately, to most black students in South Africa, English can be regarded as a foreign language, particularly those in the rural areas who have limited exposure to English and have no opportunity to use the language outside the classroom. These students do not get input from first language speakers of English (Taitz, 1985; National Department of Education, 1998a) or other sources such as television and radio. As indicated earlier, television and radio are not easily available in the rural areas.



2.3 The mother tongue debate and Language Policy in South Africa

Language Policy aims to redress the injustices of Apartheid where English and Afrikaans were given a higher status at the expense of other languages. Prior to 1994 English and Afrikaans were used as official languages throughout South Africa. Only students whose mother tongue was English or Afrikaans were at an advantage. The majority of South Africans speak an African language as a home language. For example, there are about 22% Zulu speakers and 18% Xhosa speakers while 16% speak Afrikaans and less than 10% speak English as their first language. The rest of the population speaks other indigenous languages (National Department of Education, 1992). All that changed after 1994 when 11 languages were declared official languages and given the same status. This was a way of promoting African languages

which were neglected in the past. Provinces were free to choose which of the official languages to declare an official language at regional level (Barkhuizen and Gough, 1996). The Bill of Human Rights (section 31) established the notion of languages as a fundamental human right. It states that:

- i) Every person shall have the right to use the language of his/her choice.
- ii) No person shall be discriminated against on the grounds of language.
- iii) Every person has a right to insist that the state communicate with him/her at national level in the official language of his/her choice (Senate sub-committee on languages, 1995).

The vision of the African National Congress (ANC) government of promoting all 11 languages is just a symbolic gesture and is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. The South African government has not yet provided the human resources and physical resources needed to promote multilingualism. Practically speaking, English and Afrikaans still have a higher status than other languages. The value attached to these languages even by blacks themselves, undermines the survival of African languages. The result is that many black South Africans make English their language of choice as a medium of instruction (cf. Dyers 2001; De Klerk 2000 and Banda, 2004). This makes prospects for an African language as an alternative medium of instruction at tertiary institutions appear very bleak, at least in the foreseeable future. The Ministry of Education is aware of this situation and appears not to be doing anything about it.

According to Pandor (2005), the then Minister of Education, stated that English was going to be 'optional' as a medium of instruction, but in the same breath contradicted this position by saying that English was going to remain as the language of education until African languages were sufficiently developed. Furthermore, in 2004, a representative of the Department of Arts and Culture made a presentation at the South African Linguistic Association Conference (SAALA) stating that the government was trying hard to promote the indigenous languages by funding language centers in nine (9) tertiary institutions in South Africa. Clearly, funding of tertiary institutions is not enough because the problem is not with funding, but with the poor teaching of African languages at primary and secondary school levels. The problem also lies with the implementation of government policy.

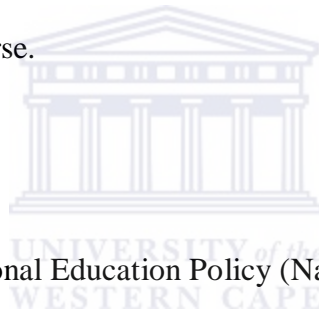
De Klerk, 2002 argues that the official recognition of English as the language of government and business confirms the power and value attached to English as the lingua franca at government level. In spite of the government policy of multilingualism, English and Afrikaans remain the only two languages used in tertiary institutions. The DoE has not been able to convince tertiary institutions to use one of the indigenous languages as a medium of instruction and the funds for implementing this option are not likely to be available in the near future. Thus, the functional value of English as the medium of instruction is endorsed and students are obliged to adhere to English in order to progress at tertiary level.

Equal opportunity in education is a priority for the government but language in education has not received the attention it deserves. Research has revealed that language and achievement are closely linked and the use of English language as a medium of instruction in South Africa contributes a great deal to the high failure rate and dropout rates among black students (Barry, 1999; Heugh, 2005)). English language proficiency is essential for students who are expected to complete tasks in English and also tasks in other subjects. The former Education Minister (Bengu, 1996) stated that theoretically, students have a right to education in the language of their choice. However, it is argued that the practical implementation of this is not feasible in the foreseeable future since there are no books written in the indigenous languages and there is little enthusiasm among African home language speakers to use indigenous languages as medium of instruction.

At present 80% of the South African population choose English as the language of learning and instruction. English as the language of choice of the majority of South African students will result in entrenching unequal opportunities to teaching and learning which will invariably undermine the success of bilingualism (National Department of Education, 1998a).

Moreover, in South Africa, the truth is that English is dominating and the government of South Africa is promoting its use as a language of business, commerce and industry (Ndzimande and Pampallis, 1992). English is regarded as being more important than other indigenous languages. Black parents who send their children to

English medium schools also encourage this. At the same time it is clear that the majority of blacks cannot afford this 'luxury' and their children suffer the consequences of not being proficient in English (Mc Donald, 1990). It is also clear that the preference of English undermines the policy of government to promote equal opportunities in South Africa (Chaka, 1997). In the South African context, black students do not have support structures to develop English language related skills thus putting them at a disadvantage. As indicated earlier, the most disadvantaged group is black students from rural areas. Most students from rural areas have limited English language proficiency and they also lack the exposure of English mother tongue speakers and to television and radio often experienced by urban students. I shall elaborate on this in due course.



However, in 1992, the National Education Policy (National Department of Education, 1992) in South Africa introduced a model where English was phased in with specific subjects over a period of years. Children were expected to begin intensive learning in their own language and the second language was to be introduced only at grade 4 or 5. The idea was that most cognitive demanding skills be taught in their own language for a longer period of time so that students could benefit from the support of their mother tongue. They could only change to the L2 when they had acquired the necessary language and cognitive skills.

Research suggests that this is not happening as parents demand English and teachers continue teaching as explained above. Most African children have not been taught in their mother tongue. Instead teachers use different models in class such as code-switching, to make students understand the content which is written in English (Macdonald, 1990; Meyer, 1997). In fact, instead of offering one of the indigenous languages, some schools in the Western Cape, for example, prefer to offer a foreign language.

The new Language Policy post of 1994 supports the democratization of South Africa (Bengu, 1996). It aims at redressing the past linguistic imbalances and encouraging multilingualism. Its ultimate aim is avoiding the continued dominance of English and Afrikaans while ensuring linguistic freedom of choice. Multilingualism is seen as challenging English as the language of power (ANC, 1992). The policy of promoting all 11 languages implies that English should no longer enjoy any special privileges (Botha, 1994). There is little doubt that using English as a language of learning often denies access to better education for black rural students while at the same time maintaining the privileged status. It is for this reason that the South African Language Policy addresses the issues of status, access, equity and empowerment, based on the following principles.

- i) The right for the individual to choose which language or languages to study and to use as a language of learning (medium of instruction).
- ii) The right of the individual to develop linguistic skills, in the language or languages of his/her choice, which are necessary for full participation in national, provincial and local life.

- iii) The necessity to promote and develop South African languages that were previously disadvantaged and neglected (ANC, 1994: 124-134).

The goals of the Language Policy in South Africa are as follows:

- i) To promote national unity.
- ii) To entrench democracy, which includes the protection of language rights.
- iii) To promote multilingualism.
- iv) To promote respect for and tolerance towards linguistic and cultural diversity.
- v) To further the elaboration and modernization of the African languages.
- vi) To promote national economic development (Department of Arts, Culture Science and Technology, 1996: 23).

It is evident that the South African Language Policy outlines a framework for the implementation of Language in Education Policy, which promotes multilingualism. This policy has two goals, namely to encourage the teaching of African Languages at all levels of education and parents' right to choose which language to be used as a medium of instruction. The study undertaken by Meyer (1997) indicates that any decision affecting Language in Education Policy needs to be rooted to the realities on the ground. The importance of decisions pertaining to language policy to be taken at local and regional level must be emphasised, hence, the Pan African Language Board (PANSLAB) has appointed staff members at regional level to attend to all language needs of the provinces. The problem, however, is that it is not clear from the policy whether the aim is individual multilingualism or societal multilingualism.

The government has attempted to use education as the tool to drive and achieve its multilingualism goals. As a result, the Language Plan Task Group (LANTAG) was established in 1995 by the- then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology to advise him on the development of a comprehensive language plan. According to the group the Language in Education Policy should:

- i) Encourage the educational use of African languages at all levels of education.
- ii) Allow people to choose which language or languages are used as languages of learning and which languages are studied (Meyer, 1997:126).

For more than ten years, very little has been achieved on both objectives, and despite the Minister's move to promote bilingualism in education, this policy remains a symbolic gesture as South Africa is moving towards monolingualism in education. English is being entrenched by the ANC as a language of business, commerce, industry and government at the expense of African languages (Nzimande and Pampallis, 1992; Macdonald, 1990). Members of Parliament use English in parliament and also most government documents are written in English. Business in South Africa is conducted in English and even job interviews are conducted in English. Furthermore, those who are not proficient in English are not likely to get good paying jobs because, as previously mentioned, English is used as the yardstick to measure whether a person is capable of doing the job or not.

Given the above scenario, it is unacceptable to insist on mother tongue education for African children. It becomes important in South African schools that children should

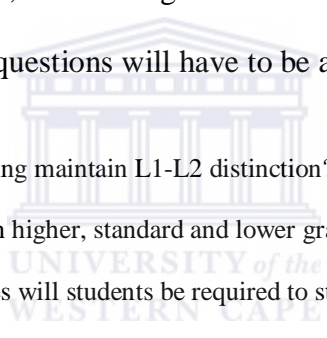
be equipped as early as possible with a good command of English, since that is the language through which their educational performance will be judged. In South Africa, all final examination question papers are either in English or in Afrikaans. Selection for positions in higher education and the job market are based on the achievement of students in the examination (Pandor, 2005). Since the majority of students in grade 12 will be examined in English, English is placed at the centre of language development of all South African children. This situation puts second language students of English at a disadvantage not only because English is not their mother tongue, but also they have little choice with regard to the medium of instruction. This is one of the reasons that African parents are not convinced of the benefits of mother tongue education as they rightly believe that unless socio-economic conditions change, education through the mother tongue will not lead to socio-economic mobility for their children.

Rex, (1989) and Banda, (2004) state that although the National Department of Education is promoting multi/bilingualism, it has not developed programmes and teaching materials to develop African languages. Furthermore, teachers are not trained for working in multilingual classrooms.

One other problem is the revision of syllabi for all languages taught. The syllabi, especially in the Eastern Cape, do not reach the teachers for whom they are intended. Many teachers in the Eastern Cape have not seen nor received the 1995 interim syllabus (National Department of Education, 1997). The syllabus currently in use is dated 1984. Even those who have access to the 1995 syllabus cannot follow it

because of large classes, poor resources and facilities, and, in some cases, an inadequate competence in English (Chick and Mwashu, 1992; Murray, 1991). The National Curriculum Statement (2003) also does not put emphasis on academic writing. A further problem is that teachers resist change. Once they are familiar with a particular syllabus they find it difficult to change their teaching practices.

English language testing is another problem facing the Policy. There is no uniformity in measuring academic proficiency as languages are tested as first, second and third languages at higher, standard, and lower grade levels. In order for the Policy to function well the following questions will have to be addressed.

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- i) Will language teaching maintain L1-L2 distinction?
 - ii) Will testing maintain higher, standard and lower grade distinctions?
 - iii) How many languages will students be required to study as subjects?
 - iv) Will there be specific language requirements for admission to tertiary education institutions?
 - v) Will students be allowed to answer examination questions or other school subjects in the language of their choice as suggested by the ANC (1992)? (Barkhuizen and Gough, 1996).

Some of the questions were addressed by the Minister of Education in the budget speech of May 2005 where the minister stated that English was not going to be a compulsory subject and students would be free to choose any two languages in order to get a certificate for Further Education and Training (FET) (Pandor, 2005). However, this is not going to be feasible in the near future because, as stated earlier,

parents want their children to be taught in English as it is perceived as the language of the market and globalization. It is also associated with access to the hierarchically ordered world of employment, status and power (Banda, 2004). Marivate (2005), the former chief executive officer of the PANSLAB does not support parents' views as can be seen in the Daily Dispatch of 21 February 2005 when the chief executive officer said that parents of English second language speakers wanted their children to learn English to the detriment of their culture. The PANSLAB head went on to mention that 78% of South Africans did not have a functional knowledge of English. However, as Banda (2004) has argued, 'culture' sacrifice is a risk most black parents are willing to take in the face of a lack of a viable medium of instruction. African language speakers, out of desperation, wanted to learn English for instrumental purposes so as to access education, housing and health services. The argument put forth is that the government must decide on how to reach the balance between what black people perceive as effective education for their children, and the promotion of cultural heritage. The government must come up with a strategy to promote and develop all South African languages in all the language aspects and not only promote speaking to the detriment of writing in any language. Therefore, there will be need for innovation and funds to write and translate books to enable all languages to be used as mediums of instruction. So far this has not been forthcoming.

To conclude this subsection, it is reiterated that one of the major constraints on the implementation of the Language Policy is the unavailability of resources including human resources, funding, facilities, materials and books. Although the Minister of

Education, in her 2005 budget speech (Pandor, 2005), tried to promote indigenous languages, ostensibly by making English a non-compulsory subject, this will not have the desired effect. The Minister of Education admitted this by saying that there were no chances of English being replaced as the main medium of instruction in schools in the near future. Also, there are no books written for content subjects in these indigenous languages and, moreover, it will not be easy to convince parents to change their mindset as the medium of instruction at university is still English. To try to implement what the Minister suggested, academics should start writing books in these indigenous languages. To address these problems a well-formulated plan of action should be designed (Barkhuizen and Gough, 1996). Such a plan has not been put on the table, and the development of African languages has yet to materialize. Having nine language centers to develop African Languages makes the whole process diffuse and uncoordinated, and makes it very difficult for synergy to develop among African languages (see Marivate 2005).

2.4 Grammatical competence and academic writing

According to James (1998) the definition of an error is an instance of language that is unintentionally deviant. Errors can be categorized as grammatical errors which refer to well formedness of spoken or written discourse and the breaches of rules of the code (Corder 1971). Grammatical errors occur when non-linguistic factors militate against the use of a form in a sentence (Beaugrande and Dressler 1981). For a sentence to be acceptable it must be grammatically correct, be produced in an appropriate context and must be free of errors (Lyons, 1977).

Corder (1971) associates errors with failure in competence and that errors are not self-correctable. Errors can only be self corrected if further relevant input has been provided, which means that errors require further learning to take place before they can be self-corrected (James, 1998).

Many language teachers spend long hours correcting the written work of their students because it is assumed that correction will improve students' competence in English second language. Researchers' findings in L2 acquisition indicate that error correction is ineffective in changing language behaviour. This is regarded as a waste of time (Creber, 1965). But other researchers such as Hyland (1990) state that the teacher's response is an essential step in the writing process because it provides the students with an idea of the criteria by which their work is judged and will offer them useful information that will help them avoid similar errors in future. However, it has been observed that when students' written work is returned to them with a lot of corrections, they put it away and hope they get fewer red marks next time. Writing out the correct answer does not offer much improvement in future. At the same time, too much red ink is obviously discouraging. The marking profile that is promoted in South Africa is that of not highlighting every error because it has a dampening effect on the students' confidence. It is necessary for teachers to determine how much error correction is needed to help L2 students improve their grammatical competence (Van der Walt, 1994).

Hendrickson (1980) and Merino (1989) state that teachers should not correct all the errors that are made by students without giving them a chance to appraise their own performance. Moderate selective or minimal marking will help improve the grammatical competence of ESL students. But the teacher should not dominate the correction of errors but also explore peer error correction. For more positive results, the teacher should be conscious of the students' writing goals, their standard of proficiency and the quality of errors made, and the students' motivation - which is positively affected by self evaluation

Correcting students' errors should always provide a platform from which students can reassess and redraft their work. Correction should encourage students to think about what they have done and lead them to improve on it (Van der Walt, 1994). Correction, provided in the oral language classroom, should help students to identify problematic areas, reformulate rules in their minds and speak more accurately. As indicated earlier in this section, some researchers maintain that correction of errors does not significantly decrease the number of students' errors (see Creber, 1965). Many commonly used correction techniques often interrupt, intimidate or confuse rather than enlighten. Correction techniques fail to locate errors precisely for the students. According to Fanselow (1977) teachers respond to errors by shaking their heads or making responses such as 'again'. These responses are never precise and they neither locate errors nor indicate that errors were made. If students do not know the location of the error and also which part of an utterance is correct, then self-

correction is difficult. Again teachers tend to provide correct responses without giving students adequate time to formulate their utterances.

Another problem is that it may not be clear to students that they are actually being corrected. Fanselow (1977) noted that teachers provide correct models after both correct and incorrect students' utterances. The reason why there are these deficiencies is because correction is provided orally. In that case, the student must first hear the teacher's response and realize that the response was intended to elicit a correction and the student also has to figure out what the teacher is trying to correct and remember the original utterance which contained the error. Further, Fanselow (1977) states that providing correction in written form makes correction more explicit if they are properly located. Locating errors gives the students more time to think because oral time constraints are no longer in effect. Orals must be written on the board and students must be given enough time to work on the errors and all the students must participate in the correction process. The main benefit of using this form of correction is that it increases the amount of self-correction and peer-correction and reduces the amount of teacher-correction, which is more often than not intimidating and humiliating.

Language practitioners believe that errors should be avoided. If they do occur they should be corrected immediately. Corder (1971) says errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about the effectiveness of teaching techniques and show the teacher what parts of the syllabus have been inadequately learned or taught or need

further attention. Students' errors also provide the information for designing a remedial syllabus or a programme of re-teaching.

Teacher feedback to students' errors is complex and is sometimes inconsistent and unclear and probably not helpful to the student. Teacher feedback may even be detrimental to the students' progress. Long (1977) pointed out that not all forms of feedback are as vital as we think, and argues that error correction is a necessary condition for second language learning. Long's (1977) views are supported by Krashen and Seliger (1975), who argue that adult second language proficiency would improve only when errors are corrected and when rules are taught in formal instruction. This view is also supported by Hendrickson (1978) who says that very frequent errors, which carry a high degree of stigma and errors which inhibit comprehension, should be corrected. There is also a wide variety of techniques used to correct student errors. Hendrickson suggests that correction by peers or by students who committed the error, with the help of the teacher, might be appropriate for some students and some teachers. It also depends on the attitude and the culture that the teachers establish in the classroom (Richard, 1983).

There are different opinions about the need for error correction. Krashen (1982) states that error correction has little or no effect on subconscious learning, and is thought to be useful for conscious learning. This does not mean that error correction has no role to play in language learning. Some researchers have pointed out that error

correction has positive results. Corrective feedback can promote correct language production to contribute to changes in erroneous utterances (Chaudron, 1977).

It is clear from the above discussion that researchers do not agree on when errors should be corrected and when they should be ignored. They all agree that some errors should be tolerated at different stages of language learning (Chaudron, 1977; Hendrickson, 1978), especially those that do not affect coherence and cohesion in a text. However, they also point out that those that affect coherence and cohesion should be corrected for a text to have intelligibility.

2.5 Second Language writing

Banda (2003) argues that the ability to write a text that is error free is not a naturally acquired skill but is formally learned or culturally transmitted as an asset of practices in formal instructional settings. Students can only learn the skill in a school situation. Writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience. Writing involves composing, conducting research, developing ideas, analyzing ideas, writing the first draft, editing and writing the final draft (Omaggio, 1993). It is the act of composing which creates problems for those writing in L2 in academic contexts.

Formulating new ideas can be difficult because it involves reworking information. By putting together concepts, the writer engages in a two way interaction between developing knowledge and developing text (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). Academic writing requires conscious effort and practice in composing, developing

and analyzing ideas. Students writing in the L2 have to acquire proficiency in the use of language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills. Furthermore, certain social and cognitive factors related to second language acquisition show that strategies involved in the language learning process also affect L2 writing (Myles, 2002).

Social dimensions are also important in writing. Writing should not be viewed as an individually-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process, but as an acquired response to the discourse (Swales, 1990). Instruction should afford students the opportunity to participate in transactions with their own texts and the texts of others. By guiding students towards a conscious awareness of how the audience will interpret their work, students learn to write with a readerly sensitivity (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

Flowers and Hayes (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) argue that a writing process incorporates pre-writing activities such as brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing, multiple drafts, and peer group editing. L2 writers are in the process of acquiring these conventions and so they often need more instruction about language itself. Limited knowledge of vocabulary, language structure and content can inhibit L2 writers' performance (Myles, 2002). On the other hand, those students who have acquired the skill of writing in their L1 can transfer that skill to L2 writing. However, the problem with black students is that even the L1 is not properly taught and they have therefore not acquired the writing skill even in their L1 (Banda, 2004; De Klerk 2002). Those who have difficulty writing in their native language may not have a

repertoire of strategies to help them in their L2 writing development. Hence, L2 writers need more teacher involvement and guidance especially at the revision stage, because when they have to revise their work, they do so at a superficial level and when they do, they focus mainly on grammatical corrections (Silva, 1993).

Myles (2002) states that in order for students to improve their writing skills they should read academic texts, attend academic lectures and, if possible, work with students who are native speakers in order to be more acquainted with the discourse.

In structuring information, the writer uses various types of knowledge, including discourse knowledge. It is also important to organize at both sentence and text levels (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). Coherence problems may be due to not knowing how to organize the text or how to store the relevant information. Revision is also important and is a demanding task because it involves definition, evaluation, strategy selection and modification of text in the writing plan and the ability of students to analyse and evaluate the feedback they receive on their writing (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

In order to facilitate the writing process, students can develop the writing strategies which are metacognitive, such as, planning the organization of written discourse, and cognitive, which is using known linguistic information to facilitate a new learning task and using new vocabulary and social effective strategies which involve peer revision (O'Mally and Chamot, 1990). As will be determined in this study, rural

black students have difficulty in planning and organising texts, and as a consequence of having no reading culture, they also do not have the required ESL vocabulary for social effective strategies to be of any significance.

According to Pellettier (2000), interaction and input also play an important role in the writing process. Writers need to receive adequate L2 input in order to form new hypotheses about syntactic and rhetorical forms in the target language.

Swales (1990) and Raimes (1991, 1998) state that students may be able to write well if they are exposed to a variety of genres of writing, which include flyers, magazines, articles and books. By examining a variety of written texts, students' awareness can be raised with regard to the way words, structures and genre contribute to purposeful writing. They can also be aware of different types of textual organization, which can affect L2 students' composing process. Models of text analysis which can help L2 writers see how grammatical features are used in authentic discourse contexts, can also be used.

The use of self-evaluation can also be encouraged in students' portfolios and prompts for error identification can also be useful (Cumming, 1995). Instructions from teachers should provide students with language input, instruction in writing and also feedback on their writing. Classroom settings are also important in encouraging students to reflect on what they want to write and then to choose the appropriate language forms (Leki, 1990). Students should be encouraged to analyse and evaluate

feedback themselves in order for it to be effective. The focus should be on idea development, clarity and coherence before grammar correction (Cumming, 1989).

Feedback is of utmost importance to the writing process. Without individual attention and sufficient feedback on errors, improvement in writing may not take place. Students need feedback from teachers on the form and structure of writing. If this feedback is not part of the instructional process, then students will be disadvantaged in improving both writing and language skills (Myles 2002).

2.6 Second language proficiency

Lack of English language proficiency is also portrayed when students are not able to understand and interpret literary texts. English language proficiency entails competence in the oral and written English used in academic discourse. Competence includes skill in the production of general oral and written English expressions. Proficiency is therefore viewed as contextually dependent upon variables such as the mode of language use including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Proficiency in academic English language use requires understanding of the dynamic relationship between text and context and internalization of discipline-specific rules of discourse. Students must be able to communicate clearly and fluently in written and spoken forms (Report of the task force, 1998).

This kind of proficiency is referred to as literacy and is provided by the schooling system (Cope and Kalantziz, 1993). Lack of literacy affects students' writing skills

adversely. Sticht (1975) defines literacy as the ability of the individual to perform some reading tasks imposed on them. On the other hand, Vanesky, Kaestle and Sum (1987) define literacy as a continuum of skills that are acquired both in and outside of formal schooling and that relates directly to the ability to function within society. Literacy emphasizes a close relationship of reading and writing. To learn to read and to write is to engage with using and interpreting the written code. Good educational programmes stress the relationship between reading and writing and encourage students to move between the two, using the experience gained in another activity to inform and enrich the other. The two cannot be separated. They are viewed as two aspects of the same phenomenon, using written language (Christie, 2005).

Recent research has looked at multiliteracies, which refers to a range of forms of literacy, like autonomous literacy, which sees literacy teaching and learning as a matter of mastering certain basic technical skills, in control of such aspects as spelling and writing systems. Literacy is used to serve whatever purposes people may have while the nature of the social contexts and meanings associated with literacy are not considered (Christie, 2005). Street (1984, 1997, 2001) argues that we can only understand the true nature of literacy if we accept that literacy is used in a range of different literacy events. The term “literacy events” refers to those practices that surround any event in which literacy is used (Heath, 1983). According to Street (2001) literacy events are concepts and social models regarding what the nature of the event is, that makes it work and gives it meaning. It is the values, beliefs and ideologies that effectively determine the meanings associated with literacy practices.

Hence Street (2001), proposes an ideological model of literacy, which will recognise that there are many literacies.

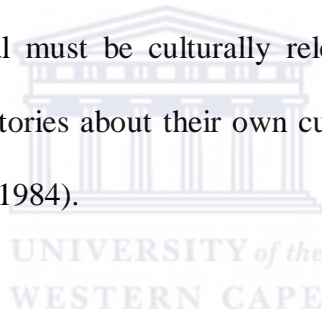
According to Christie (2005), some practices of the past that have to do with the teaching of reading and writing, have tended to dissociate the learning of literacy from social values and from the meaning expressed in written language, and yet the late twentieth century research has demonstrated that language is used to shape social values of meaning, values and beliefs. Research has confirmed that children learn literacy best when their interests in meaning and purpose in language are actively engaged. In learning literacy, children learn to handle aspects of the language in many different ways.

Yet literacy fails to acknowledge the nature of the linguistic structure and how it is organized, so that it has nothing to say of the nature of written as opposed to spoken language and this is serious for teaching purposes because it gives teachers few principles with which to teach literacy (Christie, 2005).

There is no doubt, however, that the ideological model of literacy helps us understand why black parents prefer English as a medium of instruction, which might be interpreted to mean English-based literacy practices. That is, they value English because they associate it with socio-economic mobility. At the same time, the model also tells us that black students are not able to use literacy practices associated with their mother tongue as an academic writing strategy (cf. Banda, 2004; Gough, 2000).

2.7 Reading and ESL teaching

Reading is an important aspect which can improve literacy. To function within society, one has to master the four language skills, which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. In order to be able to write correct language, one has to be proficient in reading. Students learn how to read by mastering discrete elements of language (Dudgeon, 1989). But this has been challenged by Hughes (1986) who says that it is not an effective way of teaching reading to limited English proficiency students. According to Hughes (1986) and Goodman (1986) the best model is the whole language approach, which assumes that the introduction to reading must be meaningful, and should be developed from communicative situations in real life situations. Reading material must be culturally relevant because second language students recall more from stories about their own cultural background than those of foreign cultures (Hudelson, 1984).



The problem is that black students do not have a reading culture. Unless there is a change, they are unlikely to benefit from the so many African folklore and stories, most of which remain in oral form. As a result, they are unlikely to gain experience of different genres and registers as used in different written texts.

Therefore, teachers need to understand theories of second language acquisition and methodologies of language teaching. The unfortunate situation is that some teachers do not know these theories, as some of them are not even qualified to teach English. Teachers need to develop English language teaching strategies that can be used to

address lack of proficiency of students and also design appropriate classroom activities that include group work, so that students can be communicatively competent and proficient, and their language can be free of errors. It is the duty of the education authorities to ensure that there are systems in place to improve the academic writing proficiency of second language speakers through appropriate language programmes designed to cater for the diverse South African population (Barry, 1999).

In the next chapter systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis are discussed.



Chapter 3

Analytical and Theoretical Framework

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will centre on SFL and CDA as conceptual and analytical frameworks. SFL is used to analyse students' written texts, while CDA will be used to show the importance of socio-cultural context, values, attitude and power in the writing process. CDA also comes in handy in the analysis of interviews to understand the different values people attach to writing, particularly the competent versus the not-so-competent, and this has a rural-urban dimension as well.

The theoretical and analytical frameworks are informed by recent work in SFL in relationship with classroom discourse (Martin & Rose 2003; Eggins 2004; Christie 2002, 2005; Halliday & Hassan 1985, 1996) and CDA by works such as Fairclough (1995, 1998, 2001, 2004), Wodak (1996, 2001) and Wodak & Meyer (2001).

3.1 Systemic functional linguistics

The study uses SFL as an analytical tool to examine the written texts. Focus will be on the following:

1. Coherence
2. Cohesion

3. Endophoric and exophoric referencing
4. Thematic development

3.1.1 Introduction to systemic functional linguistics

SFL theory grew out of a category of grammar. This theory emerged out of the proposal that the grammatical organization of all natural languages reflect the function for which language has evolved in the human species. Any language use serves to construct some aspects of experience, to negotiate relationships and to organize the language successfully, so that it realizes a satisfactory message (Halliday, 1994; Martin, 1992; Christie, 2002).

According to Eggins (2004), systemic functional approach to language helps us to analyse and explain how meanings are made in everyday linguistic interactions. In all our activities, language is involved. In life, we are constantly required to react and produce bits of language that make sense, which are referred to as texts.

3.1.2 Ideational interpersonal and textual metafunctions

Systemic functional linguistics is a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic meaning making resource. Halliday's (1994) major contribution to linguistics analysis in the development of functional grammar by showing how meaning, that is, ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, are expressed in clause structures and also how language is used in social interactions, that is, texts.

According to Halliday (1994), ideational metafunction are those aspects of grammar which are involved in representation of the world and its experiences. This ideational metafunction consists of two metafunctions, the experiential and the logical. The resources of transitivity and of lexis are involved in representing experience. The logical metafunction is involved in the matter of building connectedness between the meaning of clauses (Christie, 2002). Such connectedness is realized in those resources in the grammar which are involved in two different sets of relationships, those to do with the interdependency between clauses and those to do with the logico-semantic relationship between clauses brought about by expansion (Halliday, 1994).

Interpersonal metafunction refers to those grammatical resources in which the relationship of interlocutors is realized (Christie, 2002). On the other hand, the textual metafunction refers to those aspects of grammar that assist in organizing language as a message and, in this, the resources of theme, information and cohesion are involved (Halliday, 1994).

Linguists, such as Halliday (1985), view language as performing three (3) functions namely ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. Speakers are able to produce texts through the textual functions of language that are understood by listeners (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1995). Language connects discourse to the co-text and context in which it occurs. Speakers make choices regarding vocabulary and grammar and these choices are consciously principled and systematic (Fowler, 1979).

When undertaking a grammatical analysis the aim is to find the ways in which meanings of ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions are realized and tracked through the text. Text analysis would help to show this aspect of realization. The goal is to interpret the meaning in the overall organization of the text that the clauses constitute. This implies that the model of grammar is text or discourse driven (Christie, 2002).

Egins (2004) argues that all that systemic linguists are interested in is how people use language with each other to accomplish everyday social life. These linguists claim that the function of languages is to make meanings, which are influenced by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged, and that the process of using language is all about making meaning and to achieve purpose. Getting something done using language will involve more than two moves, text and context. Thus text carries context with it. These linguists are interested in the relationship between language and context.

Language and context are interrelated. That is why we are able to deduce context from text and to predict language from context. It is not possible to tell how people are using language if you do not take into account the context of use. Once a text is taken out of context, its purpose becomes obscured with part of its meaning lost (Egins.2004). Systemists divide context into genre, register and ideology.

3.1.3 Context: register, genre and ideology

One of the distinctive features of SFL theory is the relationship of language or text and context. Any text is a condition of the context situation. Context refers to that which surrounds text. Text and context are interrelated. A context is known because of text that gives it life. A text is known only because of the context that makes it relevant (Christie, 2005). The language choices to any context situations are said to be choices of register. This explains why we will not use language in the same way to write as to speak. On the other hand, the concept of genre describes stages that we follow when we use language to do things. We turn to the genre theory to explain the organization of texts.

Furthermore, the higher level of context is ideology. Our use of language is influenced by our ideology, the values we hold and the perspective acquired through our particular path through culture (Eggins 2004), hence the use of CDA (see section 3.2) in the analysis. For instance, in part, it is the underlying ideology and positive values attached to English by black parents that makes them choose the language as a preferred medium of instruction. In essence, following Eggins (2004), Fairclough (1998), Martin and Rose (2003) and Christie (2002, 2005), SFL will be supplemented by CDA as analytical tools for the study.

3.1.3.1 Register analysis

Information obtained from the detailed analysis of text can be interpreted as realization of contextual dimensions enabling a summarized register description. The contrastive register description of the text is based on the combined lexicogrammatical and cohesion evidence. Evidence allows us to specify similarities and differences between the texts at the contextual level.

Field analysis suggests similarities. Texts can share a common field while linguistic analysis differentiates the way the text approaches and constructs that field. Field refers to what is happening, the nature of social interaction and the correct language used in that interaction. Field focuses on the activity. Some text can be written for experts and others for beginners. The situation can either be technical or everyday in the construction of an activity focus. The technical situation could be characterized by a degree of assumed knowledge among the interactants in everyday situations. Knowledge that constitutes a field can be presented in taxonomies. When we classify taxonomies we find differences between depth and complexity of a text. Language in an everyday field is more familiar, grammatical structures are standard and syntax is standard. On the other hand technical language is words only insiders understand (Eggins, 2004).

In mode a text can be formal, have authoritarian tenor, construct itself as a reflexive text and written by an impersonal writer to be read by an unknown distant reader. Sometimes the language of a text can indicate a relationship of friendship between

interactants in face to face contacts. While writers must present the text as context independent, sometimes they minimize formality by incorporating features of a spoken interactive mode.

Mode is the role that language plays in interaction. In written language, there is no visual contact with the intended audience, thus language is used to reflect on some topic. Written situations in our culture call for rehearsal which includes drafts, edits, rewrites and writing of the final draft. On the other hand, in the spoken discourse, what is going to be said is not rehearsed, it is informal and it depends on the context since both parties are in the same place at the same time. Sentences do not follow standard grammatical conventions. A written text on the other hand needs to be context independent. A written text has the beginning, middle and end. Students who are competent in academic writing follow the pattern of thesis, evidence and summary (Eggins, 2004).

On the other hand, tenor refers to who is taking part, that is, the nature of the participants including their roles and relationships and the types of speech roles they are making. The variables of tenor are power, solidarity and interpersonal relations. Tenor refers to the social role that one plays and has an effect on the language in terms of formality, politeness, and reciprocity. This involves vocabulary choice. In informal situations we tend to use slang and abbreviated form of words. In formal language we use the complete lexical items and are polite. In informal language the

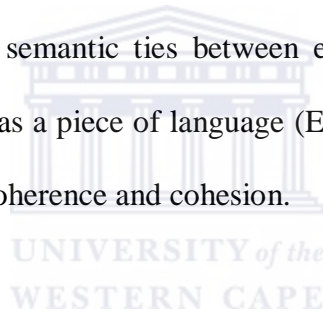
clause structure is imperative whereas in formal language it is interrogative (Eggins, 2004).

3.1.4 Text analysis

Eggins (2004) argues that SFL linguists concern themselves with the analysis of text. Halliday and Hassan (1976, 1985) define text as any passage spoken or written that forms a unified whole. They say that text refers to any passage of coherent language. It is also a meaningful passage of language that hangs together. Text can be distinguished from non-text by texture. Texture is what holds the clauses of a text together to give them unity. Texture involves the interaction of coherence and cohesion. Coherence is the text's relationship to its extra-textual context and cohesion is the way the elements within that text bind it together as a unified whole. The result of the interaction of coherence and cohesion is a piece of language which is using linguistic resources in a meaningful way.

On the other hand, not all uses of language constitute a text. The occurrence of letters arranged in words is not sufficient to constitute a text when the words do not hang together. Words in a text are made meaningful because the text uses them within lexico-grammatical structures. Lexico-grammatical structures refer to the sequenced arrangement of the words and structures. The pivotal unit of lexico-grammatical structures is the clause. A number of clauses form a sentence and a number of sentences that are related form a text (Eggins, 2004).

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), a text is regarded as a semantic unit of meaning which has clauses that are contextual properties that hang together. A text must also have cohesion, which refers to the way we relate or tie together bits of discourse. Further, Halliday and Hassan (1976) state that cohesion is like glue, since it sticks the elements and meaning together. It also expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another. Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse are dependent on that of another. In cohesion, there is a semantic tie between an item at one point in a text and an item at another point within the same text. This makes one item depend upon the other for its interpretation. For example, the noun is dependent on the preceding noun for its meaning. The absence of semantic ties between elements prevents the text from hanging together internally as a piece of language (Eggins, 2004). For a text to have intelligibility it must have coherence and cohesion.



3.1.4.1 Theme and rheme

Theme, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) is the starting point of the message, that is, what the message is going to be about. Theme contains well-known information which has already been mentioned before in the text. It also comes first in the clause. Theme also functions as the subject of the clause (Eggins, 2004; Martin and Rose, 2003).

On the other hand, rheme is part of the clause in which the theme is developed. Theme contains the familiar and rheme contains the unfamiliar. New information is

contained in the rheme. In a sentence, once the theme is identified, it becomes easy to identify the rheme since it is everything else in a sentence which does not form part of the theme (Martin and Rose, 2003).

3.1.4.2. Theme and textual meaning

Thematic choices realize meanings about the communication event, that is, how the text hangs together and how it relates to its context. Theme offers us choices of what meaning to prioritise in a text, what to package as familiar and as new. Textual choices alone cannot create text without content and it would also be impossible to interact with it. Text needs to be structured first so as to initiate interaction. This means that we need to construct mood structures by making interpersonal and experiential choices, which refers to how the text relates to the context. Once the thematic structure of the text is scrambled it becomes difficult to follow. Textual choices are essential to the text's making sense. Thematic selection results in a text which hangs together (Eggs, 2004). There is no doubt that what distinguishes competent and incompetent writers is in mainly determined by how they deal and develop theme. As will be apparent in this study, the majority of the incoherent texts were scrambled in structure ending up with texts that made no sense.

3.1.4.3 Different types of themes

Competent writers consciously or unconsciously are aware of the different kinds of themes and how they relate to textual meaning. This enables them to manipulate

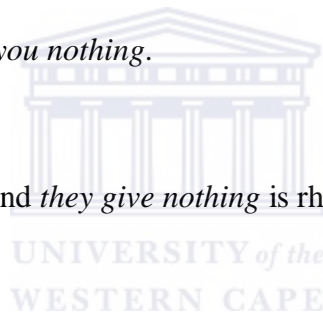
textual structures to achieve particular thematic effects and developments. Different kinds of themes and their functions are discussed below.

1. Topical theme

According to Eggins (2004) and Martin and Rose (2003), topical theme functions as the subject of the clause. In the topical theme, we can attach transitivity role such as actor, behaviour, sensor or circumstances. Every clause can contain one topical theme and the remaining clause constituents can be assigned to rheme. For example, in the following sentence:

In Greece they give you nothing.

In Greece is theme and *they give nothing* is rheme.



2. Hypertheme

Hypertheme functions as the topic sentence. Hypertheme gives us orientation to what is to come, that is, the frame of reference, and predicts how the text will unfold (Martin and Rose, 2003). Competent students are better than the not-so-competent students in the use of hyperthemes, as is demonstrated later.

3. Hypernew

After the hypertheme any new information accumulated from the hypertheme is referred to as a hypernew. Hypertheme tells us where we are going and hypernew tells us where we have been. It takes the text to a new point (Martin and Rose, 2003). This, as presented later in this study, is one of the major difficulties that the not-so-competent students face. They are unable to contextualize the topic in their texts, thus making it difficult for the reader to distinguish where the argument is going.

4. Macrotheme

Martin and Rose, (2003) state that macrothemes are higher level themes predicting hyperthemes whereas macronews are higher level news distilling hypernew. Layers of news develop the text focusing on expanding the ideational meaning. Sometimes macrothemes and macronews are given their own paragraphs. Macrotheme comes before the topic sentence, explaining and orientating the reader on what to expect.

On the other hand, periodicity involves the flow of information from one setting in time to the next. It is also sequential development of events. This covers hypertheme and hypernew in orientation, record of events and reorientation (Martin and Rose 2003). No doubt again, better writers are able to handle macrothemes because they are better able to develop their topic sentence.

5. Marked themes

Marked themes are rare in casual conversation. Marked themes can include circumstantial elements, such as place or time, or they may be participants that are not the subject of the clause. Marked themes are often used to signal new phase in a discourse, a new setting in time, or a shift in major participants. They serve to move the reader from incident to incident and from incident to interpretation (Martin and Rose, 2003).

6. Multiple themes

Texts can vary in the extent to which they contain multiple themes, be they textual and topical or single themes. This variation refers to the mode values of the text. Texts meant to be read contain high degrees of nominalization. On the other hand, conversational texts have low nominalization. Nominalization, according to Eggins (2004), is turning things that are not normally nouns into nouns.

The majority of topical themes are personal pronouns such as 'I', 'you', 'he', 'she', 'your'), classes of people (parents, infants) and circumstantial expressions (the last time, in Cape Town). Each and every clause has a topical theme. In spoken language, the point of departure for most of our messages is ourselves and in academic writing, we depart from the generalization about people, situations and causes (Eggins, 2004).

7. Method of development

The concept “Method of development” refers to how thematic elements succeed each other. The basic way to keep a text focused (cohesion) is to reiterate a thematic element. Repetition is an effective way of creating cohesion. Having the same participant on a regular basis provides the text with a clear focus, for example, the repeated use of a term in a text.

Eggs (2004) argues that there is also thematic shifting. This is called thematic progression. There are two thematic progressions, the zig-zag and multiple themes. In the zig-zag theme, an element which is introduced in the theme in clause one gets promoted in clause two to become a theme. Zig-zag pattern achieves cohesion in the text by building on newly introduced information. This gives the text a sense of cumulative development. On the other hand, in multiple themes, the theme of one clause introduces different pieces of information. Each piece is picked up and made a theme in the subsequent clauses.

3.1.4.4 Texture and scaffolding

Texture of the text, on the other hand, involves explicit scaffolding. Scaffolding involves the erection of a hierarchy of periodicity beyond the clause, with layers of themes and news, telling us where we are coming from and where we are going. Paragraphing is a tool used in this hierarchy for phasing information, marking shifts of gears as far as phases of meaning are concerned. Texture also holds the clauses of

a text together to give them unity. Texture involves coherence and cohesion or its (what?) relationship to its extra textual context and the way the elements bind it together as a unified whole (Halliday and Hassan, 1976; Martin and Rose, 2003).

3.1.4.5 Foregrounding and co-articulation

Foregrounding is also important for coherence and cohesion in a text. Foregrounding is the tendency for texts to make some meaning stand out against others (Martin and Rose, 2003). As a text shifts gears from one phase to the next, certain options get taken up more often than they were before, such as the repetition of a certain word in a text. On the other hand co-articulation refers to systems working together to produce a particular effect such as using conjunctions to co-articulate the sequence of events by using first, then, when, later, as, before and finally.

3.1.5 Coherence

According to Cook (1989: 40), coherence is the “quality of being meaningful and unified”. Halliday and Hassan (1989) give a more comprehensive explanation of coherence when they say that a text is characterized by coherence when it hangs together. At any point after the beginning, what has gone before provides the environment for what is coming next. This sets up internal expectations, which are matched up with the reader’s own expectations. The latter’s expectations are sourced from the external context of situation and culture.

On the other hand Ross and Murray (1975), define coherence as the link between sentences, between paragraphs and a logical connection. Therefore, coherence is the

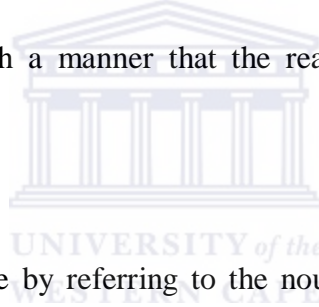
product of two factors, which are paragraph unity and sentence cohesion. Coherence is also the use of transitional devices such as ‘yet’, introducing a contrasting statement and ‘therefore’, setting up a conclusion of the train of thought. These devices and many more help to link ideas within a paragraph (Kies, 2004).

Another way of tying sentences and paragraphs together involves using reference words that point to an idea mentioned previously. Words like; ‘this’, ‘these’, ‘such’ and ‘that’ can be used to tie one sentence to the other. These reference words should not be used by themselves but should be combined with the important words and phrases from previous sentences or paragraphs (Kies, 2004). In order to achieve paragraph unity, the writer (in this case the student) must ensure that the paragraph has a single generalization that serves as the focus of attention, which is the topic sentence. The student must also ensure that other sentences in a paragraph maintain the same focus of attention as the topic sentence (Winterwood and Murnay, 1975).

To use language effectively, the student must ensure that the language holds together into a coherent, intelligible whole. In a paragraph, every sentence and every phrase contribute to the meaning of the whole piece. A coherent paragraph does more than simply lay down facts, it organizes them, thus creating a logical argument that makes sense from one idea to another (Winterwood and Murnay, 1975). The unity and relatedness of a text is in part a result of a recognizable pattern for the propositions and ideas in the passage, but it is also a function of the grammatical devices that strengthen the global unity and create local connectedness (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain

2000). This is where cohesion, in particular, the grammatical devices of reference come in.

Cohesive devices are linguistic resources that language has for linking one part of a text to another (Halliday & Hassan 1989). Although the overall coherence of a longer text depends on the presence of a conventional scheme or organization that is recognized as generic or specific to a particular communicative purpose and discourse community, the overall coherence of such a text also depends on the degree of coherence within each paragraph or section of a passage (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain 2000). Each sentence or utterance should be related both to the previous and following sentences in such a manner that the reader finds it easy to effectively interpret the text.



One can improve coherence by referring to the nouns in a previous sentence, thus emphasizing the connection in thought from one sentence to the next, avoiding unnecessary repetition. In addition, repetition can be used to link ideas within a paragraph. This can be used to emphasize an important point (Ross and Murray, 1975). Using synonyms can create sentence cohesion since synonyms actually share several elements of meaning. Using a pronoun to make explicit reference back to a form mentioned earlier is another way of creating cohesion. As mentioned earlier, pronouns are used to avoid repetition of the word. Use of overt markers (for example ‘first; ‘finally’) of sequence to highlight the connection between ideas

creates cohesion in a sentence. This system can link ideas that are otherwise completely unconnected.

With regard to this study, it is worth noting that coherence may depend on knowledge of patterns and strategies of text development that are very culture specific. Purves & Purves (1986) identify three major sets of constraints imposed by a culture upon a writer. First, there is the semantic knowledge involving knowledge of words and larger units of discourse and what they mean. Second, there is knowledge of text models and third, the knowledge of socio-cultural rules governing the appropriate procedures to use in the activity of writing. These three aspects of knowledge relate to what is referred to as knowledge of genre.

3.1.6 Genre

Martin (1984) defines genre as a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage members of a particular culture. Eggins & Slade (1997), elaborate on Martin's concepts as follows.

Staged: a genre is staged as the meanings are made in steps; it usually takes more than one step for participants to achieve their goals.

Goal oriented: a genre is goal oriented in that texts typically move through stages to a point of closure, and are considered incomplete if the culmination is not reached.

Social process: genres are negotiated interactively and are a realization of a social purpose.

On the other hand, Martin (1984) says a genre refers to different types of texts that enact various types of social contexts. It is how things get done when language is

used to accomplish them (Martin, 1985). For a text to be attributed to a genre, it must have generic identity. Systemic linguists suggest that the generic identity of a text, the way it is similar to other texts of its genre, lies in three dimensions, which are as follows.

- i) The co-occurrence of a particular contextual cluster or its register configuration.
- ii) The texts staged or schematic structure.
- iii) The realization patterns in the text (Eggins, 2004:56).

There is also an argument genre known as exposition. This type of genre consists of a thesis and supporting arguments. Its purpose is to persuade an audience to the writer's point of view. Another argument genre is known as discussion where two or more points of view are presented as one and argued over the others. In developing the argument, linkers such as 'also' and 'further' are used to guide the reader from one argument to the next (Martin and Rose, 2003).

Genre can help us to make explicit why some texts are successful and appropriate while others are not. Genres are rated as unsuccessful when referential ties within the text are ambiguous. Genres also help us to contrast types of genres and their realization in pragmatic and interpersonal contexts. Furthermore, it helps us to understand similarities and differences between non-fiction and fiction genres. Lastly genre helps us to carry out critical text analysis (Eggins, 2004). As mentioned before, for a text to have intelligibility, it must have cohesion.

3.1.7 Analysing cohesive resources

There are three main types of cohesion in written language, which are; cohesive reference, lexical cohesion, and conjunction cohesion.

3.1.7.1 Cohesive reference

Cohesive reference refers to the manner in which the writer introduces participants and then keeps track of them once they are in the text (Eggins, 2004). Participants can either be presented to the reader or be presumed, which means retrieving their identity from somewhere. In writing, the obvious place to look for a presumed identity is in the surrounding text. Usually we look backwards but sometimes forwards too. Sometimes the information is not in the text but outside the text (Martin and Rose, 2003). Presumed identities are found outside the text in the culture or in the situation of speaking. Culture involves information, which is found in the cultural knowledge that the writer and the reader share. This is called exophoric reference (Martin and Rose (2003). Only presuming participants create cohesion in a text since ties of dependency are constructed between the presuming item and its referent.

The most common presuming reference items are:

- i) Definite article 'the';
- ii) Demonstrative pronouns 'that', 'these', 'those';
- iii) Pronouns 'he', 'she', 'it' (Martin and Rose, 2003: 34).

When the writer uses a presuming reference item, the reader needs to retrieve the identity of that item in order to follow the text. If the reader is not able to retrieve the referent, the interaction will run into problems (Martin and Rose, 2003). The identity of a presuming reference item may be retrievable from a number of different contexts, which are:

- i) General context of shared culture, that is, homophoric reference.
- ii) From the shared immediate context of situation, that is, exophoric reference.
- iii) From elsewhere within the text itself where the identity of the participant has been given at an earlier point in the text, that is, endophoric reference.

Endophoric referencing refers to students' ability to correctly refer or point backwards or anaphorically, and ability to point forwards or cataphorically, within the text. Exophoric reference refers to the ability to point outside the text (cf. Halliday & Hassan 1989).

Consider the following examples;

- A. Look at *that!* (Pointing at a bird)
- B. I can't see *it*.

Load the programme onto your PC. *Then*, to see how *it* works, press ENTER.

You'll see *this* on your screen: MS XP Home Edition

It is the endophoric reference which creates cohesion since it ties and creates the internal texture of the text, while the homophoric and exophoric references contribute to the text's coherence (Martin and Rose, 2003).

Furthermore, endophoric reference is composed of the following types.

- i) Anaphoric reference, which occurs when the referent has appeared at an earlier point in the text. It may refer to a participant mentioned earlier on.
- ii) Catophoric reference, which occurs when the referent has not yet appeared but will be provided subsequently.
- iii) Esophoric reference, which occurs when the referent occurs in the phrase immediately following the presuming referent item, that is, within the same noun phrase.
- iv) Comparative reference, when the identity of the presumed item is retrieved because an item with which it is being compared has been mentioned.
- v) Whole text referencing, when the referent is a sequence of actions or events mentioned previously.
- vi) Bridging reference, when a presuming reference item refers back to an earlier item from which it can be inferentially derived.
- vii) Possessive reference, which like anaphoric reference, is where a referent has appeared at an earlier point in the text.
- viii) Location reference involves the identification of a location in time or space, for example, here, there, then. These referents are usually retrieved endophorically from surrounding texts (Martin and Rose, 2003: 34-36).

3.1.7.2 Comparative reference

Another type of cohesive reference is comparative reference. Comparative reference looks at how things are compared, for example, 'the same', 'the best'. Things can be identified by comparing the intensity of their qualities. Furthermore, they can be identified by comparing their quantity by using words like, 'most', 'more', 'fewer'. They can also be identified by comparing their order, for example, 'first', 'second', 'third', and so on (Martin and Rose, 2003).

3.1.7.3 Lexical cohesion

According to Eggins (2004) lexical Cohesion refers to how the writer uses lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs to relate to the text consistently to its area of focus. Lexical cohesion derives from observing that there are certain expectancy relations between words, for example, 'mouse' and 'computer.' Lexical relations analysis is a way of describing how words in a text relate to each other.

Lexical cohesion in a text can be captured by listing all related lexical items, thus showing how they form lexical strings that add to texture of a text. A lexical string is a list of all the lexical items that occur sequentially in a text that can be related to an immediately prior word. Sometimes one finds that a lexical item can be linked to more than one string (Eggins. 2004), and this is referred to as tracking.

3.1.7.4 Conjunctive cohesion

Conjunctive cohesion, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), refers to how the writer creates and expresses logical relations between the parts of a text using conjunctions. Martin and Rose (2003) say conjunctions look at inter-connections between processes of adding, comparing, sequencing or explaining. They help to create the semantic unity. Different conjunctions serve different purposes within a text.

(i) The logic of discourse

Conjunctions serve as logical connections between figures, adding them together, comparing them, sequencing them in time, or explaining their causes, purpose or conditions. In stories, conjunctions can be used to link events together in sequence of time, while in persuasive texts, they can be used to construct the logic on an argument from hypothesis to evidence to conclusion (Martin, 2004).

Martin (2004) argues that the conjunction 'if' serves to link contemplated actions, and the same conditional connection can also be realized by subject-verb inversion, for example, 'had I been'. This same kind of inversion functions to ask a question but its meaning is not a question but condition. On the other hand, 'then' connects to the immediately preceding events. The conjunction 'and' can function to add figures together in a sequence, one after another. 'Besides' or 'as well as' add a dependent clause to a free clause. Furthermore, 'in addition' and 'additionally' are used to link

sentences and these are referred to as cohesive conjunctions (Halliday & Hassan, 1976). The conjunction ‘but’ is used to contrast two abstract things and ‘then’ tells us that events follow each other.

(ii) Connecting arguments

Conjunctions are also used to connect arguments, that is, organizing discourse. Conjunctions such as ‘also’ and ‘further’ show that these are additional steps to the argument. The role of these is to relate text stages to each other. On the other hand, the conjunction ‘thus’ tells the reader that what follows is a conclusion. Additive conjunctions ‘also’ and ‘further,’ add arguments to support a thesis and the consequential conjunction ‘thus’ is used to draw a conclusion. These conjunctions link logical steps that are internal to the text. These are also used to organize the stages of a text such as the sequence of arguments, to link steps in an argument and to draw conclusion (Martin and Rose, 2003).

(iii) Comparing arguments

Conjunctions for giving examples compare general statements with specific instances. These conjunctions are ‘for example’ and ‘for instance’ (Martin and Rose, 2003).

(iv) Ordering arguments

There are also conjunctions that tell the reader that a new stage is beginning. These conjunctions are ‘firstly’ and ‘next’. These conjunctions order the steps in the

text's internal logic and the sequence of events, both internally and externally (Martin and Rose, 2003).

(v) Conjunctive relations

There are three types of conjunctive relations which allow us to create semantically meaningful structural links between clauses. These are as follows.

- i) Elaboration, which is a relationship of restatement by which one sentence is a representation of a previous sentence. Common conjunctions used to express these are; 'in other words', 'for example', 'that is to say', 'I mean', 'for instance' and 'in fact'.
- ii) Extension, which is the relationship of either addition or variation. One sentence changes the meaning of another by contrast or qualification. Conjunctions used to express this are; 'and', 'also', 'moreover', 'in addition', 'but', 'yet', 'on the other hand', 'on the contrary'.
- iii) Enhancement refers to ways by which one sentence can develop on the meaning of another in terms of dimensions such as time, comparison, cause, condition, or concession. Comparative conjunctions include, 'likewise', 'similarly'. Causal conjunctions include, 'then', 'so', 'therefore', 'because', 'as a result'. Concessive relations are expressed by, 'but', 'yet', 'still', 'though' (Eggins, 2004).

(vi) Adversative conjunctions

An adversative conjunction 'but' can express the following functions:

- i) Contrasting function.
- ii) Replacive function.
- iii) Subtractive function.

- iv) Enhancing function; but indicates that the situation does not cause the effect it could be expected to have (Martin *et al.* 1997:186; Eggins, 2004:287-288).

3.1.8 Tracking participants in a text

Discourse makes sense to the reader by keeping track of participants. In order to make sense of discourse, the reader needs to be able to keep track of who or what is being talked about at any point. To do this, one has to identify presuming referents in a text and then seek to link all mentions of that participant. Reference chains show us who the major participants are in a text and their importance. In fiction, most referents are retrieved endophorically, that is, from within the text itself. Non-fictional texts depend more on extra-textual context for exophoric and homophoric retrieval, since homophoric reference involves information found in the cultural knowledge that the writer and the reader share. The combination of reference ties adds up to create a highly cohesive text (Eggins, 2004; Martin and Rose, 2003).

When we first start talking about somebody or something, we name them and thereafter identify them as 'she', 'he' and 'it'. This helps the reader to keep track of exactly which person or thing we are talking about. By using the pronoun 'it', it is assumed that the reader knows who is being referred to (Martin and Rose, 2003; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Determiners are also used in tracking participants. The determinants 'an' and 'a' are used to introduce someone whose identity cannot be assumed. On the other hand, 'the' tells us that we can assume an identity of a participant. The determinat 'the' is

traditionally known as a definite article. Once introduced, a participant can be tracked by using the pronouns ‘he’, ‘she’, and ‘it’.

Participants can also be referred to as different from others with ‘another’ or ‘someone else’. These compare one participant to the other and these are known as comparative reference.

Another resource for identifying participants is possessive pronouns such as ‘my’, ‘your’, ‘her’, ‘his’, ‘their’. The possessive pronoun always presumes an identity, but the thing that is possessed may not have been mentioned before. On the other hand, words like ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘those’ are demonstratives since they demonstrate where to find an identity which is near or far.

Concrete objects that we can touch, taste, hear, see and feel are also identified. An example of concrete objects is people. They are introduced indefinitely and then tracked with determiners like ‘the’ or ‘it’. English uses the indefinite plural ‘some’ with things that can be counted. Less concrete things, such as agencies, are identified the same way that objects are. What was said before can be tracked by using demonstratives ‘this’, and ‘that’ in a text (Martin and Rose, 2003).

3.1.9 Context and text

Following Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), in this study, context shall be perceived as the factors and elements that are non-linguistic and non-contextual, but which

affect spoken or written communicative interaction. All language use has a context whose 'textual' features enable the discourse to cohere not only with itself, but also with its context of situation. The context of situation can be said to be the immediate environment in which a text actually functions (Halliday & Hassan 1989). The term is used to explain why certain things have been said or written at a particular point, and what else might have been said or written that was not (Halliday & Hassan, 1989). Outside the context of situation is the context of culture, which is the broader background against which the text has to be interpreted (Halliday & Hassan, 1989).

Context is an important dimension of texture since context may function as the retrieval source to clear up indeterminacies of meaning. Text can only be interpreted by reference to context, so all texts carry their context with them. Systemic linguists are interested in exploring how context gets into text. Context gets into text through schematic structure. Language becomes intelligible when it is placed within its context situation (Malinowski, 1946). It only makes sense when interpreted within its context (Martin and Rose 2003).

3.2 Critical discourse analysis

As previously mentioned, the study uses CDA as a theoretical and analytical framework to supplement SFL, which is used to analyse text. CDA regards language as a social practice. It is concerned with analyzing structural relationships between dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language (Fairclough, 1995, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). It explains the social process and structures

which give rise to the production of a text and the social structures through which individuals create meaning in their interaction with texts.

In essence, to understand why black students make certain errors, and to find appropriate remedies for them, we need to understand the social contexts which engender L2 writing. Thus, following Fairclough, (1995, 2001) and Wodak and Meyer (2001), we shall assume that L2 writing and errors in academic writing are a social phenomena, and so are the coping strategies that some students have used to overcome this adversity in their L2 academic writing.

CDA can be used in social scientific research as a way to analyze language. It is based upon a view of semiosis, which includes all forms of meanings in language. Every language practice includes productive activity, means of production, social relations, social identity, cultural values, consciousness and semiosis. From a semiosis perspective, black students use language to perform a certain meaningful task. For certain reasons, some black students are more successful than others at producing coherently written academic texts.

According to van Dijk (1998), CDA a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts. On the other hand, Fairclough (1995) says CDA aims at making transparent the connection between discourse practice and social practices. Luke (1995) defines CDA as the study of language and discourse in social settings. It focuses on how social relations are constructed through written and

spoken texts. The term CDA describes linguistic analysis of semantic structures above the level of the sentence (Luke 1995).

CDA refers to the use of an ensemble of techniques for the study of textual practice and language use as social and cultural practices (Fairclough, 1992). It maintains that texts are forms of social actions that occur in social contexts. Texts are social actions, meaningful and coherent instances of spoken and written language use. Particular texts or genres attempt to do things in social institutions. These include written texts, spoken and face to face interactions, electronic, and gestural texts. Meaning comes about through interaction between readers and receivers, and linguistic features come about as result of social processes. Language can never appear by itself, it appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms. CDA provides a critical dimension and descriptive accounts of texts (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1990).

Huckin (2004) says that CDA acknowledges that texts are produced and read in real-world context. Therefore CDA is context sensitive. It is also an integrated form of analysis since it unites the text, the discursive practices that create and interpret the text, and the social context. It also shows how all these are interrelated. Texts that are chosen must have real life consequences. It also assumes that people's notions of reality are constructed through interaction with others and through using language. The primary activity of CDA is the close analysis of written or oral texts that are culturally influential to a society. The meaning of a text derives from how those words are used in a particular social context.

CDA also focuses on sentence and word level analysis. Halliday (1985) argues that lexical and grammatical features of texts have identifiable functions. They portray the social and natural world, construct social relations, and develop conventions as coherent. CDA can also describe particular lexical choices and the grammatical representation of agency and action (Luke 1995).

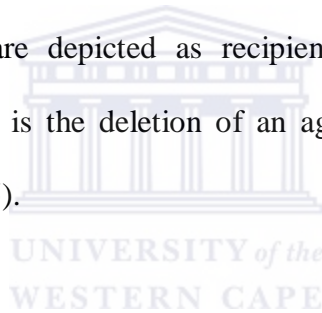
3.2.1 How to do CDA

The primary activity of CDA is to analyse a text. It points out those features of a text that appear to be interesting from a critical point of view; looking at the text from a different perspective, and focusing on those features that have the potential to mislead the reader. The reader first recognizes that the text belongs to a certain genre, for example, adverts use attention-getting language. This will allow the analyst to see why certain kinds of statements appear and what purpose they serve. It also helps the analyst to imagine what has been left out and what could have been said. Some writers, especially news reporters, are able to manipulate a genre by inserting a loaded word to mislead the readers. Genre knowledge enables the analyst to detect and interpret such deviations (Huckin, 2004).

Another important part of the text production and interpretation is framing. This refers to how the content of a text is presented. For a text to be coherent it must pull the details together in some sort of a unified whole. Closely linked to framing is foregrounding. This refers to the writer's emphasizing certain concepts and de-

emphasizing others. For example, the expected way of writing is for the topic sentence to be at the beginning of a paragraph (that is foregrounding) and those that follow will be bare-grounded. Sometimes bare-grounding leads to omission, that is, leaving certain things out of a text (Huckin 2004).

In a sentence, there are certain pieces of information which are topicalized, that is, foregrounded. A sentence topic is what the sentence is all about. The topic sentence is carried over to the next sentence reinforcing the importance of the text. In choosing what to put in the topic position the writer influences the reader's perception. In a sentence some participants are depicted as agents, that is, initiators of actions, while others are depicted as recipients of those actions. Another manipulation in a sentence is the deletion of an agent. This is often used in the passive voice (Huckin, 2005).



Writers can also manipulate the readers through presupposition. This is the use of language in a way that appears to take certain ideas for granted. For example, if a politician says 'we cannot continue imposing high taxes on people', the politician is presupposing that people pay high taxes. Presupposition is common in public discourse, advertising, and other forms of persuasive speech. Presupposition is manipulative because it is difficult to challenge. Words and phrases also contribute in manipulating the reader. When reading, one notices that certain words have connotations, that is, special meanings, which are derived from the frequent use of a word in a particular context (Huckin, 2005).

3.2.2 Text analysis in CDA

Text analysis involves organization of a text. This is the analysis of form and content. Textual analysis is composed of linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis. Linguistic analysis covers phonology, grammar, sentence, vocabulary, semantics and textual organization, which includes cohesion and aspects of the structure of the text. Linguistic analysis shows how texts draw upon linguistic systems, whereas intertextual analysis shows how texts draw upon orders of discourse such as genre discourses and narratives, which are available to text producers and interpreters (Fairclough). Fairclough goes on to say that any sentence in a text can be analysed in terms of representations, relations, and identities.

3.2.3 Intertextuality and intertextual analysis

According to Fairclough (1995), linguistic analysis at discourse practice level is also referred to as intertextual analysis. Intertextual analysis looks at texts from the perspective of discourse practice. Fairclough (1995) further says that linguistic analysis is descriptive in nature, whereas intertextual analysis is more interpretative (Fairclough, 1995). There are two types of intertextuality, the manifest intertextuality and the constitutive intertextuality. The former is marked by such signs as quotation marks, whereas the latter refers to the structure of the discourse conventions that go into the production of new texts. Fairclough (1995) claims that intertextual properties of a text are realized in its linguistic features. A student who does not have academic writing skills cannot interpret texts.

3.2.4 Social context and CDA

According to Fairclough (1995), language is an integral element of the social process. This view is based upon a view of semiosis as an irreducible part of material social processes. Semiosis includes visual images, body language, social relations, social identities, cultural values and consciousness. CDA is an analysis of the relations between language and other elements of social practices. Semiosis figures in three ways in social practice. Firstly, it figures as part of social activity within a practice, for example, doing a job and using language in a particular way. Secondly, it figures in representation or other practices by social actors. Thirdly, it figures in the performance of particular positions, for example, people who differ in social class, gender and nationality and produce different performances of a particular position.

The analytical framework for CDA focuses on a social problem which has a semiotic aspect. It identifies obstacles being tackled through analysis of network practices, structural analysis, interactional analysis, interdiscursive analysis, linguistic analysis, and semiotic analysis. It also identifies ways of dealing with obstacles and reflects critically on the analysis of network practices (Fairclough, 1995).

CDA diagnoses the language problem and then provides a positive way of tackling the problem. It highlights the problems people are faced with because of their social life such as language background, schools they attend, home language, lack of exposure to other languages, and provides resources which people can use to overcome those problems. It also provides the diagnosis of a problem by identifying

the obstacles L2 students are faced with in learning the L2. Tackling the problem involves the social structuring of semiotics. It is also a way of using the language in interaction. In interaction, there are certain language features which must be noted in CDA. This analysis makes it easy to see how categories of social analysis connect with categories of linguistic analysis. It also approaches the diagnosis of the problem by asking what obstacles are to be tackled, and what is it about social life that makes this language problem, easy to resolve.

CDA also involves structural issues, which involve not only grammatical, phonological, morphological and semantic levels but also coherence, themes, schematic and rhetorical dimensions of the text (van Dijk, 1988). Discourse, according to van Dijk, is a complex communicative event that embodies a social context, featuring participants, their production and reception processes.

Van Dijk (1988) attempts to demonstrate the relation between the three levels of news text production which is structure, production and comprehension and their relation with the wider social context. Such relations take place at two levels, microstructure and macrostructure. Microstructure analysis focuses on the semantics between proposition, syntactic, lexical and other rhetorical elements, such as, quotations, direct and indirect reporting. Macrostructure refers to the thematic structure. Thematic structure defines the overall coherence or semantic unity of discourse (van Dijk, 1988).

Van Dijk (1988) perceives CDA as ideology analysis. This approach for analyzing ideologies has three parts which include social analysis, cognitive analysis and discourse analysis. Social analysis examines the syntax, lexicon, local semantics, topics and schematic structures. Cognitive analysis is a system of mental representations which are interaction models. Models control how people speak or write or how they understand the social practices of others. On the other hand, discourse sociolinguistics, according to Wodak (1996), is the study of the text in context, the text which can be analysed using SFL. It is an approach capable of identifying and describing the underlying mechanisms that contribute to those disorders in discourse which are embedded in a particular context, for example, the structure and function of the school, and they inevitably affect communication. Wodak (1996) carried out research in various schools. The results were that the context of the discourse had a significant impact on the structure, function, and context.

3.2.5 Social context and errors

In essence, to understand why black students make certain errors, and to find appropriate remedies for them, we need to understand the social contexts which engenders L2 writing. Thus, following Fairclough (1995, 2001) and Wodak and Meyer (2001), we shall assume that L2 writing and errors in academic writing are a social phenomena, and so are the coping strategies that some students have used to overcome this adversity in their L2 academic writing.

CDA can be used in social scientific research as a way to analyze language. It is based upon a view of semiosis, which includes all forms of meanings in language. Every language practice includes these; productive activity, means of production, social relations, social identity, cultural values, consciousness and semiosis. From a semiosis perspective, black students use language to perform a certain meaningful task. For some reasons (some of which are the subject of this study), some black students are more successful than others at producing coherently written academic texts.

In essence, CDA assists in analysing black students' academic writing skills in the social context of schooling in South Africa's multilingual contexts.

3.3.6 Application to English teaching

CDA enables the researcher to seek out texts that matter (the kind that students are confronted with in their daily lives). Since it focuses on contexts, it enables the researcher to look at a broader picture and to analyze students' texts in a way that brings their hidden meaning to the surface. It also allows the researcher to focus on a variety of textual features as well as the strategies students adopt in the process of academic (text) writing (Huckin, 2004).

Wodak and Meyer, (2001) and Fairclough, (2001) state that in investigating the forms of grammatical devices of reference, SFL and CDA help us to identify which genres and discourses are dominant in academic writing and also consider diversity in genre

discourses and styles, and how other genres are affected by the imposition of the dominant ones.

3.3 Chapter conclusion

This diagram below (see *Figure 3.3.1*) summarizes the writing process where there is a connection between context and textual meaning. This study shows that with students who are not competent in academic writing there is a mismatch between context and text. Following Malinowski (1946) a text must be understood as a feature of context situation. This means that values related to context are shaped in a text. One has to understand text and context in order to comprehend what is discussed in a text. Text also accounts for the type of genre selected (Malinowski, 1946). In this connection, this study shows that the context of literacy deprivation of the not-so-competent students has negative implications for how they prepare and write academic texts.

Relationship of elements of register in a situation of use and the meanings realised in a text. (Adapted from Halliday in Halliday & Hasan 1985, p. 26)		
Situation: features of the context	Realised by	Text: Components of meaning
Field of discourse (what is going on or 'content')		Experiential meanings
Tenor of discourse (the relations of people taking part)		Interpersonal meanings
Mode of discourse (the role of language in organising meanings)		Textual meanings

Figure 3.3. 1: Relationship of elements of register in a situation of use and the meanings realized in a text (Christie 2005:10)

The diagram below (*Figure 3.3.2*) serves to summarize the writing process. The bigger picture of the diagram is the genre/context. Each genre has its own kind of register/language. Register has three aspects, namely, field, tenor and mode. Field is the underlying social activity, tenor is the relationship between the interactants and mode is the role language plays in interaction. Register informs the textual meaning which is composed of logical, ideational, experiential and interpersonal meaning. All genres must use correct grammar so as to be intelligible (Eggins, 2004). *Figure 3.3.2* also summarizes the relationship between context, text and grammar in the writing process (Eggins, 2004).

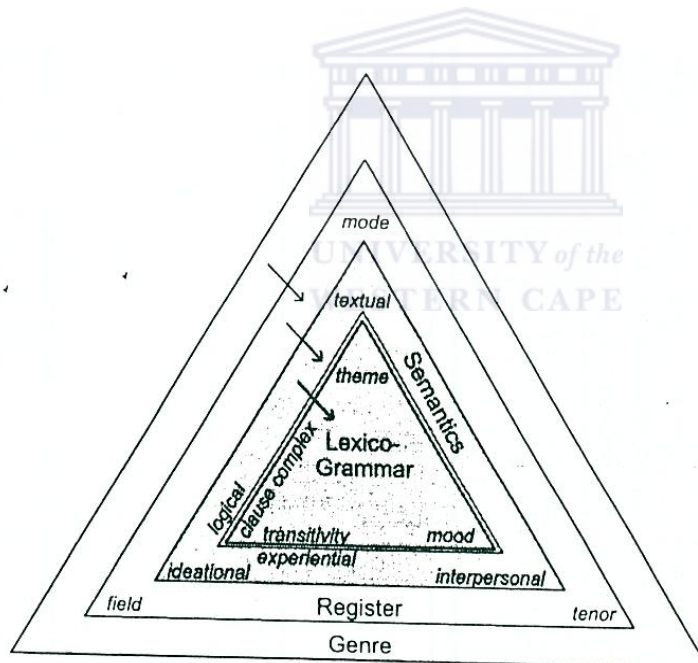


Figure 3.3. 2: The Writing Process according to Eggins (2004: 112)

In the following chapter the research methodology is discussed.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter an outline is given of the research methodology used in this study.

The following aspects of the research methodology are discussed:

- i) Scope of the research.
- ii) Research design.
- iii) Collection of data.
- iv) Analysis of assignment data.
- v) Item development.
- vi) Selection of sample.
- vii) Quantitative analysis.
- viii) Interviews.
- ix) Recording of data.

The methodology will follow a qualitative design. It should be noted from the outset that this is not an empirical design, and it is not the intention of the researcher to compare and contrast statistically the competent and not-so-competent student writers. Rather the idea is to thematically and qualitatively account for the strategies of the latter group, with an occasional ‘glance’ at the competent group. The study

does not venture to show the cause-effect relationship of academic writing and specific phenomena. It is designed to describe qualitatively the kinds of writing processes and strategies, and the outcomes arising out of them in multilingual contexts.

4.1 Scope of the research

As has been mentioned before this study aims to examine:

- i) Strategies used by black ESL students at the Eastern Cape Technikon to cope with academic writing in the target language, through a linguistic and semiotic analysis.
- ii) To reflect critically on the analysis of these strategies in South African cultural contexts.
- iii) To identify possible strategies past the obstacles, and thus propose a model of L2 writing (coping) strategies considering South Africa's multilingual context.

The study is informed by the falling standards of academic writing skills of black students at Eastern Cape Technikon which affect their academic performance (Mc Laughlin, 1987). It was not possible to rate their academic writing before the actual investigation began. The outcome of the essay given to students and the interviews conducted provided a basis for making decisions on how to improve academic writing of students. The study proceeded on the assumption that most students that join Eastern Cape Technikon for the first time lack academic writing skills. Increasing the

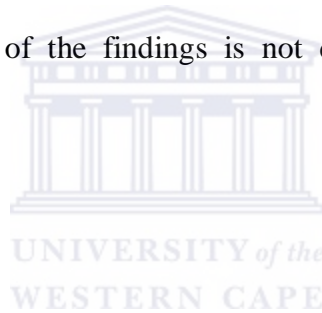
sample may not have altered the outcome since almost all the students are from similar backgrounds.

This study has relied on the written essays of two groups of students at ECT, and interviews with ECT students, teachers, lecturers, government officials and parents. The instruments used in this study are not only used in determining academic writing; they are practical approaches to this study. However, given the objectives of the study and the multiple procedures used, the outcomes present an elaborate understanding of L2 academic writing. The conclusions are generalizable with the subjects studied. This is supported by Larson Freeman and Long (1991), when they argue that generalizability of the findings is not dependent upon the number of subjects in the study.

4.2 Research design

The study adopted a qualitative design involving analysis of students written academic essays, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Since both SFL and CDA, which underpin the current study, emphasise analyzing phenomena in social contexts, a qualitative design, which uses the naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context, was deemed apt for the kind of study undertaken.

Moreover, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that qualitative research is concerned with understanding the context in which behaviour occurs. The researcher in qualitative research does not focus on one theme only but on the interaction of



multiple variables which occur in real life situations. The data has to be collected in those contexts because if measurement instruments are used outside the context, a great deal of information will be lost.

Qualitative enquiry accepts that the world is complex and dynamic. This research method can be used to understand better any phenomenon about which little is yet known and also to gain a new perspective on what is already known in order to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey quantitatively (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The qualitative design enables me to capture and describe the central themes that cut across all the participants. In sampling, any common pattern that emerges from great variation are of interest and value in capturing the central theme and shared aspects (Patton, 1990). Both the essays and subsequent interview data are thematically analysed.

However, following studies in SFL and CDA (see Martin & Rose 2003; Eggins 2004; Fairclough 2001, 2004; Wodak & Meyer 2001), qualitative analysis is supplemented by a limited quantitative analysis, particularly as a way of quantifying observed qualitative phenomena. As Blaikie (2003) and Denzin and Lincoln (2003) point out, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of relationships between variables, which can be used to quantify the phenomenon and is also an instrument used to enforce certain kinds of data and its interpretation.

Therefore, whereas a thematic analysis is the main tool, essays were also analysed quantitatively using the following grammatical devices; referencing, verb forms, conjunctions, exemplification and spelling. Frequency count was used to summarize the errors of grammatical category. Frequency was also useful to summarize information about scores received by a group. The arrangement of scores was valued from high to low. Following Brown (1988), frequency distribution was then presented in a polygon graph, where dots were placed where the top asterisk was at each score value and the dots were then connected by lines. The graph showed how each group performed on the interval scale measure.

4.3. Sampling procedure

Following purposeful sampling procedure (De Vos 2001; Du Plooy 2002; Coyne 1997), the subjects and the essays were intentionally selected as per criteria that I had set. The criteria being used was based on the identification of the ‘competent’ writers and the ‘not so competent’ writers as judged by ‘impression’ marking of an academic essay. Subject performance on essays with regard to coherence, cohesion and other criteria discussed in Chapter 5 enabled me to categorise the subjects into two groups.

The results of the analysis of the written essays are triangulated with the results of the analysis of follow up interviews with students, teachers, Ministry of education officials and selected parents. The National Curriculum Statement and ECT language curriculum documents were also analysed.

4.3.1 Selection of student participants

For the purposes of this study an essay was given to two groups of 80 students who had joined the ECT for the first time. These groups were Adult Basic Education and Public Relations Management. The essay topic was ‘Challenges Facing Education in South Africa’. The essay was written as part of the normal class assignment in the Communication Skills class. Out of all the essays, 20 that met the purposive criteria were analysed. Out of the 20 essays I classified 10 as being from competent students and 10 from the not-so-competent students in academic writing. The essays were selected purposefully since they had problems the researcher was looking for. Purposeful is defined as the power of seeking the desired end. Patton (1990) argues that the power of purposeful selection of sample lies in selecting samples that are rich with information needed for the research and are fit for the study. Morse (1991), in support of Patton’s views, says that when obtaining a purposeful sample the researcher selects participants according to the needs of the study. Coyne (1997) further suggests that the description of purposeful sampling is directed by a desire to include a range of variations of the phenomenon in the study. Sampling is therefore not varied according to the emerging theory, but is selected for the information-rich data it can yield. For this reason I used ‘impression’ marking to judge the competency in academic writing of 80 students from which 20 essays were selected for further analysis. The final categorization, according to the competent and not-so-competent, was done after reading the essays relying on impressionistic procedures sometimes applied in marking an essay. Following Bachman and Palmer (1996), while the

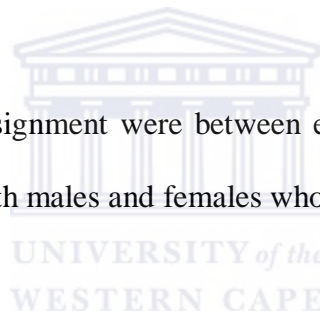
procedure relies on the general flow of the text, certain usages are identified to either show whether the students planned their essays well and also the strategies that they used in writing the essay. I underlined all the errors that affected coherence and cohesion. Bachman and Palmer (1996) further recommend that broad specifications be used to define the criteria by which the quality of the essays is evaluated. In this case, the following broad specifications were used:

- i) Contextualization of the topic,
- ii) Coherence
- iii) Cohesion.
- iv) Thematic development

The students that were chosen were those registered for the National Diploma (ND), Public Relations Management (PRM), and ND Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) at ECT for reasons that are given later in this section. The ND Public Relations Management group is based in East London and the other group is in Butterworth. The group that is in East London had students who are from model C (that is, schools that used to cater for white students only, and had English as medium of instruction) and township schools (with Xhosa or Xhosa-English code switching as medium of instruction). The Butterworth group was composed mainly of students who are from rural schools whose medium of instruction was similar to township schools.

In order to be admitted to the ND PRM, a student must have passed English with a D (50-59%) symbol and must pass at least four (4) other subjects with symbols not lower than E (40-49%). Students are also subjected to an interview, which is also used for the selection purposes. Students who are not able to express themselves are not accepted into the programme. On the other hand the admission criteria for students who are doing ND ABET is just a matric pass, no interviews are conducted and any symbol in English is acceptable, even though these students are going to major in English. The symbols they got before entry into the programme did not determine the group they were allocated. This was solely determined by their performance in the essay.

Students who wrote the assignment were between eighteen to twenty three (18-23) years of age. They were both males and females whose first language is Xhosa.



The number of participants was dictated by cost and time factors. It must be emphasized that the success of the exercise depended to a great extent on the cooperation of lecturers of the PRM and ABET diplomas by allowing the researcher a time slot in their timetable to administer the essay.

The two groups of students wrote the assignment of two pages in length. One of the aims of the essay was to enable students to use language creatively as they normally would in such an exercise. They were not coerced in any way and were told that that exercise was not for marks, and was free and voluntary. The essay provided the

students with an opportunity to explore their level of communicative ability, that is, their ability to construct functional sentences as well as expose their underlying systematic errors. Bachman and Palmer (1996), say that an essay writing task can encompass a wide variety of prompts that can differ in terms of audience, purpose and organization patterns. In order to reduce the degree of variability in students' performance, a common essay topic was chosen. The topic required them to discuss 'Challenges Facing Education in South Africa', as mentioned before.

4.3.2 Analysis of essay data

The twenty (20) essays analysed were allocated numbers one to twenty. In marking the essay the scoring was guided by how well the students were able to express their ideas correctly and link the sentences to form a piece of coherent text which communicates their ideas and thoughts accurately, fluently and imaginatively. This procedure conformed to Bachman and Palmer's (1996) recommendations that require students to produce extended responses that may be scored using scales of language ability.

The essay designer should be competent in language testing because a language essay must be a valuable tool for providing information that is relevant about the effectiveness of language teaching and curriculum. The assignment should be able to provide relevant information on the strategies that black students use to cope with academic writing in the target language and what specific kind of learning material

and activities should be provided, based on the diagnosis of their strengths and weaknesses (Bachman and Palmer, 1996).

To be able to use the scores from a language essay for making inferences about individual's academic writing skills, the researcher must be able to demonstrate a framework that enables the use of the same characteristics to describe what the researcher believes are critical features in academic writing, such as coherence and cohesion. One way of doing this is to analyse their written tasks and derive specific characteristics such as grammatical devices of reference (Bachman and Palmer, 1996).

The essay scores assist in making decisions about individuals' language ability. The methods used to arrive at these scores are a crucial part of the measurement process. Scoring is an essential step to arrive at a conclusion. In some cases, scoring may influence specific tasks included in the assignment. The first step was to determine whether their essays were coherent or not.

The scoring method involved defining the rating scales in terms of the areas of language ability to be assessed and determining the number of levels of ability on the different scales. It also specified the criteria for correctness and determined the procedure that would be used to arrive at a score. One way of doing that was to use single criteria for correctness. For example, for an item intended to measure only

grammatical knowledge, one might use grammatical accuracy as the sole criterion for correctness.

In an essay designed to measure coherence and cohesion knowledge, the essay developer might use meaningfulness as the criterion. To avoid looking at only one aspect of language ability, multiple criteria for correctness would be necessary in scoring the responses. This would include aspects such as grammatical accuracy which include referencing, verb forms, conjunctions, exemplification and spelling. It also includes meaning appropriateness and coherence, which includes contextualization, paragraph unity, colloquialism, direct translation from mother tongue, themes, reference chains, lexical cohesion, cohesive characterization, and register analysis (Bachman and Palmer, 1996).

The essays used for this study were meant to assess strategies that are used by black ESL students at ECT to cope with academic writing. This essay was meant to be objective, valid and reliable as a measuring instrument. In the essay students were required to use writing skills. The essay was also meant to meet critical outcomes of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) which states that:

- i) Students should be able to write creatively.
- ii) Students should be able to demonstrate understanding of the world by demonstrating that language does not exist in isolation but in context (NDoE, 1997b: 10).

The study did not identify the subjects individually. This is in line with Gass and Selinker (1994), who state that detailed descriptive information is not necessary for this kind of study. However, I have provided samples of essays in the appendix. The choice of groups had no bearing on ethnicity.

4.3.3 Item Development

In the following sections, the development of essays used in this study is discussed.

4.3.3.1 English assignment

I developed the essay topic using my experience as a lecturer in the Department of Communication and Languages at ECT. The essay topic was then presented to the members of the Department of Communication and Languages at ECT for their comments. I acknowledge that an essay can have an impact on the lives of people and that is why it is important to include other people for comments (Linn, 1989; Cronbach, 1971; Messick, 1995). I considered all the comments from the members of the Department and made the necessary adjustments for validity purposes.

Aspects that measured academic writing skills were grammatical devices of reference; namely, demonstratives, endophoric and exophoric referencing and coherence.

4.3.3.2 Validity and reliability

For an essay to be reliable and valid, usefulness of the essay should be maximized. In order for an assignment to be useful it must be developed with a specific purpose and for a particular group of students. What was important in the development of a language essay for this study was to be able to identify sources of errors and be able to minimize the effects of these errors. By so doing, I maximized the reliability and the academic writing ability that I wanted to measure. If the assignment is not reliable, it cannot provide any information about the ability that is measured (Bachman and Palmer, 1996; Bachman, 1990).

In validity, the focus is to what extent interpretations of data can be justified. To be able to do this, the researcher provided adequate justification for the interpretation I made of a given essay score. In order to justify a particular score interpretation, the researcher needed to provide evidence that the best score reflected the areas of academic writing I wanted to measure. In order to do this the constructs to be measured were well defined (Bachman and Palmer, 1996), that is, in terms of coherence and cohesion.

4.4 Quantitative data analysis

As discussed elsewhere the study is essentially qualitative. However, quantitative data analysis was also performed on the essays of not-so-competent students as to summarize the findings of the qualitative analysis on academic writing of students at

ECT. The variables that were subjected to quantitative analysis were grammatical categories of referencing, verb forms, conjunctions, exemplification and spelling.

The statistical procedure used in this study was, descriptive statistics, which focused on frequency. Frequency measurement helped the researcher to picture how the variables performed on each measure through graphic presentations of the performance. Frequency indicates how many students got the same number of errors on each of the grammatical categories. Following Brown (1990), after determining the number of students who received the same score in one of the grammatical categories I counted the number of students. To calculate the frequency at each score level, I tallied them up and recorded the results as in *Tables 5.1- 5.5*.

According to Brown (1990), frequency is useful, since it can be used to summarize information about error scores of the not-so-competent students in each of the grammatical categories. The arrangement of scores range from high to low.

Frequency was also presented in a polygon. Dots were placed where the top asterisk was at each score value, and these were then connected by lines. This graph is important in reading statistical studies since they represent information available about the way students performed in each grammatical category (Brown, 1990).

4.5 Interviews with students, parents, teachers and education officials

In this study interviews were conducted as a means of investigating the strategies that students at Eastern Cape Technikon used in dealing with academic writing and also to verify information received from analyzing students' errors. The interviews were a follow-up on the essay that was given to the students. These interviews served to add some information on the strategies students use in dealing with academic writing.

Cohen (2000) describes interviews as a means of accessing what a person knows. On the other hand, Lofland and Lofland (1984), say an interview is a list of questions or topics that the interviewer wants to explore during the interview. Although it is prepared to ensure that the same information is obtained from each person, there are no predetermined responses and the interviewer is free to probe and explore within these predetermined enquiry areas. Questions help the interviewer to make use of limited time, make the interview more systematic, and help to keep interaction focused. During the period of conducting interviews, the interviewer can modify the interview by focusing attention on areas of interest and exclude the questions the researcher has found to be unproductive for the goals of the research.

For the purposes of this study semi-structured interviews were used. This involves a list of topics and aspects of these topics which have a bearing on the theme, and which the interviewer should bring up during the course of the interview. Although all the respondents were asked the same questions, I adapted the formulation to fit the background. Even the order varied from person to person and depended on the way

in which the interview developed. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to use probes with a view to clearing up vague responses or to ask for incomplete answers to be elaborated on (see Hysamen, 1996).

All the interviewees were selected randomly except for the government officials. Government officials who were interviewed were those who worked in the curriculum section. Interviews were used as one of the strategies for data collection in conjunction with an essay that was written by two groups of students, as mentioned before, to triangulate the findings of the written exercise. Open-ended questions allowed for individual variations and in-depth perceptions on the issues concerned (cf. Patton, 1990). Also, following SFL and CDA, interviews were meant to gauge the interviewees' values, attitudes and ideology towards ESL academic writing and towards the difficulties black students generally have with academic writing.

4.5.1 Students

All the 20 students were interviewed for personal and in-depth information regarding their writing strategies. Thus, respondents were asked to indicate the steps that they followed in preparing their assignments and also how they prepared to answer questions in a test situation.

I asked the students to indicate which language they preferred as a medium of instruction. This question was meant to find out the students attitudes to English as a language of learning and teaching, particularly following the announcement of the

Minister of Education's (Pandor 2005) budget speech that English was no longer going to be compulsory as a medium of instruction.

Students were also asked about the kinds of reading materials that they used and which were also available at home. This is because exposure to different kinds of reading materials outside the classroom is likely to engender a culture of reading and in the process improve writing as well (cf. Francis, 2000).

4.5.2 Lecturers

Ten lecturers from the Department of communication and Languages at ECT were interviewed for their experiences and their direct involvement with the students.

The interviews with lecturers were also meant to verify information received from students on ESL academic writing. Interview questions for lecturers focused on the academic performance of students at ECT and also on the causes of their performance. Lecturers were also asked what the Technikon and the government were doing to address the problem of the declining standards of academic writing. Following the dictates of CDA, these questions were meant to solicit the lecturers' attitudes towards government's language in education policy, as well as to students' academic writing generally.

4.5.3 Teachers

Ten teachers who taught grade 12 English in various schools in the Eastern Cape area, (5 urban and 5 rural) were randomly interviewed for their perceptions on the level of English competence of students at this level, and the students' preparedness for tertiary education academic writing.

Questions for teachers focused on their academic qualifications, English curriculum, resources, competence of students in academic writing and on the part played by the government to address the problem of the falling standards of academic writing.

4.5.4 Parents

Ten parents (5 urban and 5 rural) were interviewed for their attitudes to the preferred medium of instruction for their children and about the contrasting literacy artifacts and interactive practices found in urban (middle class) homes and rural (often impoverished) homes. (cf. Banda and Kirunda 2005).

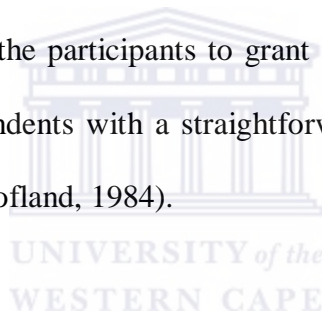
4.5.5 Government officials

Ten (10) government officials at the Ministry of Education (ECT) including the Director of the English Curriculum, the deputy and three English subject advisors were interviewed. They were interviewed for their perceptions on grade 12 teachers' competence in teaching English and also on the role that the government was playing to improve academic writing problems of students in the Eastern Cape and whether they were supplying schools with resources that were needed to improve the situation.

4.6 Recording of interview data

All the interviews were recorded with the interviewees' permission. In recording data, the researcher used written notes and a tape recorder. Patton (1990) says a tape recorder is indispensable in the collection of data, whilst Lincoln and Guba (1985) feel that written notes are better because of the possibility of a technical failure. Recording has an advantage of capturing more faithfully than hurriedly written notes, and this can allow the interviewer to focus on the interview.

It is important for the researcher to use contacts that can help to remove barriers. Since the researcher asked the participants to grant access to their lives, it was also important to provide respondents with a straightforward description of the goals of the research (Lofland and Lofland, 1984).



4.7 Data treatment

Following Bogdan and Biklen (1982) the data was analysed following the criteria that involves working with data, organizing it into manageable chunks, synthesizing it, searching for patterns and discovering what is important. Qualitative researchers use inductive analysis which means that critical themes emerge out of data (Patton, 1990). These themes are constructs which the investigator identified before, during and after data collection. These themes came from reviewing literature (Maxwell, 1996 and Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Themes are identified by sorting the examples into piles of similar meaning according to the speaker and context (Brown, 1996).

Seliger and Shohamy (1989), also state that data analysis is the sifting, organizing, summarizing and synthesizing the data so as to arrive at the results and conclusions of the research (Owino, 2002). There are a variety of techniques of analyzing data. Although distinctions are made between qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis, Johnson (1992) states that a research may be oriented towards a qualitative paradigm, but may also involve some quantitative analysis, this was the case in this study. This qualitative study includes numerical data as well. This technique can borrow features commonly associated with another technique.

The next step involved re-examining the categories identified, to determine how they were linked (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The discrete categories identified were compared and combined as I began to assemble the larger picture. Since interviews were used in this study to assess academic writing skills of black students at Eastern Cape Technikon, I was more sensitive to interactions and had to search specific kinds of information which generated major themes. I used only relevant information (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

4.8 Chapter conclusion

The focus in this chapter was on the research methodology used in the collection and analysis of data. I collected data by giving an essay to 20 ECT students and also by conducting interviews. All the data was analysed using qualitative and quantitative analyses.

In the following chapter, research results are discussed.



Chapter 5

Research Results: Coherence, Cohesion and Thematic Analysis

5.0 Introduction

Guided by the research questions, this chapter presents a summary of the grouped data, the results of the analyses and the discussions thereof. The aim is to verify the objectives of this study made in Chapter 1.

These results are discussed within the frameworks of SFL and CDA discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The results are presented after a qualitative analysis of students' essays and structured interviews. Following the SFL framework (Martin & Rose 2003; Eggins 2004; Christie 2002, 2005) although the analysis is qualitative, tallies are used to quantify some of the qualitative observations. Thus, as discussed in Chapter 4, the analysis given in this chapter does not follow an 'experimental' design, and the researcher does not intend to show cause and effect relationship between academic writing and social contexts, nor is the analysis meant to compare competent and not-so-competent student writing. On the contrary, the value of the discussion that follows is in its thematic depiction and description of the writing processes, techniques and strategies in ESL education contexts, as well as the resulting outcome of these, especially with the not-so-competent student writers.

The data in this section was elicited through three streams of information, namely, written essays and interviews. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1992), a system

of ordering data can either be derived from the text itself, or from systemic functional analysis and conceptual framework as discussed in Chapter 3. The essay topic was structured with the understanding that a student joining tertiary education should be able to contextualize the topic and present a coherent and cohesive essay. Interview questions were structured with the understanding that students, teachers, lecturers, government officials and parents would be able to provide information on the writing process and discourse strategies adopted by students, as well as to identify possible strategies and propose a model of L2 writing strategies.

5.1 The essay results

Several studies in South Africa have shown that black students have difficulties coping with academic discourse (Gough, 2000; Gough and Bock, 2001). One of the reasons that students were given an essay to write was to test the hypothesis that black students have difficulties coping with academic discourse. The essay was also to verify information received from interviews that most learning takes place in a context reduced situation. As discussed elsewhere, English learning often takes place only in the classroom in the rural areas.

Two groups of students at ECT wrote an essay on the “Challenges Facing Education in South Africa”. This falls under the argument genre known as “discussion” (Martin and Rose, 2003). Students were expected to argue about the challenges facing education in South Africa. The groups were composed of those who were competent in academic writing and those who were not-so-competent. The analysis paid special

attention to students' use of academic discourse. According to Bloor and Bloor (1995), using linguistic analysis is a means to ascertain the conventions of successful and unsuccessful writing. Thus, the analysis and interpretation of essays was guided by SFL and CDA as they pertain to coherence, cohesion and themes.

Not-so-competent students' essays are discussed first, followed by the essays of the competent ones. It should be noted from the outset that although I have analysed both the competent and the not-so-competent students, the focus is on the not-so-competent students.

5.1.1 Not-so-competent students

The the results reveal that the not-so-competent students have problems with contextualization of the topic, coherence as well as cohesion.

5.1.1.1 Contextualization of the topic

One of the major problems that the researcher noticed in the essays was the students' contextualization of the topic. I noticed that some students in this group completely failed to contextualize the topic. Since language and context are interrelated, it is not possible to use language correctly if you do not take into account the context of use. As Eggins (2004) notes, without contextual information, it is not possible to determine which meaning is being made. The problem of contextualization can be attributed to the students' failure to include background knowledge and linguistic

structures needed in academic domains. The problem could also be as a result of their lack of such knowledge and the linguistic structures to express it (Extener, 1996).

All language use has a context whose textual features enable the discourse to cohere, not only with itself, but also with its context of situation. The context of situation can be said to be the immediate environment in which a text actually functions (Halliday and Hassan, 1989). Related to the problem of contextualization is the students' inability to prioritise meaning and as a result fail to make logical relations in their academic writing (cf. Eggings, 2004). The following section presents how the students performed in relation to contextualisation.

In essay number no. 10 there was nothing about education and South Africa, linking it to apartheid and its legacy. Instead of discussing the education system in South Africa, the student discussed education as a course. This shows that this student did not contextualize the topic due to the lack of background knowledge of linguistic structures needed in academic domains. As a result, the student could not distinguish education as a system and a course.

This problem was also observed in essay no. 3 where the student discussed colonization of South Africa by Britain, freedom, and the fact that South Africa had a black president. These facts are relevant only if they could be linked to education and not discussed in isolation. The student has also failed to synthesize the facts so as to address the topic coherently.

Furthermore, in essay no. 9, the challenges that the student referred to were the assessment of one's integrity, which had nothing to do with challenges facing education in South Africa. This student fails to understand the meaning of challenges in the context in which it had been used. The student has used challenges out of context.

It should be noted from the outset that the not-so-competent students appear not to have the cultural capital to enable them to write effectively academically. According to McKenna (2004), when a student fails to write in ways that have been made common sense by the discourse of their discipline, that student is problematized and will likely end up failing. The expectations we have of our students to use specific academic literacy norms, often function in hegemonic ways to maintain a social order, based on literacy norms and access to elevated secondary literacies (Owino, 2002). Literacy, according to Street (2001) and Banda (2004), is a social practice immersed in socially constructed epistemological principles. It is about how people's knowledge (past and present) and identity are being influenced by the choices they make between different literacy practices and the way they interact with reading and writing. As will become evident, for reasons, some of which will be discussed later, the majority of the not-so-competent students can be said to lack cultural conventions of academic writing.

Christie (1993) mentions that language is an instrument of communication discourse. Language and context, then, are interrelated and hence we are able to deduce context from text (Eggins, 2004). This purports that students' difficulties in accessing meaning results from their low level of linguistic knowledge as well as from their lack of socio-cultural knowledge required for interpreting and writing texts (Leibowitz, 2004). If the interviews are anything to go by, this is, in part, caused by the fact that they rarely read academic texts.

On the other hand, competent students were on the whole able to contextualize the topic. Their paragraphs and sentences were linked. Overt markers such as, 'the first' and 'the most' were used to link ideas. Paragraphs were well organized. This kind of writing style showed that these students use the strategies that are required in academic writing, as they were able to produce coherent texts. This is elaborated on later on in this study.

5.1.1.2 Coherence

Lack of coherence is the other major difficulty that I found in all ten essays analysed. Coherence, according to Cook (1989), is the quality of being meaningful. Halliday and Hassan (1989) say that coherence is when a text hangs together. They go on to say that at any point after the beginning, what has gone before provides the environment of what is coming next. Furthermore, they say that it also refers to the way a group of clauses or sentences relate to the context. Ross and Murray (1975) also define coherence as a link between sentences, between paragraphs and a logical

connection in the essay. As outlined later, essays of the not-so-competent students are disjointed in the sense that most often what has gone before does not provide the environment for what is coming next, and a number of issues are discussed in one paragraph. Furthermore, unrelated clauses are used.

In order to achieve paragraph unity, students must ensure that a paragraph has a single generalization that serves as the focus, that is, a topic sentence. However, most students have failed to achieve paragraph unity as a number of unrelated issues are discussed in one paragraph. Specific illustrations are given below.

1. Sentence and paragraph unity

All the essays discussed in this section are provided in the appendix ([put at the end](#)).

The major problem of the essays is that they do not have what Eggins (2004) calls registerial or generic coherence. Some of the essays lack both, making it difficult for the reader to decipher the students' arguments.

The first part of essay no.1 demonstrates lack of paragraph unity which was found in all the essays of the not-so-competent students. In the first paragraph of essay no. 1, the student discusses the merged institutions and also facilities in high schools. In the third paragraph the student goes on to discuss doctors who own consulting rooms, and advocates. In the fifth paragraph, corporal punishment and the availability of electricity in the rural areas are discussed. There is no common thread running across

the paragraphs. This paragraph lacks what Eggins (2004) refers to as registerial coherence. A text has registerial coherence when we can identify one situation in which all the clauses of the text could occur. This occurs when we can specify for the entire collection of clauses, the domain on which the text is focusing. This argument is developed later in this study.

The lack of paragraph unity in essay no.2 is demonstrated by the fact that the student is discussing many points within the same paragraph. In the first paragraph the student discusses the tardiness of the DoE and gives incoherent reasons why this is so. For example, the student mentions that there are more students compared to teachers.

The student's paragraphs are also disjointed. There is no link between the first paragraph and the second paragraph. In the second paragraph, the student discusses the request by the Department for more schools and the request for salary increases within the same paragraph. Furthermore, the student brings in an idea which does not feature in the argument of Nosimo Balindlela, who has apologized to other provinces and also to students who wanted education. This particular essay lacks generic coherence. A text has generic coherence when we can identify a unified purpose. The lack of contextual coherence is reflected in, and is a reflection of, its accompanying lack of internal organization and its lack of cohesion.

This problem of paragraph unity has been observed in the first paragraph of essay no.3, where the student discusses problems facing education, as well as colonization of South Africa by Britain, within the same paragraph.

Furthermore, in essay no.4 (third paragraph), there is no common thread running across the paragraph. The student discusses freedom in South Africa, which has given a chance to blacks to be educated, and also lack of job opportunities. Within the same paragraph, the student also discusses teenage pregnancy. Then in the fifth paragraph, the student mentions that people leave South Africa looking for better job opportunities and then discusses people who are unskilled in the Eastern Cape and also scarcity of mines, all in the same paragraph. This is typical of spoken mode, where speakers may move from topic to topic without warning.

The problem of coherence has also been observed in the following essays which have no paragraph unity and do not hang together. In essay no. 6 (first paragraph) the student discusses the shortage of schools and also children who do not have money for school fees. In paragraph 2, the student goes on to discuss resources in schools and also students who travel long distances to go to school. Furthermore, in paragraph 4, security in schools is discussed and also the fact that government promised free education and is not keeping that promise. This essay also lacks registerial coherence, since the clauses do not hang together and we cannot specify from the clauses on what the text is focusing. Consider the following paragraph;

In South Africa there is a lack of School Many children are having there interested of learning. Some of the student they got no money to go to school.

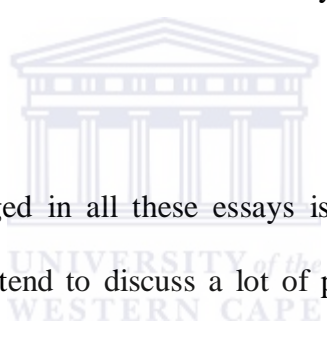
Furthermore, in essay no. 7 (paragraph two) the problem of the number of schools compared to teachers is discussed, and teachers' salaries and the problem of teachers who leave school to participate in a 'toy-toyi' are also discussed. Then in the fourth paragraph, adult students are discussed and in the same paragraph, the student goes on to discuss the government that wants to be educated. This paragraph lacks registerial coherence because we cannot specify from the clauses on what the text is focusing.

In the second paragraph of essay no. 8, the standard of education, lack of job opportunities, and differences between educated and uneducated people are discussed. Then in the third paragraph, job opportunities and OBE are discussed. Furthermore, in the fourth paragraph, the role of the governing bodies and a comparison of the South African education system and Cuban education system are discussed. This particular essay lacks registerial coherence since there is no relationship between the aspects that are discussed in the various paragraphs of the text discussed above.

In essay no.9 paragraph 2, students who are not disciplined are discussed. Then in the next paragraph problems facing first year students at the Technikon are discussed.

Furthermore, in the following paragraph, attitudes of students at school are discussed. In the next paragraph, challenges facing people who work at the bank are discussed. In the last paragraph students who are not disciplined are discussed as the conclusion. This essay has a problem with generic coherence because we cannot specify on what the text is focusing.

Students also use clauses that are unrelated within a sentence, making the text incoherent. This problem has been observed in essay no. 2, where the student talks about the determination of students to study, as well as their problems. This essay lacks generic coherence because we cannot identify a unified purpose in the text (Eggins, 2004).

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building with columns and a pediment, with the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' below it.

The pattern that has emerged in all these essays is that there is no sentence and paragraph unity. Students tend to discuss a lot of points in one paragraph. Their sentences are disjointed, and there is no common thread running across the paragraphs. What is discussed in the previous paragraph, does not relate to what is discussed in the following paragraph. So far, these essays lack registerial coherence. As mentioned before, a text has registerial coherence when it hangs together (Eggins, 2004); when we can specify for the entire collection of clauses the domain on which the text is focusing (Ross and Murray, 1975). These essays also lack registerial coherence since we cannot identify a unified purpose of some of the texts.

This lack of coherence in students' essays is a reflection of their problems with academic writing and lack of internal organization.

2. Colloquialism and direct translation from mother tongue

The not-so-competent students rely on the use of colloquialism and direct translation from mother tongue. Unfortunately, this strategy does not work for them given the register and generic constraints. Colloquialism is language commonly used in informal speech and writing (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1997). Gough and Bock (2001) have identified black students' over-reliance on primary discourse writing strategies as contributing to poor academic writing skills. Primary discourse is oral based as opposed to secondary discourse strategies.

In the following examples, students address the reader directly, as in oral speech. The spoken text contains everyday sorts of words, including slang and dialects and often sentences that are written in the spoken language which do not follow grammatical conventions. The numbers in brackets indicate the essay where the error is found and all those phrases written in bold print are those with errors.

*In the apartheid era **you'll find only teacher's** in your area not a black lawyer's or doctor's which owns his/her surgery. So clearly changes facind education in this country has improved (1).*

*Nosimo Balindlela the premier of they land the manage to ather provinces to apologies for it. Many ather student wanted to educated because these problems they fell dow. **Me at my own aims** teach and push forward untill the gavnment write to do it becous if ther is teachers thee is no educted people in whole of South Africa (2)*

In the above sentences the student is addressing the person directly as in spoken language, which is clearly the wrong mode for the topic and task given.

Sometimes students translate directly from the mother tongue to the second language. Direct translation, according to Lindholm and Padilla (1978), is using the equivalent words in the appropriate language. As a strategy, this is not a problem in itself, but could affect coherence in the text, as the clause and transitivity structures of Bantu language are not the same as those of English language (Banda, 2003). The meaning and logical relations in the following sentences have been impaired as a result.

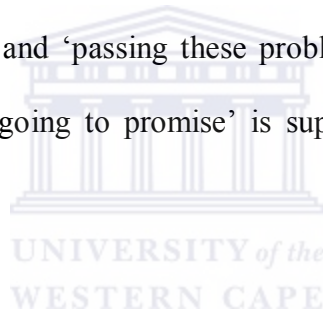
1. *The department of education often asked the government to **add** the schools.*

(Xhosa version - Isebe Lezemfundo soloko licela urhulumente ukuba ongeze izikolo)

In Xhosa ‘add’ means both ‘counting’ and ‘building’.

2. *Some members of the education department are going to the government because they wanted to increase the salaries but the government **did not follow** instead of **passing** these problem they going to promise (Xhosa version – Abanye babasebenzi bakarhulumente baya kurhulumente beyokucela ukunyuselwa imivuzo kodwa urhulumente akazihoyi izicelo zabo wenza nje izithembiso).*

The problem with this sentence is the direct translation from the Xhosa version. Students cannot differentiate when to use the passive voice ‘to be increased’ instead of the active voice ‘to increase’. In this sentence, ‘did not follow’ is the Xhosa version of ‘did not listen’, and ‘passing these problems’ means ‘attending to these problems’ while ‘they are going to promise’ is supposed to be ‘they make empty promises.



3. *Some teachers **are left** in school because of low salaries (Xhosa version – Ezinye ititshala ziyemka ezikolweni ngenxa yemivuzo ephantsi).*

Even with this sentence the problem is direct translation from mother tongue because the student does not know how to use the passive voice and the active voice. For example, the student says, ‘teachers are left school’ instead of ‘teachers left school’.
(2).

Furthermore, students use informal language or incorrect expressions, which sometimes lead to incoherent sentences. Consider the following sentences from students' essays:

*In South Africa there was the cegration which was made by Britain oppressing **South African dwellers** or citizen. But because of education South Africa realized that Britain is dominating the rights of the South African citizen. The example of domination that I am talk about there was a say which was saying **the place of the womens is in kitchin** . (3)*

The use of 'South African dwellers' and 'the place of womens is in kitchin' are incorrect in this context. In the following sentence the student has used informal language that is not often used in written discourse:

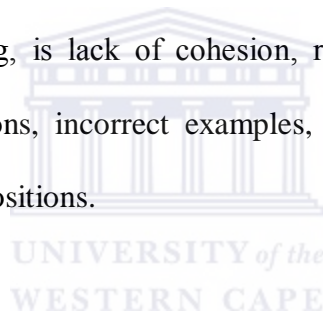
*In many years ago the blacks were not allowed to attend the sports like cricket rugby etc but now **you'll** find that sport is for everyone according education. (1)*

5.1.1.3 Cohesion

The other major weakness with the essays is with cohesion. According to Yule (1999), cohesion refers to the ties and connections which exist within texts. On the other hand, cohesion, according to Halliday and Hassan (1976), refers to the way we relate or tie together bits of discourse. These ties and connections relate to

grammatical devices which have affected cohesion in students' essays. These grammatical devices are; referencing, conjunctions, exemplification, verb forms, spelling, and prepositions. It occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be affectively decoded except by recourse to it. When it happens, a relation of cohesion is set up and the two elements, the presupposing and the presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text (see Halliday and Hassan, 1976).

In the following section it is demonstrated that the other problem with the not-so-competent students' writing, is lack of cohesion, resulting from poor referencing, incorrect use of conjunctions, incorrect examples, incorrect verb forms, incorrect spelling, and incorrect prepositions.



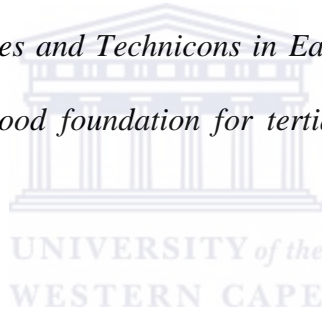
1. Referencing

According to Eggins (2004), referencing refers to how the writer introduces the participants and then keeps track of them once they are in the text. Further, Martin and Rose (2003) state that one identifies the presuming referent in a text and then seeks to link all mentions of that participant. On the other hand, referencing, according to Scollon and Scollon (1995), Fromkin and Rodman (1993) and Richards, Platt and Platt (1997), provide cohesion in written texts. The reference devices focused on in this research are articles 'the', 'an', 'a', and pronouns. The article 'the' indicates that the referent of a noun phrase has been agreed upon by speaker and

listener. It is also used to make reference to what has been mentioned before or to what is still going to be mentioned. On the other hand, references ‘a’ and ‘an’ are descriptive in meaning. All these references mentioned above are used to make a connection within a discourse.

Students sometimes do not use these references correctly, leading to lack of cohesion in their written texts. In the following examples, the reference ‘the’ does not refer to what has been mentioned before, nor to what is still going to be mentioned in the text.

*South Africa has many changes has facing education for instance lots of merged of universities and Technicons in Eastern Cape province. **The** high school also make good foundation for tertiary levels which includes good facilities (1).*



*We are facing a big problem to south Africa because in **the** school that are on **the** rural area they are having a shortage of **the** tools like computers desk, books and also class room. Some of the tudent traveling the long distance to go to school, because there is a limited school in South Africa (6).*

The use of ‘the’ in the above examples, gives the false impression that the reader already knows the referent.

The incorrect use of ‘the’ causes particular problems in cases where ‘the’ has been included where it is not supposed to be as in the following excerpts:

*To make South Africa become good in education our government must be involve him self in this issue by building Schools. Employ many teachers, and also he must construct **the** road. And another thing the government must opening the job opportunity. Our government must support us by giving us **the** enough tools (6).*

*There are many challenges facing education in South Africa like teachers there are few in schools mean tha **‘the’** children have no choise for study well some of school have many pupils in one class wich means the teach have not sure all the people must be understand (8).*

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However, there are also cases where the use of the article ‘**the**’ is obligatory. In such case the omission of ‘**the**’ could lead to awkward and incohesive sentences.

In the following examples cohesion has been affected by the omission of articles ‘**the**’, ‘**an**’, ‘a’, and pronouns:

*Look in nowadays there’s lots of black people who are well educated let alone about losing or looking for the jobs **and at – sometime** you can find black*

doctors which are owning their surgeries, the business like private schools and advocates etc. (1).

‘**At the same time**’, is a fixed expression and once you leave out ‘**the**’, the meaning is affected.

*There are many challenges facing education in South Africa challenges like to know your rights in South Africa. The first challenge that can I talk about is to be well educated because many years ago South Africa was colonized by Britain. **But – is not South Africa** only was colonized all countrys of the African contenet were being colonised (3).*

The determiner ‘**it**’, which has been left out in the sentence above, is used to track objects we can touch, taste, hear or feel (Martin and Rose, 2003). Its omission has caused the sentence to lack cohesion.

Article “a” should be included in the sentence below, to tell us that this is something whose identity we cannot assume. The identity, according to Martin and Rose (2003), is therefore indefinite. The indefinite ‘a’ is used when the identity of something has not been specified.

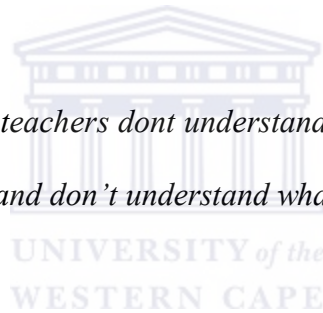
Challenges facing education in South Africa. I know that many peoples were want other courses because they says that education is lowest course

important courses is the another courses like management courses. But I'm say It is – false statement (10).

On the other hand, there are also cases where an article has to be omitted because its inclusion gives the impression that it is someone or something whose identity we cannot assume as is the case in the following examples:

In South Africa there is a lack of schools. Many children are having there interested of learning. Some of the students they got no money to go to school (6).

If you're the 1980's teachers dont understand what is a OBE because of that OBE is a new study and don't understand what mean's (8)



Furthermore, there are also cases where pronouns have been used incorrectly, leading to the violation of cohesion. A pronoun, as defined by Richard, Platt and Platt (1997), is a word which may replace a noun. There are different types of pronouns, namely; personal pronouns, relative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and possessive pronouns. Possessive pronouns always presume an identity, but the thing that is possessed may or may not have been previously mentioned. Martin and Rose, (2003) argue that possessive pronouns can be used for presenting (that is, introducing) and presuming (that is, tracking) people. Relating theory to the data, the

following examples show that the students' incorrect use of the reference devices violates cohesion in the texts,

*There people who were in jail /prison who are uneducated but now they are educated. Because now in prison **they** were teacher for the prisoners. The person enter to the prison without any experiences but when the person get out he/she get out with more experiences (7).*

*All changes to control our country coused by education that means '**there** the results of education. As from now many people in South Africa are having their degrees diplomas for obtaining super positions from their country (3).*

The other problem is when students fail to differentiate between the plural marker 's' and the possessive pronoun marker 's', as is the case in the following example:

*In the apartheid era you'll find only **teacher's lawyer's doctor's** who own surgeries (10).*

Furthermore, students use quantifiers incorrectly. A quantifier, as defined by Richards, Platt and Platt (1997), is a word which is used with a noun to show quantity. These words make it possible for us to compare things and to say how strongly we feel about someone or something by comparing it to something else (Martin and Rose, 2003). Sometimes students use double quantifiers or they use

quantifiers with nouns that do not show quantity, as is the case in the following examples:

*The department of education is **more more** problem than another department because there is no parental care in the government. Many teachers are left in school because of low salaries these teachers are left school they are going to research a green pastures to overseas. (2).*

*Challenges facing education in South Africa. In South Africa education is **very very** important because there are doctors and lawyers of South Africa because and department of education. (10).*

Cohesion has also been affected by the use of articles ‘**an**’ and ‘**a**’, with nouns that are in the plural form. Yet ‘**a**’ and ‘**an**’ are supposed to be followed by nouns that are in the singular form, as has been observed in the following examples:

First challenge that facing South Africa is that most of South African are not educated so we must educate those people to survive in this country (5)

*Most of the people that is struggling in terms of education is **an** old people who not got their chances because of racism meant by racists government ruled by whites before freedom in South Africa (5).*

Exophoric and endophoric referencing also affect cohesion in a text. Martin and Rose (2003) argue that endophoric referencing refers to the ability to point forward within the text. Endophoric referencing creates cohesion since its ties create the internal texture of the text. On the other hand, exophoric referencing is the ability to point outside the text from the shared immediate context of situation, and it contributes to the text coherence (cf Halliday and Hassan, 1989; Martin and Rose, 2003). The following sentences show students failing to use these references correctly.

*Look nowadays there's lots of black people who are well educated let alone about losing or looking for jobs and same time you can find Black lectures which was few of the by **that** time (1).*

*In South Africa we are facing challenges in education for example get people challenge you. They challenge you to know how to respect people coming at **that** bank (9).*

This study reveals that students who are not-so-competent in academic writing showed serious problems with referencing, compared to other grammatical devices (see *Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5*). They used the reference 'the' not referring to what had been mentioned before, nor to what was still going to be mentioned. The same reference was included in sentences where it was not supposed to be used. Sometimes these references were omitted.

Another problem that was observed with referencing, was that students could not differentiate between the plural marker 's' and the possessive pronoun. Quantifiers were also used incorrectly. These quantifiers had been used with nouns that did not show quantity. Exophoric and endophoric reference, which are used to point outside and forward (Martin and Rose, 2003), were also used incorrectly. All these problems show that students lack academic writing skills and do not have the vocabulary or know the strategies that are used in academic writing.

2. Conjunctions

Another major weakness of students is the incorrect use of conjunctions. Conjunctions, as defined by Halliday and Hassan (1976), Scollon and Scollon (1995) and Richard, Platt and Platt (1997) are lexical items which are used to join two clauses and which show the relationship between those two clauses. Martin and Rose (2003) state that, conjunctions look at inter-connections between processes of adding, comparing, sequencing or explaining. They help to create semantic unity and are also cohesive devices. These are causal, adversative, additive and temporal conjunctions. Incorrect use of these conjunctions affects cohesion in a text, as can be seen in the following section.

(a). Causal conjunctions

Causal conjunctions, according to Halliday and Hassan (1976) and Richards, Platt and Platt (1997), are used to join two clauses. Furthermore, they show the relationship between those clauses and also that one event causes another to happen.

Some of these causal markers are ‘because’, ‘so’, among others (Scollon and Scollon, 1995; Martin and Rose, 2003).

In the following sentences the second clause in these sentences is not a logical cause of the preceding ones, so there is no causal relationship between the two clauses joined by ‘so’.

*The country has improve to merged the blacks and whites in their schools which was not allowed in the 20th century. In may years ago the blacks were not allowed to attend sports like cricket rugby etc. But now you’ll find that the sports is for every one according education. Look now we have black lectures which was few of the by that time and even us we are in tertiary **so** it shows that tertiary level is not for whites only as they did before (1).*

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In the example below the clause after ‘because’ has no causal relationship with the preceding one.

*Education is very important in the world **because** every department coming from education every department coming from education. But the department of education is moving slowly than ather department **because** of the following reasons firstly and formost there are more students than teachers (2).*

Similarly, there is no causal relationship in the clauses of the following sentences:

*In our school we need a good security, because there are so many criminals in this country so these criminals breaking the walls in order to take the properties of school. We need to get the support of government. **Because**' we want to be safe. The government of this country should be honest to their people and give free education to the children of this country (6).*

*In South Africa you get challenges facing education because if you educated for example you are teacher at school you are facing challenges. While you are in class you get some students are no disipline. **Because** those students are coming from different home (9).*

Furthermore, students also use double causal conjunctions to join clauses that are not related. This has been observed in the following sentences:

*There are the first alite like the boys Jomo Kenyada that realized that oppression or domination after they got education. Even the people like Mandela has played the major role fighting for the freedom in South Africa. Education in South Africa is very important **because** now we know our rights **because** even South Africa is controlled by the black person that is the president (3).*

*Now I am going to talk about freedom in South Africa. We as blacks found a freedom since 1994. So black people found an opportunity to be educated free education to all so we have a chance to be educated, but **because** of poverty and lack of industry, **even if** people were have a degree or diploma 'so' the thing that they prove them that they have an experience for better jobs (4).*

(b) Adversative conjunctions

There are also cases where cohesion has been violated by the incorrect use of adversative conjunctions. According to Scollon and Scollon (1995) and Richards, Platt and Platt (1997), adversative conjunctions show that the following clause opposes the idea mentioned in the preceding one, and is also used to substitute 'instead' or 'rather'. It has also a subtractive meaning 'except', and also indicates that a situation does not cause the effect it could be expected to cause (Martin et al, 1997).

Students' texts sometimes lack cohesion because they do not use adversative conjunctions with clauses that oppose each other. Sometimes they even use double adversative conjunctions. Note the incorrect use of 'but' in the following sentences;

The government had the very good thing to make the schools and always the government open the schools. There were children who learn over the trees

but government promise to bult for them. And the children learn to the homes and in churches **but** government promises to bult for them (7).

But education in South Africa is very important because all people was born 'but' most of all we no writing. **But** if were grow four years you may go to pri-school you may try to write you name (10).

Similarly, in the following sentences 'but' has not been used to replace 'instead', it has been used to start a sentence.


*There are many challenges facing education in South Africa challenges like to know you rights in South Africa. The first challenge that can I talk about is to be well educated because many years ago South Africa was colonized by Britain. **But** is not South Africa only was colonized all countrys of the African contenet were being colonised (3).*

*When you finished a school get jobs and after a month didn't get a money for a years or 2 yrs. **But** you also teach a pupil everyday go to school that why most of people did not like to be a teacher. If your see the 1980's teachers don't understand what is a OBE because of that OBE is a new study and don't understand what mean's (8).*

(c). Additive conjunctions

Cohesion becomes a problem when students use additive conjunctions incorrectly. Additive conjunctions, according to Scollon and Scollon (1995), indicate that the following clause adds to or completes what came before. They also join linguistic units which are equivalent or of the same rank (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1997; Martin & Rose, 2003).

In the following sentences, an additive conjunction ‘and’ has been used to start a sentence. Sometimes these sentences have one clause only and yet the additive is used to complete or add clauses together one after another. Consider the following sentences:



*To make South Africa become good in education our government must be involve him self in this issue By building schools. Employ many teachers , and also he must construct the road. **And** anather thing the government must opening job opportunity. Our government must support us by giving us the enough tools of education (6).*

*South Africa had many challenges that is facing with there is the student who are unable to pay the school fees because of some problems. **And** there were children who want to continue with their studies but they failed to continue. **And** South African government try to make those children to continue the government give them some loans and busaries (7).*

(d). Temporal conjunctions

Another problem found in students' essays was with regard to temporal conjunctions. Temporal conjunctions such as 'and' or 'and then' relate two clauses in time (Scollon and Scollon, 1995). These conjunctions when used incorrectly violate cohesion in a text as in the following sentences:

*Education is very important in the world, because every department coming from education. But the department of education is moving slowly than ather department Because of the following reasons firstly **and** foremost there are more students than teachers (2).*

'First and foremost' is a fixed expression and any substitute of it renders the construction meaningless (Kembo-sure, 2004) as observed in the previous sentence.

*Education is a priority that means there is nothing is important more than it in South Africa. Because when you have education you can go at America Britain **and** whenever you want (3).*

Overall, the findings show that the conjunctions were the third problematic grammatical category to affect cohesion in students' texts (see section 5.3).

3 Exemplification

Lack of cohesion and coherence in students' essays can be attributed to the use of incorrect and incoherent examples to explain certain points, as in the following examples:

In South Africa there was the cegration which was made by Britain oppressing South African dwellers or citizen. But because of education South Africa realized that Britain is dominating the rights of the South African citizen. The example of domination that I am talk about was a say which was saying the place of the womens is in kitchin (3).

Another challenge facing education is when you are the first student at school for example at Technikon you get a challenge because while you arrive at that school you get a student while are know everything at that school 'like third year students' (9).

Exemplification did not affect cohesion and coherence as compared to other grammatical devices (see also table 5.4 below).

4. Verb Forms

It could also be argued that students' essays lack cohesion because of incorrect use of verb forms. Verbs, according to Scollon and Scollon (1995), generally refer to actions, events and processes in a sentence. These carry grammatical categories such

as tenses. Verb forms in all languages are used to produce cohesion. In English, this function is carried out by the tense system. Use of different tenses within a sentence sometimes violates cohesion (Scollon and Scollon, 1995) as shown in the following examples.

(a). Use of different tenses within a sentence

Use of different tenses within a sentence violated cohesion in the students' essays as can be observed in the following sentences:

*It is a challenge people of South Africa **were** fly to overseas to try and **found** some better jobs. This challenge is a huge problem especial in my province Eastern Cape because they are many people who are unskilled because they have no education. There are no mines, no industry or small industry like farms (4).*

*South Africa **had** many challenges that **is** facing with South Africa had many challenges that is facing with there is the student who are unable to pay the school fees because of some problems. And there **were** children who **want** to continue with their studies but they failed to continue. And South African government **try** to make those children to continue the government **give** them some loans and busaries (7).*

(b). Gerund

The other problem with students' writing is with incorrect use of the gerund. A gerund is a verb form which ends in -ing and is used in a sentence like a noun (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1995). Students sometimes confuse the gerund with the progressive tense and other tenses. Let us consider the following:

*Challenges facing education in South Africa. I know that education always **undermining**. But education in South Africa is very important because all people was born but most of all we no **writing** but were grow four years you may go to, pri-school in the pre-school you may try to write you name (10).*

*In our school we need a good security, because there are so many criminals in this country so these criminals **breaking** the walls in order to take the properties of school. We need to get the support of government Because we want to be safe. The government of this country should be honest to their people and give free education to the children of this country (6).*

(c). Perfect tense

Incorrect use of the perfect tense is another problem in the students' essays. Perfect forms, according to Palmer (1978), indicate a period of time that specifically began before and continued to a point of time, the present moment in the case of the present tense, and a point of time in the past in the case of the past tense.

Students sometimes do not know how to use the verbs that are in the perfect tense.

Consider the following:

*The country **has improve** to merged the blacks and whites in their schools which was not allowed in the 20th century. In may years ago the blacks were not allowed to attend sports like cricket rugby etc. But now you'll find that the sports is for every one according education. Look now we have black lectures which was few of the by that time and even us we are in tertiary 'so' it shows that tertiary level is not for whites only as they did before (1).*

*Because some people were not understanding that education is very important. Unlike in the case of Basic Education and training many peoples were undermine this course. But this case is helping that person **not given** a chance to study enough (10).*

(d). Infinitive

Furthermore, students' essays have been affected by the incorrect use of the infinitive.

Infinitive, according to Richards, Platt and Platt (1997) and Palmer (1978), is a non-finite form of the verb. This form of verb does not take the past tense marker 'ed'.

Students sometimes do not know that the verb that is in the infinitive does not take the past tense marker 'ed' leading to violation of cohesion in students' essays. This error has been observed in the following sentences:

*The country has improve **to merged** the blacks and whites in their schools which was not allowed in the 20th century. In may years ago the blacks were not allowed to attend sports like cricket rugby etc. But now you'll find that the sports is for every one according education. Look now we have black lectures which was few of the by that time and even us we are in tertiary 'so' it shows that tertiary level is not for whites only as they did before (1).*

*The government had the very good thing to make the schools and always the government open the schools. There were children who learn over the trees but government promise **to built** for them. And the children learn to the homes and in churches but government promises **to built** for them (7).*

(e). Concord

In addition to the infinitive, students also have difficulty with concord. Concord is a type of grammatical agreement of the verbal form with the subject of the sentence (Richards, Platt and Platt 1997; Palmer, 1978; Leech, 1992). Students sometimes do not know that a noun that is in the singular form must be followed by a verb that is also in the singular form, and a noun that is in the plural form must be followed by a verb that is also in the plural form. Consider the following sentences:

*Most of the people that **is struggling** in terms of education **is** an old people who not got their chances because of racism meant by racist government ruled by whites before freedom in South Africa (5).*

*There people who were in jail /prison who are uneducated but now they are educated. Because now in prison **they were teacher** for the prisoners. The **person enter**' to the prison without any experiences but when the person get out he/she get out with more **experiences** (7).*

(f). Progressive tense

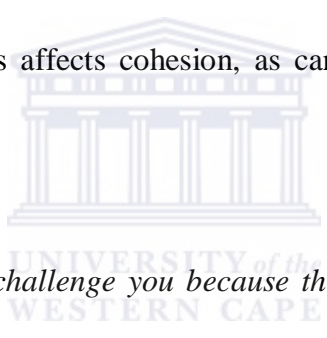
Students' essays have also been affected by the incorrect use of the progressive tense. The progressive tense, according to Richards, Platt and Platt (1997) and Palmer (1978), indicates that an action is incomplete and is in progress or developing. The progressive aspect may be used with the present tense and also with past tense. Students sometimes confuse the progressive form of verbs as has been observed in the following sentences:

*In South Africa you get challenges facing education because if **you educated** for example you are teacher at school you are facing challenges. While you are un class you get some students are no displine. Because those students **are coming** from different homes (9).*

*The main challenge is that as a youth we must develop skills to our parents who **were not getting** those chance before. If you look at the programs who are introduced by government the are programs who are looking for the education of old people who is called ABET (5).*

(g). Present tense

Apart from the progressive tense, the other problem is the present tense. The present tense, according to Palmer (1978), indicates the period of time that includes the present moment but extends to the past and the future without any specified limits. This accounts for its use for timeless truths. Some students confuse the present tense with the past tense and this affects cohesion, as can be observed in the following sentences:



*Those students are challenge you because they know **you are not know** the things of that school. They challenge you to give a negative attitude. Some students challenge you to give a positive attitude (9).*

*There are many thing that we **are** challenges facing education in South Africa. In the case of education many people we not to do Education course says that many teachers is South Africa were staying their homes (10).*

(h). Past tense

Students sometimes confuse the past tense with other tenses. Past tense, according to Palmer (1978), indicates an activity, which took place in the past. It is also the form of a verb which is usually used to show that the act or state described by the verb occurred a time before the present (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1997). Students sometimes confuse the past tense with other tenses. This compromises cohesion in their texts, as in these sentences:

*The children of the country need a better education so they need the support of the government. To improve every thing in SA. There are some student that attending their class under the trees, just because they **got** not class room at all. So these children need the support of the government (6).*

*We are facing challenges in education because if you are educated at sometimes you communicate with uneducated people. Those people who **uneducated** they challenge yourself (9).*

(i). Auxiliary verbs

It can also be argued that incorrect use of the auxiliary verbs has affected cohesion in students' essays. An auxiliary verb, according to Palmer (1978), is a verb that is used with another verb in a sentence. Modal auxiliaries can be used as resources for introducing additional voices into the text. Statements that give information can be negotiated by the use of 'is', 'must', 'should', 'might'. On the other hand, 'shall'

signals incontestable obligation and ‘can’ expresses uncertainty (Martin and Rose, 2003). The auxiliary verbs, ‘can’, ‘could’, ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘shall’, ‘should’, ‘will’ and ‘would’ are never used with verbs that are in the past tense. Students sometimes use these auxiliary verbs with verbs that are in the past tense and the progressive tense. Consider the following sentences:

*Firstly I **may said** education is very broad because when you talk about education you are talking about a future of our country as a whole (5).*

*To make South Africa become good in education our government must be involve him self in this issue. By building schools employ many teachers, and also he must construct the road. And another thing the government **must opening** the job opportunity. Our government must support us the enough tools of education (6).*

(j). Incorrect verbs

The other problem in students’ essays is the incorrect use of verbs. Once verbs are used incorrectly the text becomes meaningless as language and text are interrelated (Kembo-sure, 2004). This has been observed in the following sentences:

This programme is looking for the improvement of education to the old people who are not getting their chances. As a youth we must keep it on by pushing this program forward by producing skills for the future of our

parents especial for development of our country and to lift up the economy of our country (5).

In South Africa education is also a facing because of the goverbody have no ashaim for improve the education, in South Africa. When were see another provice is very expressive education like Tuber cause education is very good than the South Africa. Always in South Africa the is no improvement (8).

The findings showed that verb forms were the second problematic grammatical category, after referencing, that affected coherence and cohesion in students' texts.

(See Table 5.2)

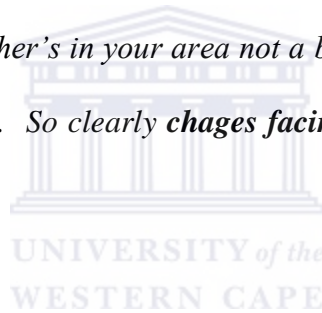
Students used different tenses within a sentence. They also confused verbs that were in the gerund with the progressive tense. Sometimes they did not know how a perfect tense was formed. Furthermore, they used verbs that were in the infinitive with a past tense marker 'ed'. Modal auxiliaries, which are used with other verbs to show obligation and uncertainty (Martin & Rose, 2003), were also incorrectly used. These auxiliary verbs are supposed to be followed by a verb in the infinitive but students used them with verbs that were in the past tense, as observed in the following sentence:

The country has improved to merged the blacks and whites in their schools.

5. Spelling

Incorrect spelling is a very serious problem with equally serious implications for writing. Incorrect spelling can be attributed to the fact that students do not use dictionaries, as well as libraries. Spelling errors, according to Kembo-sure (2004), can be linked to insufficient mastery of the L2. Incorrect spelling in the following sentences, and also in the texts cited earlier on, has affected meaning.

*At the tertiary level how many **carrer cose** they have? You cant count it shows clearly that education has change step by step. In the **aparheid** era you'll find only teacher's in your area not a black **lowyer's** or doctor's which owns his\her **sugery**. So clearly **chages facind** education in this country has improved (1)*



*I am a South African citizenship. I was born here I think since **totees**. I know South Africa very well. I start to talk about this challenges since 1976 there was a huge apartheid here in South Africa (4).*

6. Prepositions

Furthermore, incorrect prepositions have also affected students' essays, as in the following example:

The department of education is more more problem than another department because there is no parental care in the government. Many teachers are left in schools because of low salaries these teachers are left in school they are going to search a green pastures to overseas (2).

We are facing challenges in education because if you are educated at sometimes you communicate with uneducated people. Those people who uneducated they challenge yourself (9).

Overall, exemplification and spelling did not affect cohesion and coherence as much as other grammatical categories (See tables 5.4 and 5.5).

5.1.2 Competent students

Essays of students who are competent in academic writing did not display major problems of contextualization, coherence, and cohesion, as had been the case with essays of students who are not competent in academic writing. Context, according to Celce-Marcia and Olshtain (2000), are factors and written elements that are non-linguistic but which affect spoken or written communicative interaction. All language use has a context whose textual features enable the discourse to cohere not only with itself, but also with its context of situation in which the text functions (Halliday and Hassan, 1989).

The competent students had contextualized the topic and were able to address the question which is: “Challenges facing education in South Africa.”

A few essays are analysed to demonstrate how the competent students were able to contextualize the topic, where the not-so-competent failed.

In essay no. 11 the student started with the introduction and then moved to different challenges of education and then concluded by what the country needed to do to face these challenges.

In essay no.13, the student discussed the education system in the introduction, then the financial problems experienced by students, lack of resources and different subjects. As a conclusion, the student discussed what the government was doing to face these challenges. The two students mentioned above have contextualized the topic.

Furthermore, in their essays, sentences and paragraphs are linked, as in essay no. 13, paragraph 2.

Linking devices such as, ‘since’, which is used to realize the cause (Martin and Rose, 2003) and ‘indeed’, expressing similarity (Martin and Rose, 2003) have been used. These conjunctions make it clear to the reader that we are focusing on two similar things. These conjunctions have indeed been used to make their essays coherent.

Also, demonstratives such as ‘there’ and ‘these’ have been used correctly, as can be observed in essay no. 20, paragraph 2.

The competent students also proved that they are competent in academic writing by using overt markers of sequence such as, ‘the first’ and ‘most,’ telling the reader that a new stage is beginning, highlighting the connection between ideas and also comparing things as in essay no. 15, paragraph 2. This system, according to Kies (2004), has many advantages as it can link ideas that are otherwise completely unconnected. On the other hand, these markers were absent in the essays of not-so-competent students.

These students have mastered the stylistic skill of writing which, according to Heaton (1975), is the ability to manipulate sentences and use language effectively. Stylistic skill is related to cohesion. This skill ties together bits of discourse and expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). This involves the use of reference, linkage and expansion devices for coordination and subordination.

Furthermore, most of them know how to construct sentences and the devices that are used to construct sentences. They can differentiate between a verb and a noun. These students also know about concord which is the subject verb relationship (Richards, Platt and Platt 1997). These students have academic writing skills that are needed at university level. In any piece of writing, being able to organize ideas and

express them in your own words is a skill that has been displayed by the students (Heaton, 1975). This skill is essential for real life communication and also for tertiary education.

In addition, these students, unlike the not-so-competent group, demonstrated that they have the background knowledge and linguistic structures needed in academic domains (Extener, 1996). Most of them use the correct register, which is the role language plays in interaction (Eggins, 2004). The competent students are able to use the various kinds of register (including slang, jargon and archaic words), standard English, and language used by educated writers of English. Use of correct register in writing implies an awareness not only of a writing goal, but also of a particular audience (Heaton, 1975).

It is not surprising that there is coherence and cohesion in their essays. In these students' essays the paragraphs and sentences are linked and are not disjointed, as was the case with the essays of the not-so-competent group. One main idea is discussed in each paragraph. In essay no. 17, for example, the first paragraph is the introduction, in the second paragraph education before 1994 is discussed, and in the third paragraph education during democracy is discussed. In these essays ideas flow into each other and there is a logical development of ideas and argument (Owino, 2002). This argument will be illustrated later in the text in 6.1.1.

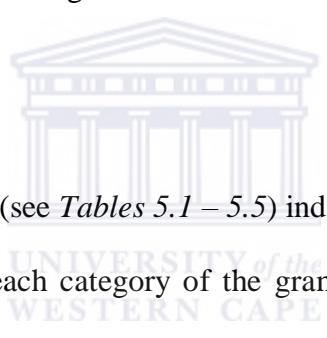
Although these essays can be categorised as fairly good, there are some few incorrectly spelt words, for example, ‘governance’ instead of ‘government’. Kembo-sure (2004), says we need not be worried about these deviations, as they should disappear as the student progresses along the acquisition scale. Kembo-sure (2004) goes on to say that these mistakes are unstable unless they are allowed to fossilize. Although there are spelling errors in their essays, these do not impair cohesion or coherence. It is also evident that these students have planned their essays, starting with brainstorming, up to editing, since they know the stages followed in academic writing.

Although most of these students have acquired academic writing skills, some of them have problems with mechanical skills, which, as mentioned before, is the ability to use punctuation marks. In essay no. 13 the student has used capital letters randomly.

The findings show that competent students did not have major problems with contextualization, coherence and cohesion. Their essays were not disjointed and have logic. There is a vast difference between the not-so-competent students and the competent ones. Not-so-competent students are from rural schools and competent ones are from urban schools. Poor infrastructure, lack of resources, untrained and poorly trained teachers and poor quality of education in rural schools affected students’ writing skills (Banda, 2004).

5.2 Quantitative analysis

Following Brown's (1988) argument, quantitative data analysis was also used to summarize the results of the qualitative analysis, especially cohesion, with regard to essays of students who are not-so-competent in academic writing. The aim of this analysis is to determine which one of the grammatical devices affected academic writing of students at the Eastern Cape Technikon the most. These grammatical devices are, referencing, verb forms, conjunctions, exemplification and spelling. The statistical procedure that was used in this study was descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the frequency of the variables of the grammatical devices. *Graph 5.2.1* shows the grammatical devices which violate cohesion in the students' texts.



The frequency tables below (see *Tables 5.1 – 5.5*) indicate how many students got the same number of errors in each category of the grammatical devices. To calculate frequency at each level the researcher tallied them up and recorded the results as shown in the tables. The frequency was used to summarize information about students' errors. This arrangement of scores values from high to low.

In the following table (*Table 5.1*), student no. 1 got 14 referencing errors and is the only one with 14 errors, so the tally is 1 and also the frequency is 1, since the number 14 appears only once in the score.

Table 5. 1: Frequency tallies on referencing

Students	Scores	Tally	Frequency
Student No.1	14	1	1
Student No.2	4	1	1
Student No.3	9	111	3
Student No.4	7	111	3
Student No.5	7		
Student No.6	11	1	1
Student No.7	9		
Student No.8	9		
Student No. 9	7		
Student No. 10	10	1	1

In *Table 5.2*, students no.2, 4 and 10 got 6 verb form errors. Since there are three of them with the same score, the tally is then 3 and since the number 6 appears three times on the score, so the frequency is also 3 (Brown, 1998).

Table 5. 2: Frequency tallies on verb forms

Student	Score	Tally	Frequency
Student No. 1	4	111	3
Student No.2	6	111	3
Student No.3	4		
Student No.4	6		
Student No.5	9	1	1
Student No.6	5	1	1
Student No.7	12	1	1
Student No. 8	4		
Student No. 9	8	1	1
Student No. 10	6		

The following table illustrates that students no. 4 and 7 have 5 conjunction errors. Since there are only 2 students with the same number of errors, the tally then is 2. Also since the number 5 appears twice on the score, the frequency is also 2 (Brown, 1998: 63-66)

Table 5. 3: Frequency tallies on conjunctions

Student	Score	Tally	Frequency
Student No.1	7	111	3
Student No.2	7		
Student No.3	7		
Student No.4	5	11	2
Student No.5	0	1	1
Student No.6	3	11	2
Student No.7	5		
Student No.8	3		
Student No.9	6	1	1
Student No.10	12	1	1

With exemplification, students no. 2, 4, 6, 7, and 10 do not have a single error in exemplification. Since there are 5 students with the same score, the tally is then 5. Also since the number 0 appears 5 times on the scores, the frequency then is also 5 (Brown, 1998).

Table 5. 4: Frequency tallies on exemplification

Student	Score	Tally	Frequency
Student No.1	1	11	2
Student No.2	0	11111	5
Student No.3	3	1	1
Student No.4	0		
Student No.5	2	1	1
Student No.6	0		
Student No.7	0		
Student No.8	1		
Student No.9	4	1	1
Student No.10	0		

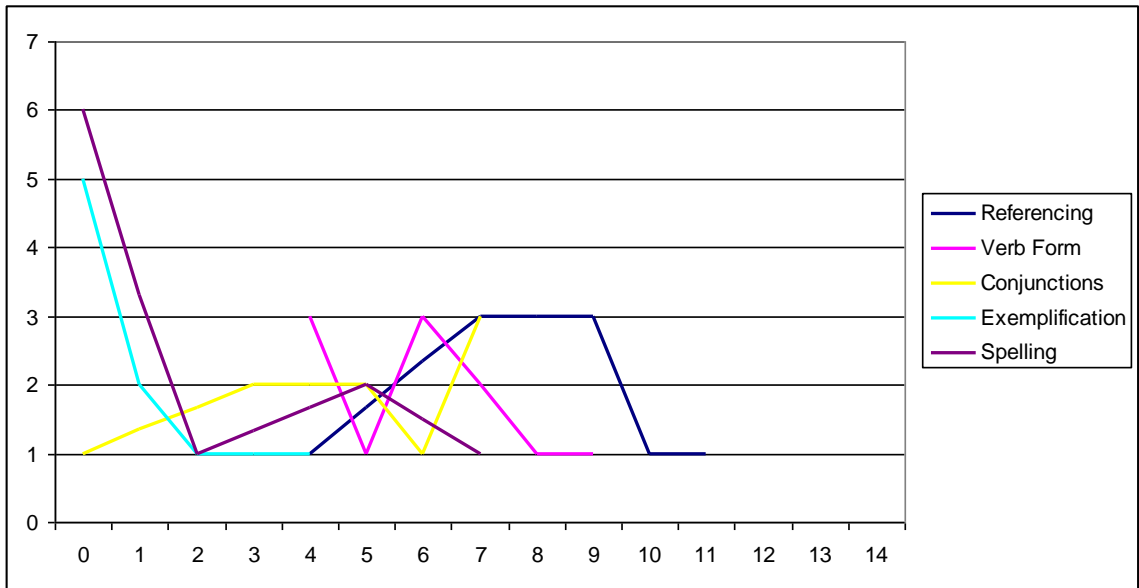
With spelling, students number 2 and 3 each has 5 spelling errors. Since there are only 2 students with the same score, the tally is then 2. Also, since the number 5 appears twice in the scores, so the frequency is 2 (Brown, 1998)

Table 5. 5: Frequency tallies on spelling

Student	Score	Tally	Frequency
Student No.1	7	1	1
Student No.2	5	11	2
Student No.3	5		
Student No.4	0	111111	6
Student No. 5	0		
Student No.6	0		
Student No.7	2	1	1
Student No.8	0		
Student No.9	0		
Student No.10	0		

Frequency distribution is also shown in the graph (see *Figure 5.2.3*) where all the categories of the grammatical devices namely; referencing, verb forms, conjunctions, exemplification and spelling, were compared in a graph. This graph provides some form of descriptive statistics, that is, a numerical representation of how each category performed on the interval scale measure.

Figure 5.2. 3: Frequency distribution of all the grammatical device



5.2.2 Interpretation of the graph

5.2.2.1 Referencing

The graph for referencing is symmetrical. This means that, the majority of the students are in the middle ranging between 4 and 14 errors. This means that students have more problems with referencing compared to verb forms as indicated by the graph of the polygon above.

5.2.2.2 Verb forms and conjunctions

Verb forms and conjunctions are both positively skewed with almost the same skew but verb forms have a higher frequency overall than conjunctions. This means that a lot of students have fewer problems with conjunctions compared to verb forms. There is also no stability in the verb forms as the graph shows that there is no normal

distribution. On the other hand, errors for conjunctions are more stable, with an average of 4.

5.2.2.3 Exemplification

The exemplification graph is positively skewed, which means that most students have fewer problems with exemplification compared to referencing, verb forms and conjunctions, as there is a frequency of 5 for 0.

5.2.2.4 Spelling

The spelling graph is also positively skewed with the highest of 6 for 0. This means that students do not have problems with spelling compared to all other categories of the grammatical devices. This implies coherence and cohesion has not been affected by spelling in the students' texts.

Students have problems with referencing compared to other categories. The second category that is also problematic are the verb forms followed by conjunctions, then exemplification and spelling.

The graph for referencing is symmetrical. This means that the majority of students' errors range between 4 and 14. On the other hand verb forms and conjunctions' graphs are positively skewed but verb forms have a higher frequency compared to conjunctions. This shows that students have fewer problems with conjunctions compared to verb forms.

Exemplification and spelling do not affect academic writing of students as such, compared to all other categories.

5.3 Themes

Considering what has gone before on coherence and cohesion one expects that the not-so-competent students will have problems with development of themes as compared to the competent ones.

Competent students show a degree of thematic planning to make their texts coherent. They use topical themes which function as the subject of the clause to give orientation to what is to come, that is, the frame of reference and also to predict how the text will unfold (Eggins, 2004). On the other hand the not-so-competent students do not use topical themes since they are not competent in academic writing. This makes their texts to be incoherent. Let us consider essay no. 13 for example:

I think the level of education in South Africa is higher than any other country. The education system we follow makes education an endless experience (13).

The student uses topical theme effectively foregrounding from one phase of the essay to the next. What has been foregrounded in this paragraph is ‘education’. This repetition enhances the main focus of the paragraph which is ‘education’.

Competent students also use marked themes to signal a new phase and to move the reader from incident to incident. This appears to be a realization of a careful written mode, which requires planning the rhetorical development of the text to allow foregrounding of circumstantial information. Again essay no. 13 gives us a good illustration of how competent students are also able to move the reader from incident to interpretation. Consider the following example:

I think money is the biggest challenge facing South African education.

Children don't go to school because fees have to be paid. Parents have to buy expensive uniform, shoes and books (13).

Not-so-competent students hardly used marked themes in their essays. This clearly shows that there was no careful planning of the rhetorical development of the text. Let us consider essay no. 10 for example:

Many years ago in the rural areas schools there is no there but now there are schools. And Adult basic school. If you not study and now you are employee is the chance of you now. Because Mining Works there's Adult school there (10).

In this example, it is difficult to identify any particular theme. In fact, what we can say is that there are three or four incomplete themes, 1. Rural schools, 2. Adult basic education, 3. Study and employment, 4. Mining and adult schools.

Both competent and not-so-competent students do not use interpersonal themes which are the unfused finite verbs and also all four categories of modal adjuncts (mood, vocative polarity and comment). For competent students this does not have a negative impact on their texts since they use other strategies like topical themes and marked themes for coherence. On the other hand, for the not-so-competent students this affects coherence in their texts since they do not use other strategies in their texts to enhance coherence like the competent students seem to do.

It is also noteworthy that both groups do not use dependent clauses which show that the main clause depends on the clause that follows, for coherence. This affects coherence in the text of the not-so-competent students as described elsewhere, they do not use other thematic structures. On the other hand, dependent clauses for the competent students do not have a negative impact on their texts, for they use other thematic structures to create coherence. For example, consider the following extract from essay no. 20 of the competent group:

*The expense of education also puts a strain on South African
Advanced schools are expensive and not everyone can afford them.
It is mostly private school that offer almost every equipment
needed for a better education which comes at an expense (20).*

In the essay quoted above we can identify the topical theme 'It is mostly private schools'. This topical theme is followed by two marked themes 'that offer almost

every equipment needed for better education which comes at an expense'. Also in this essay we can identify two dependent clauses joined by 'which' and 'that' in the same sentence. This does not cause a problem since the student uses another structure 'it is' followed by a marked theme to neutralize the problem.

The same cannot be said about the not-so-competent group. For example, let us consider the following extract from essay no. 8:

If you see in South Africa education is very poor a special in rural Areas. When you go to college and finished you go back to your home cause have no jobs for teaching that means have not their is no different between education people and uneducated (8).

In this paragraph there is no topical theme. What is supposed to be a topical theme 'If you see South Africa' is incomplete because the dependent clause is missing. The student uses 'if' which should be followed by 'then' in order to introduce contrast. In the second sentence the student uses two possible themes but both are qualified by unrelated information.

As a way of summary, it is interesting to note that thematic structures of competent students are more than those of the not-so-competent students. This could also be seen as evidence that competent students are knowledgeable about the strategies used in academic writing compared to the not-so-competent students.

Tables 1 and 2 in appendix B clearly summarise the disparities of the two groups.

Following Eggins (2004) and Martin and Rose (2003) all the tables pertaining to the discussion of items below have been shifted to the appendix section.

5.3.1 Conjunctive cohesion

Competent students use conjunctive cohesion of elaboration, extending and enhancing to add to the texture of the text in order to create semantic unity and cohesion. Elaboration is a relationship of restatement by which one sentence is the representation of a previous one. On the other hand, extending is a relationship of either addition or variation and enhancement refers to ways by which one sentence can develop on the meaning of another in terms of time, composition, cause condition and concession (Eggins, 2004). This is a clear demonstration that the competent students are aware of how elements in a sentence relate to each other, as well as the world outside. In this regard, they are better able to connect aspects of the context of situation to intended textual meaning (See *Figure 3.3.1*).

The use of conjunctive cohesion by competent students shows that the students have conceptualized the meaning of the essay topic. As will be evident in the interviews, they have enough contextual information as they do more reading than the not-so-competent group. In other words they are more experienced about the issues around the topic compared to the not-so-competent students (see chapter 6).

On the other hand most of the not-so-competent students do not use conjunctions in their texts and if they do, they sometimes use them incorrectly and this results in texts that lack cohesion. For example, they often use causal conjunctions where there is no cause, or where the relationship is not causal. The following example from essay no. 10 shows this problem:

*Education is to give more and information in our peoples **because** if the Department of Education is not created in South Africa many people were died **because** space of jobs development education Department and now developing Adult schools in South Africa.*

In the example mentioned above the student gives lack of jobs, people dying and development in adult education as reasons for lack of information. The student starts one topic or hypertheme, instead of completing it, the student starts a completely unrelated topic or hypernew and gives this as a reason or complement of the initial topic. It is clear that there is no relationship between the clauses.

Both competent and not-so-competent groups do not use explicit and implicit conjunctions. This does not affect cohesion negatively. In fact, this sometimes enhances coherence and cohesion as illustrated in essay no. 20 below:

*South Africa is growing as a country and part of its growth is education.
The level of education in South Africa is not up to standard as compared*

to developed countries like the USA and Europe. There are various reasons for Challenges faced by South African Education.

In this example, the student has used conjunction ‘and’ to connect the hypertheme (South Africa is growing as a country) and the hypernew (part of its growth is education). On the other hand, the not-so-competent students do not use conjunctions and if they do sometimes use them incorrectly and this affects coherence and cohesion in their texts. The following example taken from essay no.3 shows this problem:

There are the first alite like the boys Jomo Kenyada that realized that oppression or domination after they got education. Even the people like Mandela has played the major role fighting for freedom in South Africa. Education in South Africa is very important because of now we know our rights because even South Africa is controlled by the black person that is the president.

In the paragraph mentioned above the hypertheme of the first sentence is not related to the hypernew. In this example the student has used ‘that’ to connect the hypertheme ‘There are the first alite like the boys Jomo Kenyada’ and the hypernew ‘realized that oppression or domination after they got education’, though these two clauses are not related. *Tables 3 and 4* in appendix B summarise the conjunctive cohesion of the two (2) groups.

5.3.2 Reference chains

Competent students tend to use reference chains effectively to show the reader the major participants in the text. They are also able to link reference markers to produce highly cohesive texts. They use more homophoric and esphoric references. Homophoric reference involves information found in cultural knowledge that the reader and the writer share. This shows that the competent students are more familiar with the culture of writing texts (that is, knowledge of genre and register) than the not-so-competent students. This knowledge could be due to their superior reading experience (see section 6.1.3).

On the other hand, the not-so-competent students' texts are not linked with reference markers. Their texts do not have a significant number of major participants compared to the competent students. Their texts show categories of non retrieval from cultural context. This could be because of poor education background, lack of reading culture or lack of access to reading materials at home because of poverty (see section 6.1.3). There are indications of certain characteristics of a spoken mode in their texts. Unlike the competent students, this shows a lack of generic and registerial knowledge on the part of the not-so-competent students. This is also supported by an analysis of results discussed elsewhere (see section 5.1.1.2). This problem of reference ties results in texts that lack cohesion.

The following example taken from the essays no.6 of the not-so-competent group shows a lack of textual cohesion:

In South Africa there is a lack of schools. Many children are having there interested of learning. Some of the student they got no money to go to school.

These three sentences are potential topic sentences or hyperthemes. With effective use of textual cohesion, the three sentences could be done in one sentence. Alternatively, using appropriate textual cohesion markers at the beginning of the three sentences could have helped make the relationship between them more apparent than is the case.

Competent students on the other hand, show competence in academic writing by using some of the strategies of foregrounding and co-articulation which are, for example, 'first', 'then', 'when', 'later', 'as before' and 'finally', to connect specific evidence (Martin and Rose, 2003) (see section 3.2.1) as in the example below.

Let us consider essay no. 15 for example, where the writer has used these strategies:

***Firstly**, challenge that mostly affects education in this country is the lack of properly trained teachers. **Secondly**, its schools that are not built properly.*

(11)

It is also noteworthy that the competent students produce more head items and participant chains than the not-so-competent students. They also have richer and

more differentiated head item chains. This seems to further support my argument that the competent students have superior vocabulary and morpho-syntactic knowledge of ESL.

Tables 5 and 6 in appendix B show the analysis of reference chains of the competent and the not-so-competent group.

5.3.3 Lexical cohesion

Competent students also use lexical chains effectively in their written texts. These lexical chains are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and events sequence. There is a high proportion of words that enter into strings in the texts of competent students thus indicating a tightness of focus and careful selection of lexical items. These chains relate the text consistently to its area of focus.

The following example is from essay no. 20 of the competent group:

The expense of education also puts a strain on South African Education. Advanced schools are expensive and not everyone can afford them. It is mostly private schools that offer almost every equipment needed for better education.

In the above essay chains that link this text are the following words ‘expense’, ‘expensive’ and ‘equipment’. The student focuses on educational material and

affordability by using words like ‘expense’ and ‘equipment’. The student also uses synonyms, for example, ‘advanced schools’ and ‘private schools’ in another chain. However, I need to point out that what is clear here is that it is not so much the number of chains but more so how and where certain lexical items are fitted in the chain.

The not-so-competent students do not use these lexical chains correctly in their writing, ending up with texts that are not focused. The following example is taken from essay no. 6 of the not-so-competent group.

In our school we need a good security because there are soo many criminals in this country so these criminal breaking the walls of school in order to take the propartise of school. We need to get the support of government. Because we want to be safe. The government of this should be honest their people and give the free education to the children of this country.

In the first sentence even though the student uses ‘school’ in the chain, this is not put in the logical chain. Also the sentence ‘because we want to be safe’ is just left hanging. Furthermore, ‘free education’ is not fitted logically in sequence to ‘security’ and ‘support of government’.

The summary of the findings of lexical cohesion analysis are illustrated in **tables 7** and **8** in appendix B.

5.3.4 Cohesive characterization

As mentioned already, competent students tend not to use many causal relations. This does not have a negative impact on their texts since they are able to use other academic writing strategies to create coherence and cohesion in their texts. They also rely on superior knowledge of cultural context for retrieval of referent identity.

On the other hand, the not-so-competent students do not use many conjunctions and when they do, they sometimes use them incorrectly. As already shown, they sometimes use causal conjunction where there is no causal relationship. They also fail to use the cultural context for interpretation of the referent identity (cf. Eggins, 2004). Since they lack vocabulary, they just use any conjunction to link two clauses. This results in texts that lack cohesion. The following example has been taken from essay no. 10 of the not-so-competent group:

*Education is to give more and information in our peoples because
if the Department of Education is not created in South Africa
Many people were died because space of jobs development
Education Department and now developing Adult schools in
South Africa.*

The student talks about education which gives information and then uses a causal conjunction ‘because’ to give a reason, which in actual fact is not a reason. Furthermore, the student discusses ‘death of people’ as being caused by ‘space of jobs’ and ‘the development of adult education’. These clauses are not related, leading to the paragraph being incoherent.

Tables 9 and 10 in appendix B illustrate the findings of analysis of cohesive characterization of the two (2) groups.

The tables show that the most commonly used reference is homophoric reference, especially by the competent group, since it is retrieved from the cultural context. As mentioned before, the competent group is more familiar with the issues around the topic. This could be because they do a lot of reading as compared to the not-so-competent group.

It can be said that, both groups do not use many cataphoric references which occurs when the referent has not yet appeared but will be provided subsequently, nor do they use esphoric reference, which occurs when the referent occurs in the phrase immediately following the presuming referent item (Eggins, 2004). The implication, particularly for the competent group is that, although their skills might be characterized as competent in terms of writing, they have not yet reached the levels of what could be characterized as accomplished writers.

5.3.5 Register analysis

In register analysis information obtained from the detailed analysis of text can be interpreted as realization of contextual dimensions enabling a summarized register description. The contrastive register description of the text is based on the combined lexico-grammatical and cohesion evidence. Eggins (2004) argues that evidence

allows us to specify similarities and differences between the texts at a contextual level.

The information obtained from the detailed analysis of register shows that there are similarities in field between most of the texts of competent students since most of them were able to contextualize the topic, unlike the not-so-competent students, most of whom could not contextualize the topic

In mode and tenor, competent students used high formal, authoritarian tenor. They constructed their texts as reflective written texts by impersonal writers to be read by unknown distant readers. On the other extreme not-so-competent students used highly informal language, non-standard grammar, incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, and highly interpersonal language. Their language incorporates features of a spoken interactive mode (Eggins, 2004). Out of field, mode and tenor, mode has proved to be the most problematic.

Textual choices alone cannot create text; the text would have no content, nor would it be possible to interact with it. Thus, knowledge of context of culture and situation (field, generic and registerial competence) are critical in this regard. Meaning cannot be prioritized until those meanings have themselves been chosen in context. Thus, we see the competent students construct transitivity structures by making experiential choices, segmenting and linking those experiential choices through logical relations. The following example has been taken from essay no.11 of the competent group:

The first challenge that mostly affects education in this country is lack of properly trained teachers. These days no one wants to be a teacher because of certain reasons and this results to few teachers. We all know that teachers play the most important role in education so they need to be taken care and natured in order to improve the standard of education in this country.

Secondly, in schools we can have teachers but if they are not properly trained---

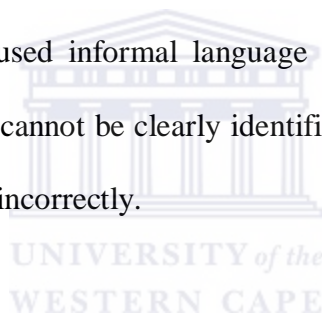
In the above mentioned essay the student has contextualized (that is, the field) the topic by mentioning lack of trained teachers as one of the challenges. The student also uses formal language (that is, mode and tenor). Furthermore the student uses lexical chains ‘education’, ‘teachers’ and ‘the standard of education’ to link the text. The use of the strategies of foregrounding, ‘the first’ followed by ‘secondly’, in the next paragraph are an indication that the student is competent in writing. Hypertheme ‘The first challenge in this country is lack of properly trained teachers’ and hypernew ‘that mostly affects education’ can be clearly identified. A causal conjunction ‘because’ has been used to give a reason though the reason is not mentioned.

On the other hand, the not-so-competent students do not use transitivity structures to link experiential choices. The following example is taken from essay no. 1 of the not-so-competent group:

The country has improve to merged the blacks and whites in their schools which was no allowed in the 20th century. In many years ago the blacks were not

allowed to attend the sports like cricket rugby etc but now you'll find that the sport is for everyone according education. Look now we have black lectures which was few of the by that time and even as we are in tertiary so it shows that tertiary level is not for whites only as they did before.

The paragraph mentioned above clearly shows that it is difficult to understand the essay because this student has failed to choose or prioritise meaning. The student does not have a repertoire of vocabulary and construction types, that is, grammar and morpho-syntactic knowledge, in the L2 to enable him to construct transitivity structures needed to make logical relations of experiential choices in different contexts. The student has used informal language (look now) used in the spoken mode. Thematic structures cannot be clearly identified. Furthermore, the student has used cohesive conjunctions incorrectly.



The findings of register analysis are illustrated in **tables 11** and **12** in appendix B .

5.4 Conclusion

The findings show that competent students do not have problems with themes, conjunctive cohesion reference chains, lexical cohesion, cohesive characterization and register analysis since they do a lot of reading.

On the other hand, not-so-competent students have serious problems with all the aspects mentioned above. In their essays themes cannot be clearly identified. They also do not use cohesive conjunctions and if they do, use them incorrectly.

Furthermore, textual cohesion markers which help to indicate relationships in the text, have been incorrectly used. All these problems could be associated with the fact that black students from rural schools do not read due to lack of reading materials at home. This argument is pursued in chapter seven.

Information received from the analysis of students' written essays is compared with the results of the interviews for cross-referencing and triangulation.

In the next chapter the interview results are discussed.



Chapter 6

Research Results: Analysis of Interviews

6.0 Introduction

Interviews in this study are a tool which gave some understanding on the writing process and discourse strategies of students at ECT (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989; Myles, 2002; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). These interviews are interpreted within CDA framework with the aim of trying to find out the reasons behind the poor writing among the not-so-competent students. The aim is not really to find the cause and effect relationship between variables but rather to try and explain why certain students have difficulty in writing coherent essays in ESL education contexts, hence interviews with significant people in the province under which ECT itself falls. This is one reason chapters 5 and 6 are not merged and discussed as one. The other reason is that merging the two chapters would make chapter 5 too long and unmanageable as the two chapters are designed to account for two different things. The aim of this chapter is to account and describe the writing processes and discourse strategies from the interviewees' perspectives. The previous chapter focused on student writing (essays). Following Faiclough's (1989, 1995, 2001), of particular interest in this chapter will be values and attitudes behind certain perceptions expressed by interviewees.

6.1 Not-so-competent group and competent group

Studies on reading and writing in Africa suggest that rural-based students have much more academic writing problems than students in urban areas (cf. Banda, 2004; Asmal, 2002). This problem is reflected in all 10 students of the not-so-competent group who mentioned that they did their Matric in the rural schools of the former Transkei, namely, Willovale, Ngqeleni, Butterworth, Libode and Elliotdale. The interview revealed of the ten(10) students classified as competent, 8 had their schooling in urban township schools and two (2) from former ‘whites only’ Model C schools where English was the sole medium of instruction. Mindful that this does not necessarily show cause and effect, it appears that the urban-rural divide has some differential effect on ESL academic writing.

6.1.1 Writing process of competent and not-competent students

A student has to be competent in academic writing and know the writing process in order to be successful academically, hence the focus was on student discourse in written texts. This focus was based on the assumption that texts are systematically related to contexts in which they are produced and to the context in which individuals acquired language and literacy practices (Halliday and Hassan, 1985; Halliday, 1995). Students were then asked about the stages they were following when preparing their assignments. As stated earlier, these stages are composing, conducting research, developing ideas, analyzing ideas, writing the first draft, editing and writing the final draft (Omaggio, 1993). Some of the not-so-competent students mentioned going to the library to get information and asking other people for information. Only one out

of ten students interviewed mentioned first writing the assignment in rough draft. None of them mentioned editing and proofreading the assignment. Some of their responses were as follows: (These are not the real names of the students for the purposes of confidentiality).

- Lina - I am going to the library to check their bookses that assignment and then writes. Sometimes go to other students to help me.
- Fuza - I go to do my assignment in the book and go to library to check some books I want information. I read those books I get this information I wanted these books then I write.

Unlike the group of not-so-competent students, competent students, when asked about the steps they followed in preparing their assignments, all mentioned that they analysed the topic, drafted the resources that they were going to use, did some library research, consulted specialists, wrote the first draft, edited and proofread it and wrote the final draft before submitting it. Their responses proved their competency in writing. The following were some of their responses:

- Tem – Research is the first important stage. I have to know the topic understand it, find out everything that has to do with what you are required to do, then draft it down, divide it into important points so that it can be easy for me to write it neatly, then edit, correct some mistakes like grammar and spelling, then write it neatly. Before submitting proofread again so that

you can be sure that everything you wanted to include is there, then submit it.

As a follow-up question, students were further asked about their preparation before answering an essay question. The not-so-competent group mentioned that they read the question and started answering without drafting the answers. They did not even proofread it at the end. This shows that these students more than anything else, do not prepare thoroughly or they are not familiar with the stages that are followed in writing. This is proved by some of their responses which are:

- Soma - Firstly I am looking a question before I am going to write to answer all that question. I am going to start that question. After that I am going to look which question going to be easy to me question that question and I am try to write the question which I am understanding in the question paper.
- Ncu - For example if you are give a question I read all the instruction then if these instruction I don't understand a question so that this question may be clear in me because if I written this question not clear this test failed. I did not understand us questions.

On the other hand the competent group all mentioned reading the questions first, understanding them, ticking all those that they knew best and started writing them and then continued writing others. After that they edited their work to check for mistakes.

Grammar is one of the most important ingredients in whether a text/discourse is coherent/cohesive or not (Christie, 2005). As can be seen from the above texts, interview texts from the competent students tended to be more coherent and cohesive than from the not-so-competent students.

Writing coherently in academia is as much about what happens during the actual writing as the strategies the writer adopts before engaging in the actual writing process (Banda, 2003). This study shows that the not-so-competent group did not know the stages of academic writing. The not-so-competent writers experienced problems with composing, formulating ideas and putting together new concepts. They clearly lacked practice in composing, developing and analyzing ideas. This relates to Bereita and Scardamalia's (1987) argument that ESL students writing in an L2 have to formally learn to use the language as well as ESL writing strategies, techniques and skills. Otherwise, they do not succeed.

These findings show that the not-so-competent students do not plan their work and if they sometimes do, do it haphazardly. They also revise their work at a superficial level. These findings on academic writing show the disparity between students from rural schools and those from urban schools because all the students who are not competent are from rural schools and all the competent ones are from urban schools. Also, not-so-competent students are obviously not familiar with academic writing as a genre since they do not even know the steps followed in academic writing.

6.1.2 Resources

For students to improve their academic writing they need resources. It was for this reason then that one of the questions addressed the availability of resources.

6.1.2.1 Libraries

The next question related to the availability of library facilities in students' schools and communities, as well as their use. The assumption is that the presence of libraries nurtures reading and writing habits, hence facilitating academic writing development essential for academic discourse (see Francis, 2000). According to De Klerk (2002) and Banda (2004) during apartheid, black schools and black communities in particular were denied library facilities and one wonders about the extent of the apartheid legacy in the new South Africa. It is clear from the responses received from the not-so-competent group that libraries are more likely to be found in urban areas than in rural areas. Only three out of ten students had libraries in their schools and even those did not utilize those libraries fully because there were no trained teachers to help them. Information received from the students about the libraries was as follows:

- Makaula - There were less books
- Dimane - We not use it cause there is no teacher to attend the library for teaching us.
- Jali - We use to study after school at the time

Even teachers from rural and township schools supported the information received from the not-so-competent group by mentioning that there were no resources in their rural schools, such as libraries and computer laboratories. Of all the teachers that were interviewed only two mentioned that they had libraries in their schools, and those libraries were underutilized because students were not taking out books to read. Even in those schools where there were libraries there were no trained librarians. The only schools that had libraries that were fully functional were model C schools. One government official mentioned that in the Eastern Cape, out of 1117 high schools, only 30% had libraries. The official went on to say that, one could hardly see any other book, magazine or newspapers other than the school books in the rural schools. Municipal libraries were only available in the urban areas but not in the rural areas.

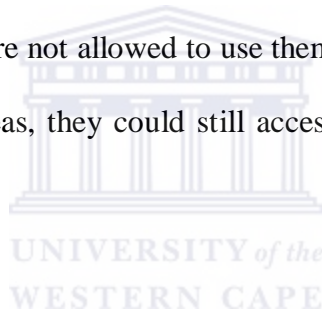
The competent group mentioned that that there were libraries in their schools.

It is clear from the responses received from the not-so-competent group that libraries are more common in urban schools than in rural schools. Also teachers and government officials cited the lack of libraries in rural communities. This has culminated in the poverty of literacy stimuli in black schools so that students from these schools are often found not to have the kind of school literacies required for academic discourse (Banda *et al.*, 1998; Gough, 2000).

6.1.2.2 Computers

The advent of Information Technology has meant that computer literacy is important in society. Given South Africa's past policy of apartheid, the question is whether use of computers has a rural–urban dimension (Banda, 2004). It seemed that students from the rural schools have never used computers because there were no computers in their schools. Thus they could not get any exposure to computer assisted language learning.

Also out of the competent group, few schools had computers and even in those that had computers, students were not allowed to use them. However, since the competent students are from urban areas, they could still access computers from other sources such as internet cafes.

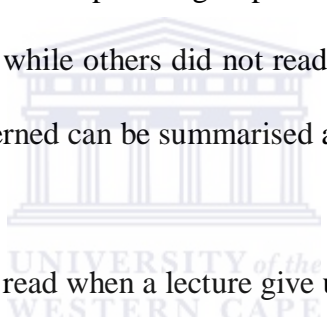


Information received from both groups of students and teachers showed that black students were not computer literate as there were few or no computers in their schools and also in their communities. They did not have access to the language software which could help them improve their academic writing as was mentioned by one of the lecturers in an interview.

6.1.3 Private reading and reading material

I wanted to know the kinds of everyday reading students were doing. The idea was to determine common literacy practices and their frequency. According to Francis (2000) exposure to different kinds of reading or writing materials outside the classroom is likely to engender a culture of reading and writing. Leibowitz (2004) adds that students have to acquire literacy at home, by engaging orally with adults. The students were thus asked to indicate whether they do any private reading apart from their school books.

The response of the not-so-competent group was that they occasionally read magazines and newspapers, while others did not read at all. Their responses in as far as private reading was concerned can be summarised as follows:

- 
- Maka - I read when a lecture give us notes I read that.
 - Soma - I am not read any book. Sometimes I am reading magazine

Unlike the previous group, the competent students all mentioned that they most of the time read newspapers, magazines and books.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to indicate the kinds of reading materials found in their homes. Lack of print literacy facilities in rural African homes was recounted in many interviews, hence the majority of students mentioned that there were no reading materials at home because their parents were either illiterate or could

not afford to buy books because they were poor. Banda (2004) supports this view by saying that not many blacks can afford daily newspapers. Thus, most students from these settings had their first engagement with literacy practices when they attended school (Leibowitz, 2004). It can also be said that the not-so-competent students only read when asked and demanded by their teachers.

On the other hand the competent group mentioned that there were reading materials in their homes in the form of newspapers, magazines and books. They did not require any prompting and read on their own.

As a follow up question, the researcher wanted to know whether they had dictionaries and whether they were able to use them. All 20 from the two groups mentioned that they did not have dictionaries but were able to use them.

It is clear from the information received from the not-so-competent group and also from their poor spelling and poor syntax that these students were not doing much reading. Even those that were reading, were only reading magazines and newspapers, and others were not reading at all. Furthermore, at their homes there were no reading materials as their parents were either illiterate or could not afford to buy books, as they were not employed. According to Francis (2000), interaction with written language, both narrative texts and contextualised writing is critical to literacy learning. Francis (2000) goes on to say that without the emergence and elaboration of narrative discourse it would be difficult, if not impossible to learn the more abstract

text schemata associated with schooling (Francis, 2000). Narrative discourse facilitates access to the less transparent expository texts and academic discourse. Lack of books, libraries and reading materials makes it impossible for students to acquire academic writing skills (Francis, 2000). Availability of reading materials can facilitate access to the schooled literacy required for academic discourse (Banda, 2004). Therefore, the not-so-competent students' poor writing skills could be attributed to their lack of experience in writing and with written material.

6.1.4 Medium of instruction

With the dismantling of apartheid, there has been much interaction between different language groups and races. Urban areas in particular are becoming the meeting place of diverse speech communities, thus the perceived importance of English as a medium of instruction. A medium of instruction is an enabling tool. It facilitates the learning of subject content, and is also a means by which students reflect different facts and viewpoints in order to construct a new view of the world, including the meaning they attribute to the new concepts they are introduced to, and the values they attach to them (Kyeyune, 2004). In addition, literacy in English is often perceived as a passport to socio-economic status and mobility (Banda, 2004). Hence the researcher asked the students to indicate which language they preferred as the medium of instruction. All the students of the no so competent group preferred to be taught in English. They said that they wanted to improve their speaking skills and be able to communicate with people of other cultures. Others mentioned that in order to get a job in South Africa one had to be competent in English. None of them

mentioned improving their writing skills, which as can be seen from this study, is a serious problem. The following were some of their responses:

- Fundi - I want to improve skill to speak English. Nowadays English is the language that can communicate with other different people like if I meet Afrikaans people I suppose to speak English not Afrikaans.

The responses of the competent group were not different from the previous group. They also preferred to be taught in English since it was used for official matters and was the language for business used globally. They also reiterated the statement mentioned by the not-so-competent group, that it was the language that one could use for communicating with other people of other cultures and could also open job opportunities. Out of this group only one student preferred to be taught in her mother tongue, mentioning that her mother tongue was easily understandable compared to English. The following were some of their responses:

- Tim – English is globally used. Its business language and can take you anywhere. Xhosa cannot open doors for me in the business world.
- Poni - Xhosa because it is more understandable.

Parents also supported the views of students regarding the medium of instruction because of the reasons mentioned above.

As a follow up question students were asked to comment on the announcement of the Minister of Education (National Department of Education, 2005), that English was no longer going to be compulsory as a medium of instruction, nor as a subject, and that schools were going to be free to choose their medium of instruction. Most of them disagreed with the Minister. They mentioned that if Xhosa was used as the medium of instruction, students would not be able to speak and understand English and would not be able to communicate with other races that did not know Xhosa. Furthermore, they mentioned that English was the medium of instruction at tertiary level and that unfortunately the Minister did not address the question of tertiary institutions pertaining to the medium of instruction. The following were some of their comments:

- Sivu – Say you go to tertiary the medium is English students are going to struggle. Anywhere you go people speak English to understand each other especially where people have different languages so they usually communicate in English.

English is perceived by students and parents as able to open doors to more job opportunities and equip the child with a competitive edge since it is the language most used in the workplace and the language of Science and Technology. It is also vital to academic success since it is the key to other subjects and is also a medium of instruction at tertiary level. It can also bestow social advantages because children who learn English become assertive and confident. Thus both groups of students and even parents preferred English as the medium of instruction in spite of the

announcement by the Minister of Education of opening the possibility of developing other official languages into languages of learning and teaching (cf. Pandor, 2005). Thus, the competent students' confidence in English means they read and speak more English outside the classroom, hence contributing to success in their writing in the ESL.

6.1.5 Starting to read and to write

One question relating to reading and writing patterns was the age at which children started reading and writing. The assumption here is that an early or late start in reading and writing has implications for later literacy practices. That is, experience in reading and writing could have an effect on success or failure in the kinds of literacies required at secondary and university levels (Banda, 2004), hence students were asked to indicate when they started reading. The not-so-competent group started speaking, reading and writing English when they started schooling. On the other hand the majority of the competent group said they were able to speak and read even before they started schooling. They had access to crèches which are not available in rural areas.

As a follow up question the researcher asked the participants to indicate which one was more problematic, reading or writing. Following Banda (2004) the researcher had anticipated that students' own perceptions of their skills would present a more positive picture than would be derived from the assignment they had been given. Students generally have a high opinion of their writing skills compared to speaking.

This however, does not mean that they have good writing skills. They all mentioned that they did not have problems with writing but had problems with speaking. On the other hand the analysis of their written work shows the opposite. The following is one of their responses:

- Maka - Speaking more problematic but I am just try because people who didn't speak English cannot because all over the world we speak English.

Even the competent group mentioned that speaking was more problematic compared to writing. The following were some of their responses:

Tim - Speaking of course

This study shows that urban students are less likely to experience difficulty with either speaking or writing compared to the rural students.

In order to improve writing skills one has to be able to understand what is written because in order to respond to a question one has to understand it first. That is why the researcher asked the students whether they were able to understand reading materials given by the lecturers and information from library books. They all mentioned that sometimes they did but not always. These were their responses:

Candy - Not always but not so far

On the other hand competent students did not have problems with either of the two, reading and writing

6.1.6 Language used in class

Social conditions and lack of models of English in the communities prompted the researcher to ask whether their grade 12 teachers were using English in class. Most of them mentioned that their teachers used both English and Xhosa in class. Only two teachers used English only. So these students did not get full exposure to either of the two languages. Some of their responses were as follows:

- Jali - Both English and Xhosa because he want us to know what she is talking about.
- Fundile - He uses only English.

Since their teachers were using both languages in class it follows that even students used both languages in class. When they were asked about the language they were using outside the classroom they all mentioned that they were using their mother tongue.

Their responses were not different from those from the competent group, since they also mentioned that their teachers used English only in class and that outside of the classroom they also used both languages, namely, English and Xhosa. But, the

difference between the two is that the competent group is more likely to be exposed to English in urban areas than in rural areas, through watching television and reading. Thus, since most of the competent students are from the urban areas, it can be argued that for them, English is not so much a classroom language compared to the not-so-competent who only get to hear it in a classroom situation.

It is evident from the interviews that code-switching is a norm in rural schools. Meyers-Scotton (1993) argues that code-switching entails rights and obligations. In discourse the speaker and the hearer must agree that the ultimate goal of every exchange is to understand each other. Thus, the not-so-competent students' response was that their teachers used a lot of code-switching in class. It could be that the teachers themselves were not proficient in English as mentioned by government officials in an interview. Thus, students were not exposed to linguistic structures needed in academic discourse. Although some linguists such as Barkhuizen (1996) argue that code-switching facilitates learning in the education process, however, this study suggests that code-switching could be an impediment to ESL academic writing, if it is not pedagogically planned and is done by default rather than by design.

6.1.7 Improvement of writing skills

As students at tertiary level need support from the institution in order to improve their writing skills (cf. Myles, 2002), it was important for the researcher to find out from these students what the Technikon should do to help improve their writing skills. The not-so-competent group mentioned that they should be encouraged to speak English

but did not mention anything about writing. This shows their reliance on oral discourse, which they translate into written discourse and thus leads to colloquialism.

The following was one of their responses:

- JJ – Technikon try to improve into understanding English. Lectures use to talk English and encourage us to talk confidently.

On the other hand the competent group mentioned that students should be encouraged to do a lot of private reading which helps to improve writing (cf. Myles, 2002). Unlike the not-so-competent group, which mentioned that students should be encouraged to speak English.

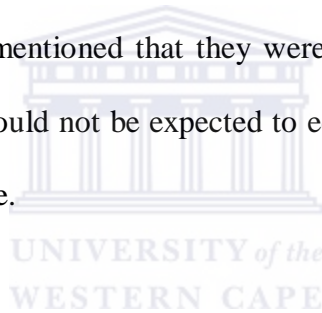
This study shows that students of the not-so-competent group are not competent in academic writing, since they do not plan their work or if they do, do it haphazardly. Also they did not have libraries and did not do any private reading since there were no books at home. The only reading materials available to them were magazines. This assumption emanates from their responses to interview questions.

6.2 Teachers, Lecturers, Government Officials and Parents

I interviewed teachers, lecturers, government officials and parents to ascertain information received from students.

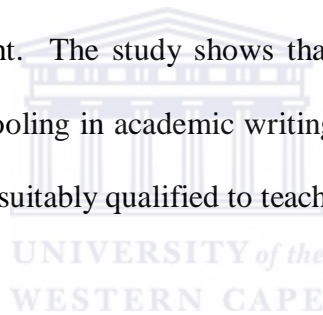
6.2.1. Qualifications

Teachers and lecturers were asked what qualifications they had in English and government officials were asked whether grade 12 teachers were competent enough to teach English. They responded as follows; lecturers mentioned that all Eastern Cape Technikon lecturers were well qualified as most of them had Masters degrees and one had a PhD. High school teachers who were interviewed all majored in English, thus they could all be said to be competent to teach English at high school level. However information that was received from the Director of the English Curriculum in the Eastern Cape was that most teachers in the rural areas were not qualified or did not have the required skills to teach English in grades 10, 11 and 12. Furthermore, the Director mentioned that they were not even literate academically. For that reason then, they could not be expected to equip students with the skills that they themselves did not have.



According to the Director, to address the problem, the DoE in the Eastern Cape has embarked on a programme with Rhodes University to retrain teachers of English, since the training teachers received from their tertiary education was not adequate enough. The director mentioned that the programme has been running for over a period of two years. In this programme they target teachers in the rural areas. The first batch joined the programme in 2003 and were from these areas; Butterworth, Cofimvaba and Lady Frere. The next one joined the programme in 2004 and were from these areas; Maluti, Mt Fletcher and Lusikisiki. This programme is being funded by the Department of Labour.

Findings show that teachers of English in the rural schools were not qualified or did not have the required skills to teach English in grades 10 – 12 and were not sufficiently proficient in English. Teachers need to have an understanding of the theories underlying second language acquisition and be trained in second language methodology to enable them to teach English effectively (Barry, 2002). Teachers also need to have an understanding of the distinction between basic language proficiency and cognitive academic language proficiency, which is fundamental to the teaching of higher order thinking skills. Skills such as classifying, organizing and clarifying facts should be taught (Barry, 2002). Even basic thinking skills necessary for writing should be taught. The study shows that the not-so-competent students have little or no proper schooling in academic writing since, going by the interviews, their teachers were also not suitably qualified to teach grade 12 English.



6.2.2 Curriculum

In South Africa it seems as if the issue of context has not been dealt with comprehensibly in the National Curriculum Statement. A curriculum, according to Christie (2002), functions to establish overall goals for teaching and learning, defining possible strategies for work and generally charting the course the programme of work to pursue; hence the researcher wanted to find out whether the English curriculum was able to address the problem. Ten (10) teachers responded as follows; they felt that the present curriculum was adequate and was able to address the writing problems mentioned above. The curriculum, which is referred to as the Revised

National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2004), encouraged the student to conduct research, organize ideas, develop ideas, improve coherence and cohesion using the correct register, refine, write the final draft and in the process discover own answers. There is definitely a problem of putting the National Curriculum Statement provisions into practice. Students are supposed to be guided in conducting research. On the other hand the very teachers, who are supposed to guide them, also do not have academic writing skills as mentioned by one of the subject advisors.

Teachers also have a problem interacting with the curriculum and are not qualified enough to teach English in grade 12 (as mentioned by the Director of the English Curriculum). These teachers felt that what needed to be changed was the literature part of the curriculum. They suggested that the focus should not be on Western literature such as that by William Shakespeare but more on African literature because students would be able to identify with the cultural aspects discussed there and would understand the context situation. According to Celce-Murcia and Olsain (2000), all language use has a context, whose textual features enable the discourse to cohere not only with itself but also with its context of situation. Text can only be interpreted by reference to context and language becomes intelligible when it is placed within its contexts situation (Malinowski, 1946; Martin and Rose, 2003). Teachers and the Director of the English Curriculum supported the view of teaching language in context.

Furthermore, they also mentioned that communication should be one of the focus areas. On the other hand, teachers focus more on functional grammar instead of communication, which involves a lot of writing. Also, academic writing is not included in the syllabus so teachers do not cover it. This was also highlighted in the responses received from the not-so-competent group about their writing skills because none of them knew the stages that were followed in the writing process.

Government officials felt that teachers were not able to mediate with the curriculum and make students understand. Teachers lacked the skill to mediate with the learning programme. Furthermore, most teachers were not able to handle such genres as poetry and drama. They preferred short stories and novels and even in those genres, they lacked the skills to teach them effectively.

A teacher needs specialist advice in the form of subject advisors in order to be competent in teaching any subject. For this reason, I wanted to know whether there were any subject advisors to help teachers with the problems they encountered in the teaching of English. Government officials mentioned that in the whole of the Eastern Cape, there were only 34 subject advisors for all the subjects to deal with 1117 high schools. Thus, teachers were not getting the support they needed in a classroom situation. Workshops were being conducted by these few subject advisors for grades 10, 11 and 12 teachers to improve their performance, but were not adequate, since the focus was more on the methodology of language teaching than on academic writing, which was also a problem. I discovered that there was a gap between content and

methodology as mentioned by the Director of the English curriculum in the Eastern Cape.

Another shortcoming in the curriculum is that it does not address the issue of academic writing. Lecturers at ECT mentioned that the curriculum was at par with other institutions but was not able to address the language problems of students. Since all courses are taught in English, the language problem should be handled across the curriculum, that is, it should not be left to language teachers alone.

Lecturers maintained that students' written tasks were always full of errors. According to James (1998), an error is an instance of language that is unintentionally deviant. For a sentence to be acceptable, it must be grammatically correct and must be produced in an appropriate context (Lyons, 1977). Lecturers also mentioned that one of the reasons for the errors could be that those students come from disadvantaged backgrounds where there was no proper teaching. This point was also mentioned by government officials. Lecturers felt that the curriculum should empower students in language skills. Aspects such as English for Academic Purposes should be included in the curriculum so that they could apply it in other courses as well. It was a general feeling that communication should be offered over a period of two years. During the first year, the focus should be on language skills, and academic writing should be introduced later in the year.

There is a lack of co-ordination between the Department of Languages and the departments of content subjects at ECT. Therefore, lecturers within the Department of Communication and Languages mentioned that the problem at ECT was that students in other courses were introduced to tasks that required academic writing skills, before the lecturers of Communication had actually introduced it to students. As indicated in earlier sections, academic writing skills involve composing and conducting research, developing and analyzing ideas, writing the first draft, editing and writing the final draft (Ommagio, 1993),. The lecturers also mentioned that the question of language across the curriculum was a necessity because, in that case, language would not to be seen as being the duty of language lecturers, but all the lecturers should take it upon themselves to address language problems as well.

Life skills at tertiary level help students to cope with their academic work. Students at ECT lacked life orientation skills, as mentioned by an Academic Development Officer. Fortunately the government was addressing the problem by allocating an amount of 10.3 million Rand to the Institution. The money was available for a period of three years, to put up sustainable structures in place to address, amongst other things, academic writing.

Judging from the responses of teachers, lecturers and government officials, the present curriculum of English both in schools and at ECT needs to be reviewed to address the problem of academic writing skills of students, which is the main focus of this study.

Flower and Hayes (1980), and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), propose a curriculum which uses the process approach in writing instruction, which will also help students improve their academic writing. This incorporates pre-writing activities such as brainstorming, strategy instruction in the stages of composing, drafting, revising and editing, multiple drafts, and peer-group editing. This engages students in analyzing and commenting on a variety of texts. According to Silva (1993) students revise their written tasks at a superficial level. They re-read and reflect less on their written texts, revise less, and when they do revision, focus on grammatical errors. Yet, revision involves task definition, evaluation, strategy selection, and modification of text in the writing plan. It also involves the ability of students to analyze and evaluate the feedback they receive on their writing (Grape and Kaplan, 1996).

This study shows that the grade 12 English curriculum has none of the above attributes and it does not include academic writing. This shows that the present curriculum does not prepare students well enough for university education.

L2 instructors need to understand the social and cognitive factors involved in the process of second language acquisition and errors in academic writing since these factors affect L2 writing development (Myles, 2002). In order for students to enhance or facilitate language production, they can develop particular learning strategies such as the metacognitive. Metacognitive involves planning the organization of written discourse, that is, responding appropriately to the demands of

the task cognitive, such as transferring or using known linguistic information to facilitate a new learning task, or using imagery for recalling and using new vocabulary and social strategies. This involves cooperating with peers (O'Malley and Chamont, 1990).

It is clear from this study that aspects which can be used to improve academic writing of students mentioned above, are not seen to be done in rural schools. There is a growing need for people in education to constantly review and develop curricula with changing circumstances; in view of the language policy in South Africa and with the intention of promoting multilingualism and also to retrain teachers in the new curriculum. This view of promoting multilingualism in South Africa was also supported by the Minister of Education in the budget speech of 2005 by saying that schools were free to choose their own medium of instruction (Pandor, 2005).

6.2.3 Competency of students in academic writing

The problem for black students is over reliance on primary discourse based on the spoken language. This creates problems of coherence and cohesion in the writing process. A student needs good academic writing skills so as to be successful academically. Hence, I asked teachers and lecturers about the writing skills of their students. **Both** Teachers and lecturers mentioned that students who were from rural backgrounds were not competent in academic writing, and have difficulty in coping with academic discourse. They also lacked academic literacy. This problem affected the pass rate both at high school and at ECT. Students were not able to complete their

degrees on time because of language barriers. Their performance was not at the level where it was supposed to be. Students had problems in writing assignments, making presentations, and analyzing examination questions. Students who were from the previous model C and urban township schools were adequately competent in academic writing. One lecturer, who teaches at the East London and Butterworth campuses, mentioned that those students who were not competent interacted with those who were competent in East London. During the course of the year, those who were not-so-competent picked up and were at par with those who were competent. But the situation was different in Butterworth because there were no students who were from model C schools, so their improvement was very slow.

Furthermore, to function within a society one has to master the four language skills, which are; listening, speaking, reading and writing. In order to be able to write correct language one has to be proficient in reading. Students learn how to read by mastering discrete elements of language (Dudgeon, 1989). Lecturers mentioned that students were poor in reading, writing and also speaking since some teachers at high school used a lot of code-switching, especially those who were teaching content subjects. Their argument was that students could not understand certain concepts in English. Meyers-Scotton (1993) argues that code-switching entails rights and obligations. In discourse, the speaker and the hearer must agree that the ultimate goal of every exchange is to understand each other. However, to black students, this exposure to code-switching affected their language ability, since they did not hear a lot of English being spoken. Moreover, students themselves were not willing to use

English. Once they were called upon to explain something, rather than use English, they preferred to keep quiet. Even outside the classroom, the language they used was their mother tongue. One lecturer mentioned that even teachers themselves did not want to use English. Meyers-Scotton (1993) discovered that teachers were more comfortable using their mother tongue than English. This study suggests that, code-switching could be an impediment to ESL academic writing.

Some teachers also supported the views of lecturers. They mentioned that teachers themselves were not committed to their work, and did not try to improve students' writing skills. Their lack of responsibility for follow up improvements on students' writing indicates failure to fulfill their role in dealing with challenges in education (Kyeyune, 2004). Since some teachers were under-qualified, they spent a lot of time trying to upgrade themselves at the expense of students. One teacher mentioned that to improve the situation, upgrading of teachers should be prioritized by the DoE. While some teachers are busy upgrading their qualifications, the Department should appoint temporary teachers.

Teachers and lecturers mentioned that students should be encouraged to use English, read more books, magazines and newspapers in order to improve their academic writing skills, since reading has implications for academic literacy (Banda, 2004). Public speaking and debates could also help to improve their writing skills, as writing is the culmination of speaking.

Lecturers also suggested that tutorials should be compulsory for all the courses since that was where students would be able to get individual attention on their writing skills. They also mentioned that there should also be a writing centre where the students could be taught the writing skills. Fortunately, at ECT there are financial resources available for that, as mentioned before. Furthermore, they suggested the introduction of the foundation phase, where the focus would be on writing skills.

One teacher mentioned that the problem of students' writing skills could be tackled better if the second language (L2) could be introduced during the critical period of language acquisition. According to Banda (2004), an early start in reading and writing has implications for later literacy practices. Experience in reading and writing could have an effect on success or failure in the kind of literacies required at secondary and university levels. The teacher went on to mention that English was the language of power, so it was important for students to acquire the language at a very early age. On the other hand, the DoE official said that in the foundation phase, students should be taught in their first language (L1) so as to develop cognitively in their L1 before the L2 was introduced. Cummins (1984) says that students need English cognitive and academic language proficiency (CALP) to be well developed in order to cope with academic work. Cummins (1984) and Hakuta (1990), say that once CALP is acquired in one language it can be transferred to any other language.

Parents' involvement in their children's education is important. They could help their children by buying books, newspapers and magazines so that their children are

exposed to the culture of reading, which will invariably improve their writing skills. This is because academic writing should not be seen as a skill that could be acquired at school only (Leibowitz, 2004). In South Africa, most reading and writing is in English, a language which to most South Africans is a second language. In this regard, reading and writing in English is always a burden and it is not uncommon for people to seek help from family and friends with reading and writing. Teachers mentioned that parents of students at high school level were not involved in the education of their children. This was caused by the fact that the parents were from rural backgrounds and others were from informal settlements and were illiterate. The parents did not, therefore, understand the work that their children were bringing from school and thus could not help them. Other parents were workers and were leaving home early in the morning, only to come back late and tired. As a result, they were spending very little time with their children. Some parents were not employed, so they were spending the better part of the day looking for jobs. These socio-economic problems affected students negatively. If parents were not educated they could not see the importance of buying books and if they were not employed they could not have money to buy reading books and newspapers for their children.

De Klerk (2002) has argued that parents see English as a tool that opens the doors to job opportunities and equip students with a competitive edge, since it is the language most used in the work place. The lack of academic writing competency affected students even after leaving ECT to look for employment. In order to get employment,

one is subjected to an interview conducted in English and, unfortunately, since students are not competent in English, it becomes a problem.

It was evident from teachers, lecturers and government officials that they were aware that black students lacked academic writing skills, which put them at a disadvantage in the job market. A number of reasons were cited, one of them being that teachers were not adequately qualified to teach grade 12 English and that students were not doing any private reading, as they had no books at home. Interviews with parents confirmed that the majority of them could not afford to buy books for their children due to the socio-economic problems mentioned earlier in this section. To improve the situation, the government should focus on the retraining of teachers of English in academic writing.

Spady (1988), at a South African Association of Language Teachers (SAALT) conference, emphasized that the success of any curriculum and teaching methodology rests on the training of teachers and their commitment to improve learning opportunities, which will support and develop students. Spady (1988) maintains that teachers need to change their orientation to be far more student responsive. On the other hand, information received from government officials highlighted the fact that teachers were not committed to their work, besides being under-qualified.

The data showed that teachers also did not know anything about academic writing. It is not surprising that students lacked academic writing skills needed at tertiary level.

6.2.4 Resources

One of the problems facing schools in the Eastern Cape is lack of resources such as libraries and computers, which are essential for improving students' academic writing skills. If resources were available students could conduct their research before starting to write. As mentioned in the previous section, exposure to different kinds of reading materials has implications for, and is likely to engender, a culture of reading and writing and thus improve literacy. The advent of Information Technology has also meant that computer literacy is important in society (Banda, 2004). A computer laboratory can help students to improve writing, more especially if there is writing software on the computers. The teachers were asked whether these resources were available in their schools and institutions. Almost all the teachers that were interviewed maintained that there were no resources in their schools like libraries and computer laboratories.

Government officials mentioned that to address the problem, the DoE was planning to enforce reading, by letting teachers award marks for extra reading. Furthermore, the Department was also introducing process-writing at high school, which included brainstorming up to the editing stage.

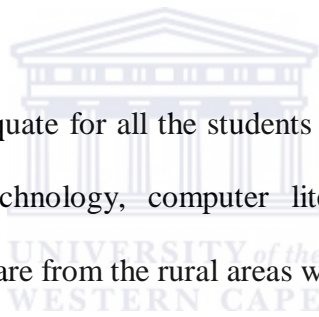
According to the Director of the English Curriculum, one of the biggest challenges to South African education is the late delivery of books, particularly to rural schools. No student can improve in writing skills if the government that is supposed to deliver

books for students does so late in the year. Teachers were thus asked about the delivery of books. Teachers mentioned that the late delivery of books prevented them from completing the syllabus on time. The problem of books was also experienced at ECT, where students were not able to buy books because of socio-economic reasons already mentioned. In addition teachers were not even trained to use these books. A textbook is ineffective if a teacher is not trained to use it. Thus, it becomes important that there should be subject advisors, who are going to train the teachers on how to use these textbooks.

Furthermore, academic writing requires that students be given individual attention, especially those who have problems with writing (Myles, 2002). Teachers mentioned that the problem of big student numbers and lack of classrooms was forever a recurrent problem in the Eastern Cape, and affected education. Teachers were expected to teach more than 60 students in class and, as a result, they could not give individual attention to students. Teachers felt that the problem could be alleviated if the Department could implement a smaller teacher student ratio.

Resources which are important to improve students' academic writing skills are not only a problem at high school, but also at ECT, where lecturers also complained about the lack of resources. They mentioned that there were libraries on all the campuses, that is, East London, Butterworth, Umtata and Queenstown, but all of them were not well equipped because of lack of funds. As mentioned before, the presence of libraries nurtures reading and writing habits, hence facilitating literacy

development needed for academic discourse (cf. Banda, 2004). There was also a shortage of human resources. As mentioned in the previous section, the government gave the institution a sum of 10.3 million Rand to start, amongst others, foundation programmes, but the problem of who was going to teach those students arose because all the lecturers are overloaded. According to the Academic Development Officer at ECT, those foundation programmes were compulsory because the Higher Education Quality Committee, when conducting audits, would expect the foundation programmes to be visible in all the programmes offered in the Institution. All the departments were expected to have programmes to deal with issues of academic writing in the foundation phase, though there was a general lack of resources.



Computers were also inadequate for all the students at ECT. As mentioned, with the advent of Information Technology, computer literacy became very important, especially for students who are from the rural areas who are more likely to have never used a computer. Even if computers could be purchased, there is a lack of physical space to store them. Lecture halls that are available are limiting because of size. The management needs to be informed by the lecturers of the gravity of the situation. A shortage of computers has a negative effect on academic writing. One lecturer reported to have conducted a research at the Butterworth campus, using a language software which was installed on the computers that were in Butterworth only. The lecturer used two groups of students. One group was exposed to the computer language assisted language programme and the control group was not. The writing skills of the group that was using the programme improved a lot and the other group

that was not exposed to the language software progressed very slowly. To the lecturer, this showed that the writing software improved the writing skills of the students.

As long as there are no resources for all the students in schools and institutions the problem of lack of academic writing skills, which affects the academic performance of students will continue.

6.3 Chapter conclusion

In conclusion, one of the problems observed in essays of students who are not-so-competent is that these students lack academic writing skills and do not know the strategies that are required in academic writing. They have failed to contextualize the topic. Their essays lack coherence and cohesion as mentioned. Judging from their responses to the interview, questions they do not plan their essays and if they do, it is done haphazardly. Their essays have mainly been affected by poor planning. This point has also been proven by their responses in an interview on the question of planning an essay.

Furthermore, students have no sense of academic writing being a genre, that is, a staged, goal oriented, purposeful activity where meanings are made in steps (Martin 1984). The stages are a process in writing, that is, one argument or sentence leading to another until a logical conclusion is reached. In a genre, a text typically moves through stages to a point of closure and is considered incomplete if the culmination is

not reached (Eggins and Slade, 1997). These students did not mention brainstorming, conducting a research, writing the first draft, editing and writing the final draft as compared to competent students who were able to follow all these steps mentioned. This lack of planning culminates in poor writing.

As can be deduced from the interviews students did not get proper tuition in English, as they were taught by teachers who were not suitably qualified to teach grade 12 English. They could not use the skills they mastered in their L1, as their teachers were not even competent to teach the L1 as mentioned.

The interviews showed that students over-exaggerate their writing skills, by stating that they did not have problems with writing. What I observed in their essays was the direct opposite of their responses in the interviews, as their essays showed that they had serious problems with academic writing. This has to be so because, as stated before, writing is not in their culture (Banda, 2004). Moreover, there are no books at home for them to read and there are no libraries even in their schools. The government, which is supposed to deliver books, delivers these late in the year when the syllabus for the year is almost finished. As mentioned in the section on interviews, these students do not do any private reading, except for reading school books.

For the lecturers, the main issue with academic writing is the divide between the rural and the urban. They feel that rural students are more disadvantaged when it comes to

academic writing compared to urban students. In general, the more affluent students tend to write better and exhibit better academic skills, than the less affluent students.

In the next chapter conclusions and recommendations are presented and discussed.



Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.0 Introduction

This study was undertaken because there is a growing concern about the falling standards of academic writing among ECT students. The problem is particularly marked among black students whose home language is neither English nor Afrikaans, the languages used as media of instruction in tertiary institutions. One finds that these students have not yet reached proficiency levels to cope with written English used in academic discourse at tertiary education level. This lack of English language proficiency affects the academic performance of students (Mc Laughlin, 1987). One reason why the situation is like this is because most of these students come from rural schools where there are no resources and their teachers are not well trained to teach English at Grade 12. Furthermore, English is not their mother tongue. The National Department of Education is making an attempt to correct the situation by providing material and retraining teachers while at the same time allowing schools to choose their own medium of instruction.

Changing bureaucracy does not automatically change the system of education. Research conducted in international curriculum reform indicates the need for control

to be exercised far closer to the individual education institutions, than has been the custom previously (Holt, 1994; Barry 2002).

It is also apparent that some of the academic writing errors committed by the not-so-competent students cannot be solved by a mere change of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT). There are issues relating to environmental factors such as the poverty of literacy stimuli and a general lack of reading and writing culture (cf. Banda, 2004), as well as socio-economic poverty in certain homes and communities. There are also issues related to ability for logical and conceptual formulation of phenomenon which can be ascribed to students not being taught well in both the mother tongue and the L2. The discussion and the model given below should be seen as a suggestion rather than a solution to what those involved in academic writing of black students need to focus on. Although the model was developed with black ESL students in mind, it has been presented in such a way that it can apply to any other student involved in academic writing.

7.1. Contextualization

The findings showed that out of all the grammatical categories of coherence and cohesion (that is, contextualization, sentence and paragraph unity, colloquialism, referencing, conjunctions, exemplification, verb forms, spelling and prepositions), contextualization was the major problem with students' academic writing. Some students from the not-so-competent group failed to contextualize the topic, giving the impression that they did not understand what the question required of them. As

defined earlier, contextualization is the ability to address the topic so as to bring out the meaning (Eggins, 2004). Without contextual information, it is not possible to determine which meaning is being made since context is in the text (Eggins, 2004). Contextualization is more than knowledge of grammar. It is about intertextual knowledge, that is, knowing related and unrelated texts.

The study showed that competent students were able to contextualize the topic effectively. Their paragraphs and sentences were linked. Overt markers such as, 'the first' and 'the most' were used to link ideas. Paragraphs were also well organized. This kind of writing style showed that these students used the strategies that are required in academic writing, as they were able to produce coherent texts. These strategies are; draft, edit and write the final draft. The not-so-competent students were not able to do this because of the apparent mismatch between what they know, what they have been taught by teachers who sometimes are not qualified to teach grade twelve English, and what tertiary academic writing demands.

7.2 Coherence

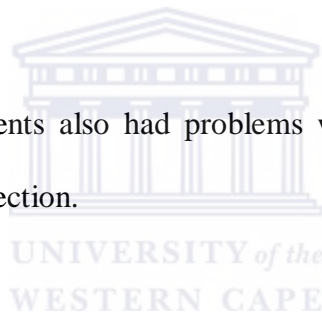
This study also showed that the not-so-competent students' essays lacked coherence. In the students' essays, there was no common thread running through the paragraphs. They discussed many points within a single paragraph. As a result, their essays lacked paragraph unity. What was discussed in the previous paragraph did not relate to what was discussed in the following paragraph. As a result, their essays lacked what Eggins (2004) refers to as registerial and generic coherence, since they could not

identify the situation in which all clauses of their texts occur. There was no unified purpose in their texts. This lack of coherence in students' essays is a reflection of their problems with academic writing, and lack of internal organization.

On the other hand, competent students had relatively few problems with coherence. In their essays the paragraphs and sentences were linked and not disjointed, as was the case with the essays of the not-so-competent group. One main idea was discussed in each paragraph. In their essays there was a logical development of ideas and arguments.

7.3. Cohesion

The not-so-competent students also had problems with cohesion. This situation is discussed in the following section.



7.3.1 Referencing

The study showed that students had serious problems with referencing compared to other categories of cohesion (see *Table 5.1*) They used the reference 'the' and quantifiers incorrectly and could not differentiate between plural marker 's' and the possessive pronoun.

On the other hand, competent students did not have problems with referencing.

7.3.2 Verb forms

Incorrect use of verb forms also violated cohesion in the essays of not-so-competent students. They used different tenses within a sentence, confused the gerund with the progressive tense, they did not know when to use the perfect tense and also how to use the auxiliary verbs (see *Table 5.2*). These problems show that students' academic writing is not well developed to help them cope with academic demands at tertiary level. Poverty could be one of the problems why academic writing of the not-so-competent students is not well developed since most of them come from rural background where poverty is rife. This influences the standard of education and access to reading materials. On the other hand, academic writing of competent students is at the level expected for students at tertiary level.

7.3.3 Conjunctions

Conjunctions were the third problematic grammatical category to affect cohesion in students' texts (see *Table 5.3*). Conjunctions add to the texture of the text in order to create semantic unity. With not-so-competent students' texts, there was often no semantic unity. On the other hand, competent students used conjunctions to link ideas so as to create coherence in their texts.

7.3.4 Spelling and exemplification

Exemplification and spelling did not affect cohesion and coherence compared to other grammatical categories (see *Tables 5.4* and *5.5*). Students sometimes used incorrect spelling of words and incorrect examples to explain certain points.

7.4 Interviews

Interviews were also used in the study as a tool, which could provide insight into the writing process and discourse strategies of students at ECT. Interviews also allowed the researcher to investigate the oral proficiency, that is, the students' proficiency in spoken language.

The findings showed that the not-so-competent students, unlike the competent ones, did not plan their work and if they did, did it haphazardly. They also revised their work at a superficial level. These findings on academic writing showed the disparity between students from rural schools and those from urban schools, as the students who are not competent tended to be from rural schools and all the competent ones were from urban schools (see also Banda and Kirunda, 2005). Furthermore, the not-so-competent students did not treat academic writing as a genre, different from other kinds of writing, as they did not know the steps to be followed in academic writing.

On the other hand, information received from both groups of students and teachers showed that black students were not computer literate, as there were few or no computer facilities in their schools and also in their communities. They did not have access to the language software which could help them improve their academic writing.

It was clear from the information received from the not-so-competent group and also from their poor spelling and poor syntax that these students were not doing much

reading. Even those that read, they only read magazines and newspapers and not academic texts while others were not reading at all. Furthermore, at their homes there were no reading materials as their parents were either illiterate or could not afford to buy books.

The competent group mentioned that there were reading materials in their homes in the form of newspapers, magazines and books. They did not require any prompting and read on their own. This helped to improve their competency in academic writing.

Availability of reading materials can facilitate access to the schooled literacy required for academic discourse (Banda, 2004). Therefore, the not-so-competent students' poor writing skills could be attributed to their lack of experience in writing and with written material.

In as far as the medium of instruction was concerned, both groups of students and even their parents, still preferred English as the medium of instruction. This is in spite of the announcement by the Minister of Education opening the possibility of developing other official languages into languages of learning and teaching. However, it is the competent students who showed confidence in English as can be seen from the fact that they read and speak more English outside the classroom, hence contributing to success in their writing in the ESL.

It was evident from the interviews that code-switching was a norm in rural schools. Thus, the not-so-competent students' response was that their teachers used a lot of code-switching in class. This could be because the teachers themselves were not proficient in English. Thus, students were not exposed to linguistic structures needed in academic discourse. Although some linguists such, as Barkhuizen (1996), argue that code-switching facilitates learning in the education process, this study suggests that code-switching could be an impediment to ESL academic writing, if it was not pedagogically planned and was done by default rather than by design.

Findings further showed that teachers of English in the rural schools were not qualified or did not have the required skills to teach English in grades 10 to 12 and were not sufficiently proficient in English. The study showed that the not-so-competent students had little or no proper schooling in academic writing since their teachers were also not suitably qualified to teach grade 12 English.

Another shortcoming was the curriculum which does not address the issue of academic writing. This study showed that the grade 12 English curriculum does not include academic writing. This puts a burden on the teachers to come up with their own programme of academic writing. In turn, this means that only well-trained and creative teachers are able to include aspects of academic writing in their teaching. As this study revealed, most of such teachers tend to be in urban schools.

7.5. Recommendations: A profile of academic writing

Considering the findings, a comprehensive model of ESL writing strategies for black students will have to tackle the following specific areas of concern: training of teachers, encouraging the culture of reading, reviewing the curriculum to include academic writing strategies (some of which are suggested below), and providing resources, especially in rural schools.

7.5.1 Training of teachers

Improvement in students' academic writing can come about if there is a change in the English grade 10 to 12 curriculums. The curriculum should put more emphasis on academic writing by encouraging amongst others strategies, writing competitions. Any curriculum change will also have to be supported by appropriate language teacher education. In order for teachers to be able to deal with multilingual classes, they should be subjected to training on multilingual skills that could be used to improve academic writing of students. Although the choice of English as medium of instruction is not really the focus of this study, I want to argue that a change in LOLT to the mother tongue would be useful, but only if it is accompanied by parental and student consent, training of teachers, and provision of materials in African languages.

However, considering that for most black parents and students English is the medium of choice (De Klerk, 2002; Banda, 2004), teachers in South Africa need to demonstrate their dedication to time-on-task in the classroom. They have not had the support needed to be able to handle academic writing. For fundamental changes to

occur, teachers must undergo professional development to develop their skills in academic writing in multilingual contexts. Also, theories of second language learning need to be addressed at teacher training level. Barry (2002) argues that teachers need to have an understanding of the theories underlying second language acquisition, and be trained in second language methodology, to be able to teach academic writing effectively

Furthermore, as implied in the foregoing discussion, to be able to use indigenous languages as the medium of instruction, should schools choose, teachers need training. They need to be able to use diverse teaching methods, which will provide support for all students to reach their potential. Teachers also need to understand theories underlying language acquisition to enable them to teach effectively in a multilingual situation. They will have to develop new attitudes, which will be supportive of the changes advocated by the DoE promoting multilingual instruction at school and invariably convince the parents to change their mindset about the medium of instruction for their children. The mode of response to the medium of instruction change and implementation depends, to a large extent, on the teachers' attitudes and values. Sharing certain values by all teachers is essential in the implementation of the new policy. In order to improve the academic writing of students, strategies should be planned (for similar argument, see Cooper, 1989; Cummins, 2000).

There is a need to combine the direct and the indirect modes of teaching. Direct modes as Cooper (1989) explains, depend on classroom instruction by teachers,

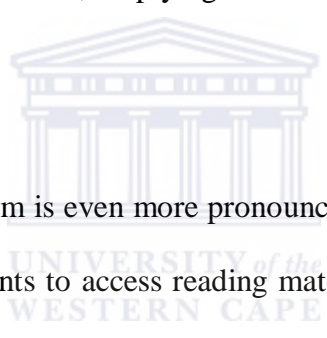
whereas the indirect modes depend on other means of teaching and learning that are recognizable outside explicit language instruction. They should also be emphasized in other subjects as well. It follows, for example, that code-switching by design in multilingual classroom practice should not be ruled out if it helps students to access knowledge.

The DoE has to be committed to these changes, since if teachers do not get the necessary support from the government, they cannot be expected to be enthusiastic and committed to these reforms. For instance, if the government is serious about using African Languages as LOLT, then they need to demonstrate a commitment to this. Currently there is virtually no training in the use of African Languages as media of instruction. The DoE has done very little in giving funding, resources and other support for African language teaching. As a result, at universities, departments of African Languages have closed down or are facing closure for lack of students. There is very little support from government and its agencies in terms of research grants and bursaries for those students who want to study African Languages at university.

To conclude this section, I want to emphasise that there is little or no support from government to enhance ESL academic writing, nor for effective teaching in the mother tongue, thus putting black students from the rural areas in particular, at a huge disadvantage.

7.5.2 Culture of reading

The culture of reading has to be encouraged at school and at home, which will invariably help improve students' academic writing skills (Banda, 2004). It could be argued that blacks do not have a reading and writing culture. This could explain why the not-so-competent students are not able to interpret linguistic events. Linguistic events are only interpreted correctly when additional contextual information about the situation and culture is provided. We also saw that the not-so-competent students had difficulty situating their writing in a particular context. As a result, their written texts were unintelligible. As Eggins (2004) points out, language becomes intelligible when placed in its context of situation, implying that the meaning of a single word is dependent on its context.



In the rural areas, the problem is even more pronounced as the government is making it impossible for rural students to access reading materials by not providing libraries in schools and communities, let alone developing a reading and writing culture. Banda (2004) argues that these literacy practices are a luxury blacks in the rural areas could not afford and that is why government intervention is needed.

For the school to be able to develop the culture of reading and writing, firstly, the government must see to it that each school has a well-equipped library with books as well as with qualified librarians. The libraries should stock books in African languages. Students should be encouraged to use the library. Furthermore, parents who can afford to buy books, newspapers and magazines should be encouraged to do

so. Schools should encourage students to summarize books that they have read monthly and marks be awarded for summaries produced. Barry (2002) argues that if students write these summaries they will be able to produce a variety of written texts, express thoughts and opinions in writing, understand and apply language conventions appropriately, illustrate the use of appropriate register and structure written texts logically and, by so doing, improve their academic writing.

7.5.3 Curriculum

The diversity of students in South Africa calls for a curriculum that is sensitive to the different backgrounds (Barkhuizen, 1996 and Heugh *et al.*, 1995; Banda, 2004). Language in Education Policies need to be suited to the socio-economic environments of students. There is a need for people in education to constantly review the curricula in accordance with the changing circumstances to include, amongst others, academic writing and writing in the mother tongue. Although there have been attempts to infuse African experiences into the curriculum, little has been done to promote reading and writing in African Languages and materials written in African languages are scarce.

Furthermore, syllabi often do not reach the teachers for whom they are intended. Some teachers do not have access to the syllabus and do not follow it because of large classes, poor resources and facilities, unfamiliarity with the approach, and an inadequate competence in English.

7.6. Improvement of academic writing skills

The study showed that there is need to improve academic writing. At the moment the mother tongue option is a difficult one as there are virtually no materials in African languages. Also, the in-take in universities of students taking African languages in South Africa is at an all time low. Therefore, even if the mother tongue was used, there would be no qualified teachers to handle such classes.

The strategies suggested below emanate from the study and relate to the classroom situation as currently obtaining.

7.6.1 Writing as social practice

In order to improve the academic performance of students at ECT, it is important to improve students' academic writing skills. According to Myles (2002), the ability to write well is not a skill that is naturally acquired but is learnt or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings. As mentioned before, writing for black students is not part of their culture so, they can only learn the skill in a school situation. This can be done through organizing, among other activities, cultural and literacy campaigns and writing competitions.

Writing skills must be practiced and learnt through experience. As indicated in earlier sections of this study, writing involves composing, conducting research, developing ideas, analyzing ideas, writing the first draft, editing and writing the final draft. It is the act of composing that creates problems for those writing in an L2 in

academic contexts. As outlined above, black students found formulating new ideas difficult because it involves reworking information. By putting together concepts, the writer engages in a two-way interaction between developing knowledge and developing text (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Thus, academic writing requires conscious effort and practice in composing, developing and analyzing ideas. Also, the writing process incorporates pre-writing activities such as brainstorming, drafting, revising and editing, multiple drafts and peer group editing. Writing in the L2, black students are in the process of acquiring these conventions and so they often need more instruction about the language itself. This study has revealed that, limited knowledge of vocabulary, language structure, and content inhibited the not-so-competent writers' performance. Furthermore, students writing in an L2 have to acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills. Enriching the learning environment by providing well-equipped libraries in each school can help to improve proficiency of students. In this study it is clear that the competent group tended to be proficient in ESL and also tended to adopt appropriate writing strategies and techniques compared to the not-so-competent group.

7.6.2 Encouraging mixed group work

According to Swales (1990), writing should not be viewed as an individual-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process, but as an acquired response to the discourse. In this regard, effective instruction should afford black students the opportunity to participate in transactions with their own texts and the texts of others. One way of

doing this is through group work, in which academic writing tasks are done in mixed groups comprising both competent and not-so-competent students. By guiding the students towards a conscious awareness of how an audience will interpret their work, students learn how to write with a readerly sensitivity and learn how to edit their work.

7.6.3 Develop intertextual and metacognitive competence

Black students need to be encouraged to read academic texts to help them improve their writing skills. One way of doing this is encouraging a culture of reading at home. Black students need to be taught how to structure information through manipulation of intertextual knowledge and other discourse knowledge. It should be brought to their attention that it is important to organize at both sentence and text level. In other words, students need to be taught how to write coherently through text organization and storage of relevant information. Coherence problems in the writing of students may be due to not knowing how to organize the text or how to store the relevant information.

According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), revision is also important and is a demanding task because it involves definition, evaluation, strategy selection and modification of the text in the writing plan and the ability of students to analyze and evaluate the feedback they receive on their writing. Students should be encouraged to edit their work. However, it is also apparent that revision will not help the not-so-competent

group as they have no access to the contexts of culture and situation as well as the linguistic capacity in the ESL to create meaning.

In order to facilitate the writing process, students can develop the writing strategies. The strategies include the metacognitive, such as planning the organization of written discourse; cognitive, which is using known linguistic information to facilitate a new learning task and using new vocabulary; and social strategies, that is, intertextual knowledge (Fairclough, 2004), which involves peer revision (O'malley and Chamont, 1990). Interaction and input also play important roles in the writing process. Black students need to receive adequate L2 input in order to form a new hypothesis about syntactic and rhetorical forms in the target language, hence, students need to be apprenticed to academic writing and be taught grammar.

7.6.4 Develop genre and critical language awareness

Students may also be able to write well if they are exposed to a variety of genres of writing including flyers, magazines, articles and books, amongst others. By examining a variety of written texts, students' awareness can be raised with regard to the way words, structures and genres contribute to purposeful writing. They can also be aware of different types of textual organizations that can affect L2 students' composing processes. Models of texts analyses can also be used, which can help L2 writers to see how grammatical features are used in authentic discourse contexts.

Instruction from teachers should provide students with language input, instruction in writing and also feedback on their writing, hence it is important for teachers themselves to be trained in academic writing. Classroom setting is also important, in order to encourage students to reflect on what they want to write and then to choose the appropriate language forms (see Leki, 1990). Thus, mindful that some language teachers will find it objectionable, planned code-switching should not be ruled out completely in a multilingual classroom practice, particular if it leads to access to academic knowledge.

Students should also be encouraged to analyze and evaluate feedback themselves in order for it to be effective. The focus should be on idea development, clarity and coherence before grammar correction. Self-evaluation can also be encouraged and prompts for error identification can also be useful. Feedback is of utmost importance in the writing process. Without individual attention and sufficient feedback on errors, improvement in writing will not take place. Students need feedback from teachers on the form and structure of writing. If this is not part of the instructional process, then students will be disadvantaged in improving both writing and language skills.

7.7 Provision of material and resources

One other major problem that affects the academic writing of students is unavailability of resources, including human resources, funding, school facilities, materials and books. It may be well to say that academic writing should be the focus area in schools, but often the government does not give the guidance as to how to achieve this, nor does it indicate where to find human resources, financial backing

and infrastructural support. It is important to construct a well-formulated plan of action, a plan that is possible to carry out with available resources (Barkhuizen, 1996).

According to Banda (2004), academic writing is linked to racial background, rural versus urban, language spoken at home, availability of reading materials both at school and at home, as well as cultural and socio-economic factors. Most black Africans do not have a culture of reading and writing required in academic discourse, as mentioned before. Literacy events such as reading newspapers, books and watching television and access to libraries are associated with the black elite and white culture. In actual fact, these literacy practices were a luxury blacks could not afford. In order to promote reading in the rural schools, teachers need to organize community literacy events, and newspaper and book shows.

Poor infrastructure, lack of libraries, lack of teaching resources, untrained and poorly trained teachers, and poor quality of education in black schools only serve to impoverish academic writing and a literacy culture (Banda, 2004). According to Francis (2000), interaction with written language, especially contextualized writing, is critical to early literacy learning. Availability of reading materials outside the classroom, availability of library facilities and nurturing reading and writing habits, needed in academic domains, can improve academic writing skills of students. With the absence of books, libraries and reading material, even the acquisition of narrative

competence, which Francis (2000) calls the most basic universal of all non-conventional discourses applicable to academic discourse, becomes difficult.

Most reading and writing in South Africa is in English, which to most South Africans is an L2. Because of this, reading and writing to L2 speakers is always a burden. If material in an African language is available, black students are more likely to read that (Banda, 2004).

The government of South Africa has come under severe criticism from teachers for their tardiness in delivering books, not supplying schools with resources, and also not employing some teachers permanently. Furthermore, in the interviews, teachers mentioned that they were demotivated. They also mentioned that there were no curriculum workshops organized by the Provincial Department and they were not receiving the support they needed to interpret the curriculum, since there were few subject advisors. Teachers cannot be expected to be enthusiastic and committed to the curriculum reforms when it is evident that they are not receiving the necessary support from the Provincial Education Department.

Educators, when planning course materials, should do so from an understanding of the existing cultural capital of the students. The research conducted by Leibowitz (2004), underlines the importance of a focus on students' biographies, a claim also made by writers such as Barton (1999), Benson *et al.* (1994) and Dison (1997).

Teachers and lecturers need to provide support for students, focusing on improving academic writing of students and all aspects of academic discourse. It is hoped that the model discussed in this chapter and summarized below will be beneficial to first language speakers of English. For black students writing in ESL, the model is even more critical as it could help mitigate the shortcomings arising out of their inadequate command of English grammar.

7.8 Model of academic writing

The model discussed in this chapter and summarized below is aimed at benefiting ESL, as well as first language speakers of English. For black students writing in ESL, the model is even critical as it could help mitigate the shortcomings arising out of their inadequate command of English grammar.

7.8.1 Outside the text

Before starting to write the actual text there are activities which must be performed outside the text.

7.8.1.1 Pre-writing activities

This section considers activities that need to be performed before the actual writing start. These include conducting research, brainstorming, identifying context of situation and culture, theme construction and development, writing the first draft, revising for cohesion and coherence, and finally, editing.

1. Conducting research

Students should be helped to read extensively about the topic before starting to write. This can be done by conducting library research and reading any other text with information related to the topic.

2. Brainstorming

Teachers need to help set up mixed brainstorming groups of competent and not-so-competent students. Brainstorming the topic involves context and themes. This can be done by stating the subject at the center, linking all major ideas to the subject, and then linking all minor ideas to the major ideas.

2.1 Identifying context of situation and culture

With little or no culture of reading and writing in their homes and communities and poor education background, students have little or no experience with regard to registerial and generic aspects of academic writing. Classroom practice, as it relates to academic writing, needs to focus on the following questions relating to context;

1. What is the context of the text?
2. What register is used, and should be used in writing?
3. What genre is used?
4. Which ideology is influencing use of language?
5. Are there simpler or other texts written on the topic or unrelated topic (intertextuality)?

6. What can be learned from these texts with regard to 1-5 in the given task?

2.2 Theme construction and development

Tertiary institutions assume that students are familiar with aspects of academic writing such as theme construction and development. It is clear in this study that a significant number of black students have difficulty with essay writing. Teachers therefore need to help black students with the following aspects of theme development:

- i) Identify the main theme, should it be single or multiple themes?
- ii) Identify topical themes, which function as the subject of the clause and rheme, which are the remaining clause constituents.
- iii) Identify hypertheme, which functions as the topic sentence.
- iv) Identify hypernew, which is any information arising from the hypertheme.
- v) Identify macrotheme, which is any information that comes before the topic sentence orientating the reader on what to expect (Martin and Rose, 2003).

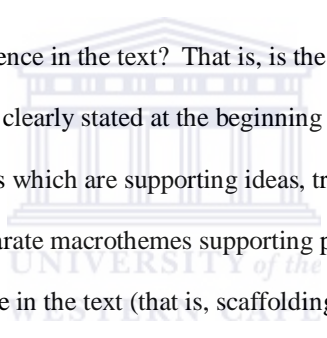
Francis (2000) suggests that one way of doing this is for teachers to start with a simple narrative text, where students can be guided to identify the themes. Thereafter, they can be introduced to specialised writing using some of the themes identified earlier on in the lesson.

3. Write the first draft

In writing the first draft, the ideas that came up in the brain-storming phase should be converted into sentences. The goal at this stage should be to state the main idea clearly and support it with supporting ideas. Students should make it a point that each main idea constitutes a paragraph by identifying the thematic structure.

4. Revise for cohesion and coherence

Revising means rewriting the text, building upon what has already been done in order to make it more focused. When revising the following questions need to be asked:

- 
- i) Is there any coherence in the text? That is, is the text unified?
 - ii) Is the hypertheme clearly stated at the beginning of the paragraph?
 - iii) Are the hypernews which are supporting ideas, truly supporting the main idea?
 - iv) Are there any separate macrothemes supporting points for each main idea?
 - v) Is there any texture in the text (that is, scaffolding)?
 - vi) Are there any cohesive devices that are visible in the text to link ideas, for example, conjunctions (Langan, 2002)?
 - vii) Is there any nominalization used in the text?
 - viii) Are there any marked themes which are circumstantial elements such as place or time or they may be participants that are not the subject of the clause?

5. Editing

The last stage is editing, that is, checking the text for coherence and cohesion which involves checking grammatical errors, and punctuation and spelling mistakes.

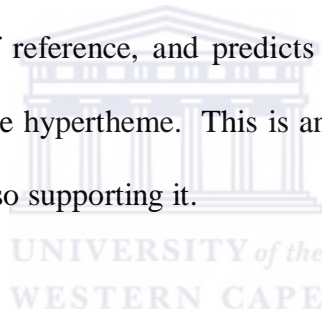
However, to be effective, editing should be made part of the classroom practice. The weaker students may need help from the teacher in order to edit their texts.

7.8.2 Inside the text

Inside the text, the students have to be taught and apprenticed into developing writing skills in the following.

7.8.2.1 Hypertheme: Topic sentence development

Teachers need to help students on how to decide on the hypertheme, which is the topic sentence of each paragraph. The hypertheme gives orientation to what is to come, that is, the frame of reference, and predicts how the text will unfold. The hypernew should support the hypertheme. This is any new information accumulated from the hypertheme and also supporting it.



7.8.2.2 Hypernew: Supporting evidence development

Teachers need to help students on how to decide on the hypernew which supports the hypertheme with specific and relevant evidence. Supporting evidence is needed for the purposes of coherence. The evidence that supports the point in a paragraph consists of overt markers such as ‘first of all’, ‘secondly’ and ‘finally’. The evidence is also made up of reference chains showing the major participants in the text. These include homophoric, esphoric, exhophoric, endophoric and cataphoric references. These are used to link clauses and ideas, and to create a text that has coherence and cohesion (cf. Martin and Rose, 2003).

7.8.2.3 Foregrounding: Connect specific evidence

Teachers need to help the students on how to connect specific evidence for coherence in their texts. The reader of the text must move smoothly from one bit of supporting information to the next. Students need to be taught how to use transition words such as, ‘also’, ‘on the other hand’, ‘firstly’ and ‘then’, which are strategies of foregrounding and co-articulation.

7.8.2.4 Tracking participants

Teachers must guide the students to identify key words and pronouns which should be repeated to tie ideas together, to form reference chains and also to indicate major participants and their importance. To do this, one has to identify presuming referent in a text and then seek to link all mentions of that participant. Students find this a daunting task, and yet teachers often assume that identifying participants is rather obvious and not worth spending valuable teaching time on.

7.8.2.5 Expectancy relations

Teachers must guide the students on how to use chains of clauses and sentences to relate the text to its area of focus. They must also be guided on how to use expectancy relationships (that is, the relationship between the doer and the action) to create lexical cohesion. There is no doubt this could be hampered by students’ lack of requisite vocabulary and grammar. Encouraging students to read outside set texts and retell and recount in their own words what they read, could be a useful tool in this regard.

7.8.2.6 Cohesion : Consistency with verbs

Teachers should guide the students on how to be consistent with tense. Students should not shift tenses unnecessarily. If the student starts in the present tense, there should not be any sudden shift to the past tense because this will affect cohesion. Again, this is also a function of experience with texts. This also entails exposing students to different text-types from newspapers articles and scientific reports. Teachers can then draw attention to how a change in tense, for example, in legal documents, could have implications for the whole case.

7.8.2.7 Cohesive conjunction : Combine clauses

Teachers should guide students on how to combine clauses. They should emphasise that clauses that are related or co-ordinated should be joined using explicit, implicit, elaborating, enhancing, and extension conjunctions to create semantically meaningful structural links between clauses.

The following diagrams summarise the profile of academic writing, and hence the strategies that should be developed in ESL academic writing.

7.8.3 (a) Outside the text

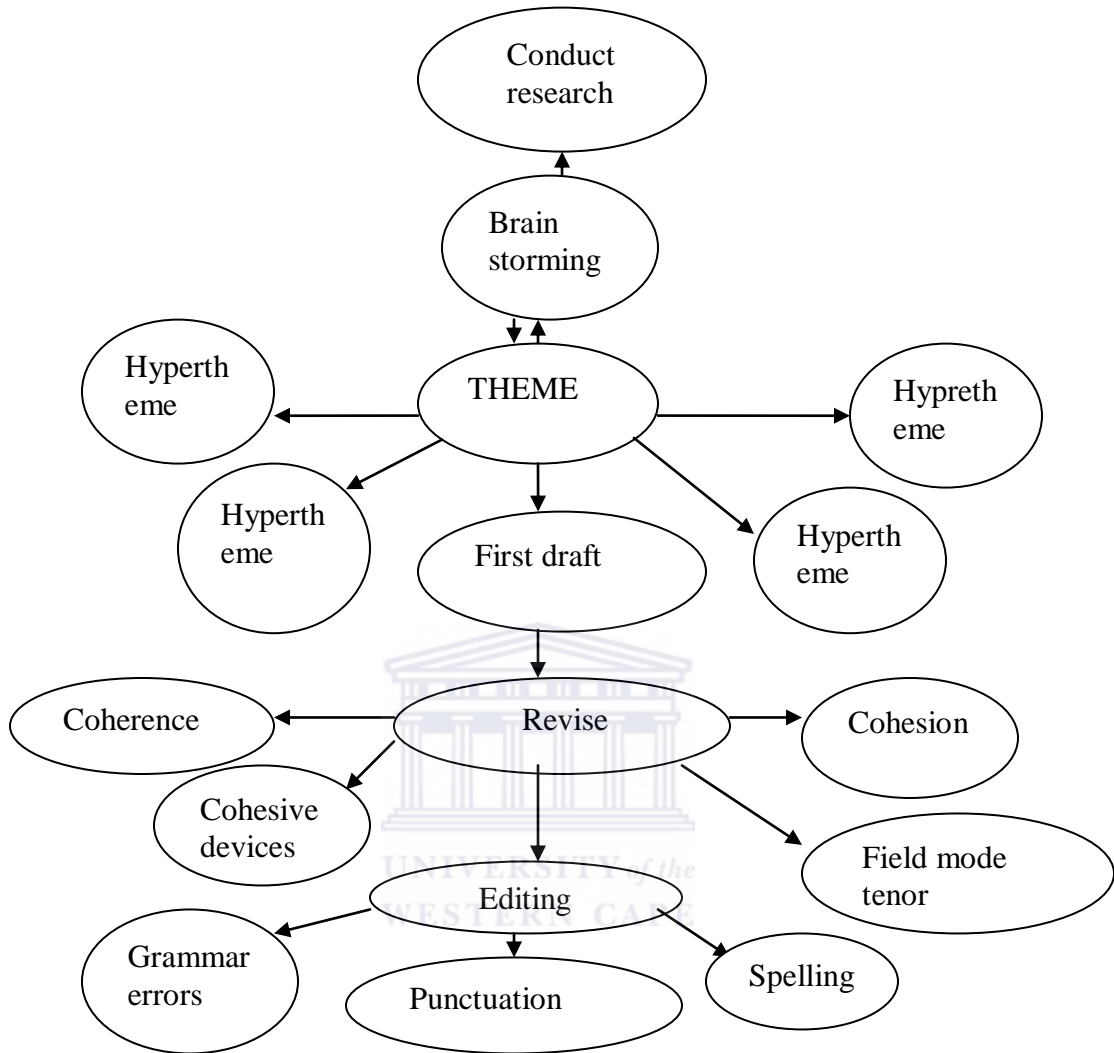


Figure 7.8.4 (a): Figure Outside the text

(b) Outside text

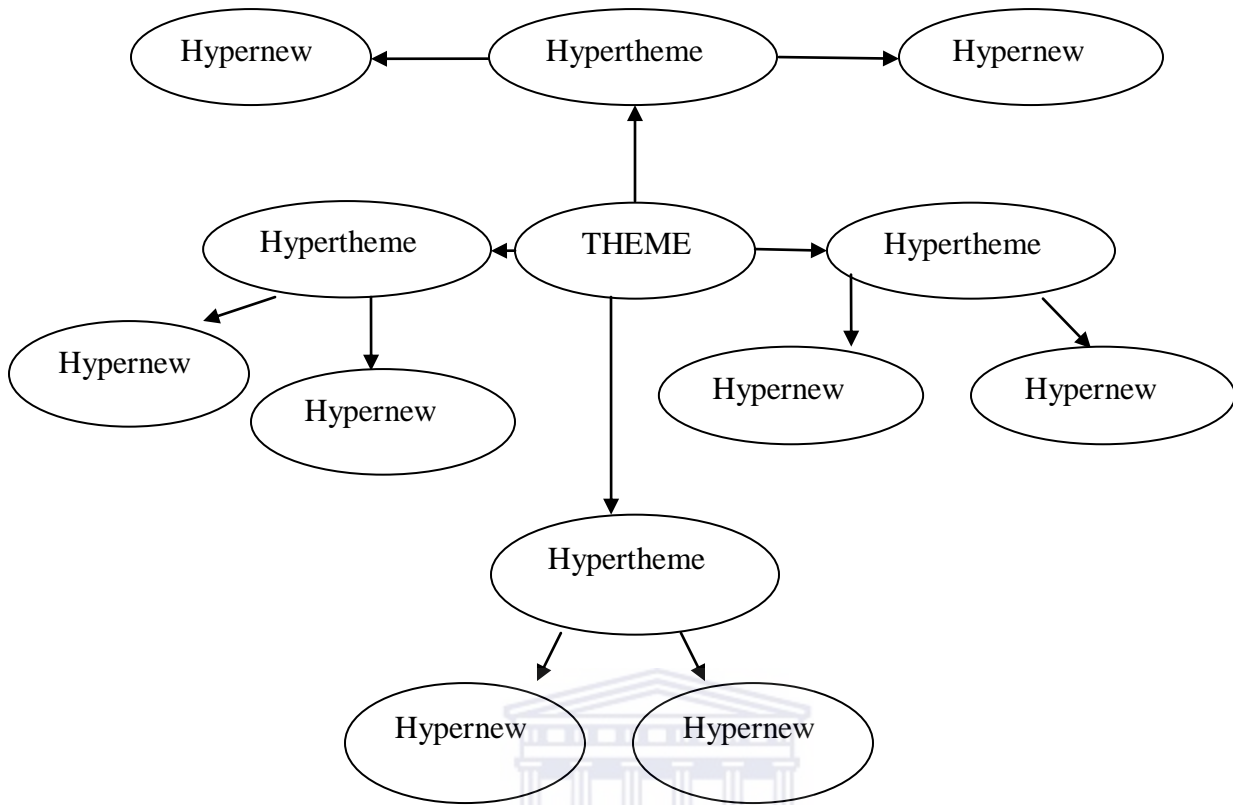
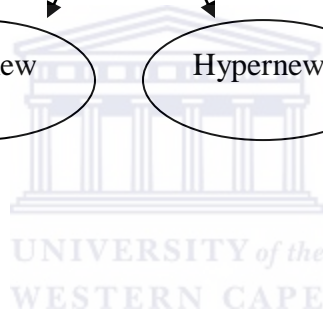


Figure 7.8. 5 (b): Outside text



7.8.4 Inside text

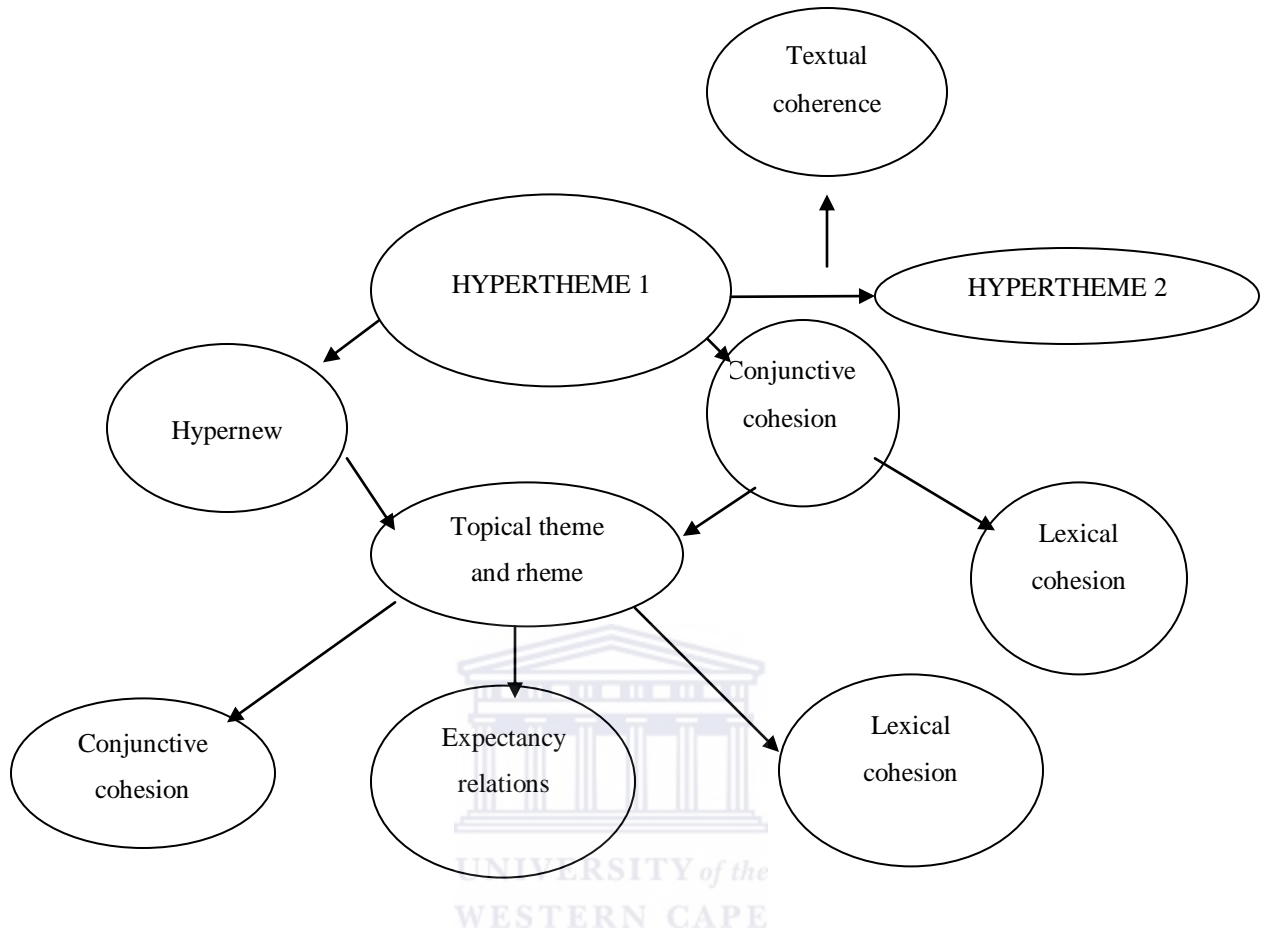


Figure 7.8. 6: Figure Inside Text

7.9 Conclusion

The first step towards solving the problem of lack academic writing skills among black students is for institutions of learning and government to acknowledge that black students have problems with academic writing. Teachers also have a responsibility to guide the students on how to improve on these problems. Changing students to improve their academic writing is a slow process that requires

commitment on the part of the student, teacher, lecturer, government and parents. However, it can be done, and the present study gives some pointers.

To address the problem of the falling standards of academic writing amongst black students in South Africa, a number of issues need to be tackled immediately, that is, training of teachers to be able to teach academic writing, changing the curriculum to address academic writing needs of students, ensuring that there are resources in rural schools, and introducing an academic writing model such as the one introduced in this study (see section 7.8).

As this study suggests, nothing is impossible as long as all the role players, some of whom are discussed in this thesis, do their part. But there is no doubt that government will need to play a much greater role than it is currently doing, providing funding, training, and materials. In general the government needs to provide a conducive environment, both in the schools and communities, for effective learning. Tackling poverty in whatever forms (for example, material and literacy deprivation) would go a long way in alleviating the academic literacy related problems that have been discussed in the study.

To sum, in line with the objectives of this study, I examined the ESL writing strategies that are used by black ESL students at Eastern Cape Technikon linguistically and semiotically. Regarding the writing processes and discourse strategies, it was clear that the not-so-competent black students lack the requisite

skills to prepare, plan, draft, revise, organize and edit their ESL written work. In most cases they do not even know how to deal with errors, with the possibility that they 'relearn' the errors with a chance for bad writing habits to be *fossilized*.

Regarding written texts contextualization and topic or theme development, these proved most problematic. To this end the grammatical devices of reference (demonstratives and the use of endophoric and exophoric referencing) tended to be incorrect, haphazard or non-existent, particularly for those classified as not-so-competent. As a result their written texts tended to lack coherence and cohesion, making them illogical and nonsensical.

In terms of **interactional and discursive practices** at school and home, it was evident that for the most in the not-so-competent group, there was a significant gap between their Xhosa-based home literacy practices, and the ESL-based literacy practices in school. Clearly, a dearth in reading material even in Xhosa, and a general lack of reading culture among this group also had a telling effect on their poor writing abilities. Since the students who constituted this group were from rural areas, it was also evident that they were likely to have been taught by teachers with no formal qualifications and in classrooms that lack teaching aids and in Xhosa. Thus, in terms evaluating the social order (network of practices), the not-so-competent group can be said to have had an impoverished education set up, with no writing experience in English and, in terms of classroom practices, they had inadequate and poor quality of feedback from teachers on written tasks.

Moreover, since some of the teachers had had no formal training, they had no knowledge of teaching methodologies. This means unlike trained teachers, they were unlikely to innovate in class as a way to address shortcomings resulting from students' rural and impoverished socio-economic factors, or to introduce critical elements in addressing black students' L2 academic writing needs.

In line with the second objective, then, it is clear that although the South African constitution is premised on equality in all spheres of human endeavour, the current study suggests that the system provides unequal education depending on where one acquires their schooling (impoverished rural versus resourced urban areas), their home socio-economic factors, and 'experience' with ESL.

As way to ameliorate the above, and in line with the third objective, this study ended with recommending several possible strategies past the obstacles, as well as with an outline ESL writing (coping) strategies considering South Africa's multilingual contexts.

Therefore, in line with Fairclough (2001), the researcher not only provides a diagnostic tool for the ESL writing problems, but also the ways of tackling and reducing the effects of the problems. In this regard, I have made wide ranging recommendations, from ways to link home-based literacy practices and school-based

ones, to curricula modifications, text-based strategies, and innovative classroom practice.

7.10 A look to the future

Following the conclusions of the current study and Fairclough's (2001) proclamation on academic writing, the following areas of concern are recommended for future research.

There is need to broaden the scope of research in academic writing to include the vast body of knowledge that a writer uses when successfully completing the activity of writing. In this sense, focus should not only be on linguistic knowledge (for example, on lexical, orthographic and syntactic knowledge); it should also be on units of discourse, and how people acquire knowledge of forms of discourse appropriate to the various fields (genre).

There is need to account for the appropriate pragmatic knowledge required for academic writing. The current study suggests this to be culturally determined, as individuals in a particular culture, for example those in the competent group from urban schools, know when it is appropriate to take notes and how to arrange such notes into coherent essays.

Most importantly, going by this study, there is need to account for how or at what point an individual acquires the knowledge that certain forms or uses of language are

important for the individual if when seeking acceptability within a given community, whether it be a large social group or a small community of a particular profession. (That is, accounting for register and genre knowledge in social contexts).

Lastly, following Fairclough (2001) CDA framework adopted in this study, one may raise a number of additional issues particularly with respect to; firstly, what segments of discourse and what aspect of discourse are formulaic for writers in different cultures, communities, or vocations; secondly, what model or models of texts exist for a given culture; and thirdly, whether such models include various aspects of the text such as lexis, orthography, syntax, structure, use of embellishment, format and selection of content.



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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Questions

Lecturers

1. Comment about the performance of Eastern Cape Technikon (ECT) students.
2. Are they proficient in English?
3. How does their lack of proficiency impact on their academic performance?
4. Say there are students who really struggle to understand English, what do you as a lecturer do to help them improve?
5. Are there any resources at ECT to address the problem? If any which ones?
6. Are there any programmes in place to address the problem?
7. What is the medium of instruction at ECT?
8. Which language do students use in the classroom and outside the classroom?
9. Do you use English only as a medium of instruction?
10. Do you think grade 12 teachers do address the language problems facing the students? If yes/no explain.
11. What do you think the Technikon should do to address the problem?
12. What should the government do to improve the situation?
13. If students were to be given extra classes are there any human resources to do that?
14. Do you encourage students to read books/newspapers/magazine and listen to news?
15. How long have you been teaching English?
16. What are your qualifications? Are you qualified to teach English if so at what level?

17. Have you attended any workshops or seminars for teachers of English lately?
When? What was your contribution, if at all?
18. Have you presented any seminar papers on English teaching? If so on what?
19. Are you familiar with curriculum objectives?
20. Is there anything in the syllabus or curriculum that you think needs to be changed? Explain?
21. Are you familiar with ESL teaching theories and approaches? Mention some of them.
22. Do you utilize some theories or approaches either to prepare your lessons or to conduct the actual teaching?
23. What resources (books, manuals etc) are available to you?
24. What references do you use? Explain.
25. Are you familiar with South African Language Policy (and/or) are you satisfied with the current language policy in the country and how is it applied?

Teachers

1. Which grades do you teach?
2. What is your highest qualification in English and where was it obtained?
3. Which methodologies do you use in class?
4. which one do you feel is the best and why?
5. What is the general performance your students?
6. How is their performance in English?
7. What do you think are the causes of their performance?
8. Are they good/poor in speaking, reading and writing English and explain why?
9. Are the students willing to use English in class?
10. Which language do they use outside the classroom?
11. Do you encourage them to speak English and how ?
12. How do you try to improve their proficiency in English?
13. How many students do you teach on average in each class?

14. How do you think these numbers impact on your teaching and also on the students' performance?
15. Which teaching material do you use and is it available?
16. Are there any resources in your school e.g. library and computers?
17. Do your students have the required text books ?
18. When does the government deliver books and stationery?
19. Are the books delivered by the government able to address the needs of the students ?
20. What is the attitude of other teachers towards English. Do they conduct their lessons in English or do they code switch?
21. How is the timetable i.e is English mainly taught in the morning or in the afternoon?
22. Do you feel that slots in the timetable for English are adequate?
23. Do you consult with other teachers concerning problem areas in English?
24. How do you feel about the present curriculum? Do you feel that there should be changes and what do you suggest should be changed?
25. What role do parents play in their children's education? Do they help their children at home?
26. How were last years' English matric results?
27. What is your comment about the pass rate?

Students

1. Where were you schooling?
2. Is the school the then model C or a school for black children?
3. Are you proficient in English i.e. speaking, reading and writing?
4. Which aspect of the language is difficult to you?
5. How was English taught at secondary school? Was English always taught in English?
6. According to your observation were they competent? If not why?

7. Was there any reading material in your school?
8. Was there any library?
9. Are you a member of a library?
10. How much reading do you do in English? In other languages?
11. How do you try to improve your language?
12. Were you involved in the language activities in your previous school? Which ones and if not why not?
13. Tell me about your exact involvement?
14. Did these activities have any impact on your language improvement?
15. When was English taught in your school i.e. morning or afternoon?
16. What impact did the time slot allocated to English have on you?
17. Do you have a dictionary and do you know how to use it?
18. How can a dictionary help you to improve your language?
19. Were there any resources in your school i.e. library computers etc?
20. Which language do you use outside the classroom?
21. Why do you not speak English?
22. Which language was used in class by Students/teachers (code-switching)?
23. During English classes did you participate actively in the development of the lesson. If yes how?
24. What do you think should be done either by the government/teachers to improve students' proficiency in English?
25. What language(s) do you use in everyday conversation in your home with friends, neighbours and relatives?
26. Did you know how to speak English before you started primary school?
27. Did you understand English before you started primary school?
28. At what age did you start learning English formally?
29. What kinds of reading materials are found in your home?
30. Do you read daily newspapers, books etc.?
31. Do you have a dictionary? Encyclopaedia in your home?
32. Are you aware of the constitutional stipulations on language rights?

33. Would you accept to be taught in your mother tongue from crèche to college level?

Parents

1. Tell me about your qualifications?
2. What is your qualification in English?
3. What role do you play in your children's education?
4. Do you help your children with English?
5. Are there any books/mini library at home?
6. Do you encourage your children to read books/magazine/newspapers?
7. Do you encourage your children to watch/listen to English news?
8. Are your children members of a local library?
9. Are there any libraries within reach?
10. What advice do you give teachers to improve the standard of education?
11. Are you involved in the actual curriculum planning?
12. Does the English curriculum address the needs of students?
13. What should be done by the government/teachers to improve the situation?

Appendix B: Tables

Table 1. Thematic analysis of the competent group

Category	Essay 11	Essay 12	Essay 13	Essay 14	Essay 15	Essay 16	Essay 17	Essay 18	Essay 19	Essay 20
Topical Theme	6	4	8	7	6	4	5	6	6	5
Marked Theme	4	1	43	5	3	3	1	4	5	
Interpersonal element as Theme	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Independent clause as	0	7	3	11	5	3	4	3	2	1

Theme										
Ranking Clause	40	36	44	54	37	35	26	34	33	44

Table 2 Thematic analysis of the not-so-competent group

Category	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5	Essay 6	Essay 7	Essay 8	Essay 9	Essay 10
Topical Theme	3	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	2
Marked Theme	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Interpersonal element as theme	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dependent clause as theme	3	0	1	3	2	0	3	0	1	0
Ranking Clause as Theme	13	5	10	16	14	13	9	4	15	12

Table 3 Conjunctive cohesion analysis of the competent group

Type	Essay 11	Essay 12	Essay 13	Essay 14	Essay 15	Essay 16	Essay 17	Essay 18	Essay 19	Essay 20
Elaborating	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1
Extending	11	5	1	4	6	4	6	16	9	4
Enhancing	3	6	2	5	1	3	1	1	3	3
Implicit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Explicit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of sentences	11	9	3	10	6	7	7	13	10	5

Table 4 Conjunctive cohesion analysis of the not-so-competent group

Type	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5	Essay 6	Essay 7	Essay 8	Essay 9	Essay 10
Elaborating	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Extending	3	1	0	2	2	3	7	1	0	1
Enhancing	0	2	3	2	0	1	0	0	1	3
Implicit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Explicit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No of Sentences	3	3	3	4	2	3	6	1	3	4

Table 5 Reference chains analysis of the competent group

Feature	Essay 11	Essay 12	Essay 13	Essay 14	Essay 15	Essay 16	Essay 17	Essay 18	Essay 19	Essay 20
No. of head items	20	36	27	23	40	14	26	20	21	18
No. of major Participants Chains	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	33	2
Head items of 3 longest Chains	Edu- 5 Teach-5 Bks-4 Schl-4	Probl-8 Teach-6 Schl-10	Edu-10 Stu-3 Schl-3	SA-6 Pple-5	Chil-6 SA-6 Edu	SA-6 Pple-5	Sa-6 Edu-5 Progr-5	SA-10 Edu-5 Chall-5	Gov-4 Pers-12 Edu-4	Dept-6 Sch-4
Homophoric	2	4	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	4
Exophoric	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	2
Cataphoric	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Esphoric	3	3	5	1	9	5	1	4	1	6
Bridging	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No of sentences	12	9	21	14	19	11	14	18	16	15

Table 6 Reference chains analysis of the not-so-competent group

Feature	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5	Essay 6	Essay 7	Essay 8	Essay 9	Essay 10
No of head items	14	3	5	7	7	13	8	4	4	9
No of major participants	1	0	2	1	2	1	2	0	2	1
Head items of longest chain	Black-2	0	SA-9 Edu-3	SA-3	Edu-3 Chall-3	Gov-4	Teac-5 Gov-3	0	Edu-4 Chall-4	Edu-9
Homophoric	1	1	3	1	0	2	2	0	1	2
Exophoric	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cataphoric	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Esphoric	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1

Bridging	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No. of sentences	5	2	9	7	5	7	6	1	5	4

Table 7 Lexical cohesion analysis of the competent group

Feature	Essay 11	Essay 12	Essay 13	Essay 14	Essay 15	Essay 16	Essay 17	Essay 18	Essay 19	Essay 20
No. of Strings	46	48	47		55	30	55		40	60
No. of Major strings	20	18	20		15	20	13		8	35
Lexical items in strings	139	114	126		173	97	138		133	101
Head items of longest strings	Edu-6 School-4	School-11 Teachers-9	Edu-11 Sch-5 SA-4		Child-20 Edu-6	Edu-10 SA-6	Edu-5 Stud-4 SA-4		Edu-4 Gov-4	Sch-8 Edu-10

Table 8 Lexical cohesion analysis of the not-so-competent group

Feature	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5	Essay 6	Essay 7	Essay 8	Essay 9	Essay 10
No. of strings	22	24	25	20	17	29	23	24	35	34
No. of major strings	11	8	19	11	10	13	7	11	15	15
Lexical items in strings	88	78	80	92	73	66	44	38	60	66
Head items of longest strings	Tertiary-4 black-4 edu-3	Edu-4 Gov-4	SA-9 Edu-19	SA-5 Edu-6	Edu-5 Chall-5	Gov-5 Sch-5	Sch-4 SA-3	Edu-6 SA-5	Chall-8 Edu-7	Edu-12 Chall-3

Table 9 Cohesive characterization analysis of the competent group

System	Essay 11	Essay 12	Essay 13	Essay 14	Essay 15	Essay 16
Conjunction	Extending Enhancing	Extending Enhancing	Extending Enhancing	Elaborating Extending Enhancing	Extending Enhancing	Extending Enhancing
Reference	Homophoric Cataphoric Esphoric	Homophoric Exophoric Esphoric	Esophoric Homophoric	Homophoric Esphoric	Homophoric Cataphoric Esphoric	Homophoric Esphoric
Lexical cohesion	Many major Strings-20 Education school	Many major Strings-18 School teachers	Many- 20 Education School SA	Many-21 Challenges Students	Not many- 15 Children Education	Many-20 Education SA

System	Essay 17	Essay 18	Essay 19	Essay 20
Conjunctions	Extending Enhancing	Elaborating Extending Enhancing	Elaborating Extending Enhancing	Extending Enhancing
Reference	Homophoric Esphoric	Homophoric Esphoric	Esphoric Exophoric	Homophoric Esphoric
Lexical cohesion	Many-20 Education SA	Many-27 SA Education Challenges	Not many-8 Education Government	Many-18 School Education

Table 10 Cohesive characterization analysis of the not-so-competent group

System	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5
Conjunctions	Extending	Enhancing	Enhancing	Extending	Extending
Reference	Homophoric	Homophoric Esphoric	Homophoric	Homophoric	None
Lexical cohesion	Not many- 11 Tertiary	Not many- 8 Education	Many-19 SA Education	Not many- 11 SA	Not many- 10 Education

	Black Education	Government		Education	Challenges
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System	Essay 6	Essay 7	Essay 8	Essay 9	Essay 10
Conjunction	Enhancing	Extending	Extending	Enhancing	Extending
Reference	Homophoric Esphoric	Homophoric	None	Homophoric	Homophoric Esphoric
Lexical cohesion	Not many-13 Government School Education	Not many-10 Education Challenges	Not many-11 Education Challenges	Not many-15 Challenges Education	Not many-15 Education Challenges



Table 11 Register analysis of the competent group

Register variable	Essay-11	Essay-12	Essay-13	Essay-14	Essay-15
Field	Clarifying the challenges facing education: lack of properly trained teachers, schools not properly built, no books	Clarifying the challenges facing education: shortage of teachers, racism in schools, shortage of books, class attendance, solutions	Opening paragraph does not address the topic but the following addresses the challenges; shortage of funds,, resources, curriculum, problems of attendance	Clarifying challenges; no funds, teachers not employed, lack of commitment	Opening paragraph does not address the topic. Following paragraphs do; finance, poverty, shortage of teachers, learning materials and lack of commitment
Mode	Uses mainly the written mode, Non – interactive, using language to reflect, moderate experiential distance	Written mode, non-interactive using language to reflect, experiential distance	Used both written and spoken modes. Using interpersonal and experiential distance	Written mode, non-interactive, experiential distance	Blend of spoken and written mode e.g. starting first paragraph with ‘some’, another sentence with ‘true’. Low interpersonal, moderate experiential distance
Tenor	Relatively formal, unequal power between experts and advisee, there is academic distance between the writer and reader	Formal; unequal power, no slang or abbreviations, not casual, language has been used to reflect	Formal and informal: ‘I think’, abbreviations: NASFAS, does’nt; no clear academic distance	Formal; unequal power between expert and advisee. There is academic distance, language used to reflect	Formal and informal language. There is academic distance between the expert and advisee

Register variable	Essay 16	Essay 17	Essay 18	Essay 19	Essay 20
Field	Opening paragraph discusses education in general and even in the following paragraphs	Discusses changes in education not challenges e.g. multiracial schools, Bantu education	Challenges clarified; shortage of funds, educators and crime rate	Discusses need for education no challenges. The only challenge mentioned is HI V and AIDS	Clarified challenges facing education; shortage of funds, resources, teachers not well paid, misuse of funds
Mode	Blend of spoken and written mode. Low interpersonal, moderate experiential distance	Written to be read, high experiential distance	Written to be read. High experiential distance	Blend of spoken and written. Low interpersonal, high experiential	Written to be read. High experiential distance
Tenor	Formal and informal. Started the first paragraph with 'as' and the third one with 'due to'. Equal and unequal power exploited	Formal; unequal power between expert and advisee. There is definitely academic distance	Formal; unequal power between expert and advisee. There is academic distance	Formal and informal, starting a paragraph with 'I think'. Equal and unequal power exploited	Formal ; unequal power between expert and advisee maximized to construct academic distance

Table 12 Register analysis of the not-so-competent group

Register variable	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5
Field	Does no clarify the challenges instead discusses merged universities and also changes in education	What is being discussed is not clear. He discusses members of education department and Nosimo Balindlela	Does not clarify challenges facing education instead the student discusses colonization of South Africa	Does not clarify the challenges instead he discusses the apartheid era	Discusses education in general and then challenges: illiteracy, shortage of skills
Mode	Blend of spoken and written but more spoken than written	Spoken; begins in interactive mode' grammar is non-standard, incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, high interpersonal distance	Spoken; non-standard grammar, incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, high interpersonal distance	Spoken, non-standard grammar incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, high interpersonal, interactive mode	Spoken, non-standard grammar, incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, high interpersonal interactive mode
Tenor	Informal language used words like 'look' to start a sentence and abbreviations like you;ll. Used language as action	Informal language, lexically sparse	Informal language, used expressions like 'I am talk about', lexically sparse	Informal; uses expressions like 'I was born here', lexically sparse	

Register variable	Essay 6	Essay 7	Essay 8	Essay 9	Essay 10
Field	Clarifies challenges: shortage of schools, resource, teachers security	Discusses challenges: shortage of funds, teachers, classrooms and training of teachers	Discusses challenges: shortage of classrooms, unemployment, shortage of funds	Does not clarify challenges, cannot make out what is being discussed	Does not address the topic, discusses education as a course, gives an example of ABET
Mode	Blend of spoken and written, non-standard incomplete clauses incorrect spelling, high interpersonal and low experiential	Blend of spoken and written, non-standard grammar, incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, high interpersonal	Neither spoken nor written, non-standard grammar, incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, high interpersonal	Neither spoken nor written, non-standard grammar, incomplete clauses, incorrect spelling, neither interpersonal nor experiential	Neither spoken nor written, non-standard grammar incomplete spelling, neither interpersonal nor experiential
Tenor	Formal and informal, equal and unequal power between expert and advisee, uses expressions like 'to make South Africa become good'	Informal, uses expressions like 'the children learn to the homes'	Informal, uses expressions like 'always in South Africa there is no improvement'	Informal, uses expressions like 'you are facing challenges in education while you are in practical times'	Informal, using incorrect expressions like 'I know many people were want other courses'

Appendix C: Essays

Essays Written by Competent and the Not-so-competent Students

Essay no. 1

South Africa has many changes has facing education for instance theres lots of merged Universities and Technicons in Eastern Cape province. The high school also made good foundation for tertiary levels which includes good facilities.

The country has improve to merged the blacks and whites in their schools which was not allowed in the 20th century. In may years ago the blacks were not allowed to attend the sports like Cricket Rugby etc. but now you'll find that the sport is for everyone according education. Look now we have black lectures which was few of the by that time that tertiary level is not for whites only as they did before.

Look in nowadays there's lots of black people who are well educated let alone about losing or looking for the jobs and at sametime you can find black doctors which are owning their surgeries, the bussness like private schools and the advocates etc.

In this era you'll find computers primary, juniors not available in the apartheid era and it shows education is changing in nowadays.

At the high shool in westen provinc there's no coporial punishment, the govement dismissed the coparral punishment on their circumstances. Another improvement facing education the electricity in schools whether is in rural area townships.

At the tertiary levl how many carrer couse they have? You cant count it shows clerly that education has change step by step. In the Apartheid era you'll find only teachers in your area not a black lowyers or doctor's which owns his/her sugery. So clearly changes facind education in this country has improved.

Essay No. 2

Education is very important in the World because every department coming from education. But the department of education is moving slowly than ather department because of the following reasons firstly and formost there are mor teachers students than teachers mining that if you are going to anather school you find 90 students in classrooms meaning that all those students depending her/him. The Department of education often asked the government to add the schools, or renover ather school and same members of the education are going to government because they wanted to increase the salaries but the government did not follow instead of passing these problem they going to promise but whnm it comes to renewish that documents they going to promise again.

The department of education is more more problem than another department because there is no parental care in the government. Many teachers are left in school because of low salaries these teachers are left in school they going to research a green pastures to overseas same they are stay here wanting for tolerance because there is no wings to fly to overseas to research the green pastures.

Nosimo Bhalindlela the premier of the they land the manage to other provinces to apologies for it. Many other student wanted to be educated because these problem they fall down. Me at my own aims teachers push forward until the government decide to do it because if there is teachers there is no educated people in whole of South Africa.

Essay No.3

There are many challenges facing Education in South Africa challenges like to know your rights in South Africa.

The first challenge that can I talk about is to be well educated because many years ago South Africa was colonized by Britain. But is not South Africa only was colonized all countries of the African continent were being colonized.

In South Africa there was the segregation which was made by Britain oppressing South African dwellers or citizen. But because of education South Africa realized that Britain is dominating the rights of the South African citizen. The example of domination that I am talk saying the place of the women is in kitchen.

There are the first elite like boys Jomo Kenyada that realized that oppression or domination after they got education. Even the people like Mandela has played the major role fighting for the freedom in South Africa. Education in South Africa is very important because now we know our rights because even South Africa is controlled by the Black person that is the president.

All changes like to control our country caused by education that means there are the results of education. As from now many people in South Africa are having their Degrees Diplomas for obtaining super positions from their country in South Africa there are many jobs challenging education jobs like teaching and so on.

South Africa is having many thing that are challenging education as said above.

Therefore in South Africa Education is very much important and very much needed.

Because Education is a priority that means there is nothing is important more than it in South Africa.

Because when you have Education you can go at America, Britain and wherever you want.

Essay No. 4

I am a south African citizenship. I was born here I Think since totes. I know South Africa very well. I start to talk about this challenges since 1976. On 1976 there was a huge apartheid here in South Africa.

Blacks were not equal with whites since that year. Black people were not educated at all because there was an Bantu education. So black man decided to go to the mines to find some jobs. Even if maybe some black man have little education were are not some because they were treated as unskilled labour.

Now I am going to talk about a freedom in South African. We as blacks found a freedom since 1994 so black people found an opportunity to be educated free education to all so we have a chance to be educated but because of poverty and lack of industry even if people were have degree or diploma so the thing that they prove them that they have an experience for better jobs, there is no job opportunity in South Africa the reason for that is because our goverment is not opening or try to found an industry or company that can make South Africa to be an wealthy country. Instead our gornvment, thank gornvment thank unplanned pregnance by giving them a child grant so that one make under age teenages to be pregnant so they were know that they were given that child grant.

Education is a huge problem in South Africa, the reason is that there are many people who are uneducated than those who are educated even those are no job.

It is a challenge, people of South Africa were fly to overseas to try and found some better jobs. This challenge is a huge problem especial in my province Eastern Cape because they are many people who are unskilled because they have no education. There are no mines no industry or small industry like farms.

Our brothers and sisters those who have an opportunity to be educated they are no working no jobs when they found lucky a job that job need or demand an experience may be experience of five or ten year. This is a serious problem in our country I wish our goverment make some changes especial in this challenge.

Essay No. 5

Firstly I may said education is very brood because when you talk about educan you are talking about a future of our country as a whole.

I am trying to talk about the challenges facing education in our country which is South Africa. All of us know that our government which is policy of this country need an educated South Africa.

First challenge that facing South Africa is that most of South African are not educated we must educate/teach those people to survive in this country.

Most of the people that is struggling in terms of education is an old people who not got their chances because of racism meant by racist government ruled by whites before freedom in South Africa. The main challenge is that as a youth we must develop skills to our parents who were not getting those chance before. If you look at the programs who are introduced by government the are programs who are looking for the education of people who is called ABET.

This program is looking for the improvement of education to the old people who are not getting their chances. As a youth we must keep it on by pushing this program forward by producing skills for the future of our parents especial for development of our country and lift up the economy of our country. We are gitting our freedom so we must struggling to get education for all citizens in South Africa.

This country is for us we must educate our parent ABET is for them. That is why we must challenge the challenges that facing education in South Africa.

Essay No.6

In South Africa there is a lack of school. Many children are having there interested of learning. Some of the student they got no money to go to school.

We are facing a big problem to South Africa because in the school that are on the rural areas they are having a shortage of the tools like computers desk books and also class room. Some of the tudent traveling the long distance to go to school, because there is a limited school in South Africa.

To make South Africa become good in education our government must be involve him self in this issue. By building Schools Employ many taeachers and also he must construct the road. And another thing the government must opening the job opportunity our government must support us giving us the enough tools of education.

In our schools we need a good security because there are soo many criminals in this country. So these criminals breaking the walls of school in order to take the propartise of school. We need to get the support of government. Because we want to be safe. The government of this country should be honest to their people and give free education to the children of this country.

The children of the country need or better education so they need the support of the government. To improve every thing in S.A. There ar some tudent that attending their class under the trees just because they no class room at all. So these children the support of the government.

Essay No. 7

South Africa had many challenges that is facing with there is the student who are unable to pay schoolfees because of some problems. And there were children who want to continue with their studies but they failed to continue. And the South African government give them some loans and busaries.

South Africa had facing with some challenges there were many schools here in South Africa but there were few teachers. The government cannot take the teachers to the schools, the government said there is no money for the teachers. The teachers do hard work but they get less month salaries for their work. There is the time at schools the teachers cannot teach because they go to toyi-toyi because they want their money to be increased but the government always make the promises to increased their money but the government cannot do that.

The government had the very good thing to make the schools and always the government open the schools there were children who learn over the trees but government promises to built for them. And the children learn to the homes and in churches but government promises to bult for them.

The govemnet make a good thing to make the schools the old people. There were teachers trained to teach the old people. The government of education thinks of the old people. The government of education thinks of the old people who leave the schools so early and they are unable to read and to write and vote. The goverment want to be educated and get some works.

There were people who were in jail/prison who are uneducated but now they are educated. Becouse now in prison they were teachers for the prisoners and they were trained to teach the prisoners. The person enter to the prison without any experience but person get he/she getout with more experience.

Essay No. 8

There are many challenges facing education in South Africa like teachers there are few in schools mean that the children have no choise for study well. Some of school have many pupils in one class wich means the teach have not sure all the people must be understand.

If you see South Africa education is very poor aspeical in rural areas. When you go to college and finished you go back to your home cause have no jobs for teaching that means have not there is no different between education people and uneducation.

When you finished a school get jobs after month didn't get a money for a years or 2 yrs. After that when we get it but you also teach a pupils every go to school that why most of people did not like to be a teacher. If your see the 1980's teachers don't understand what is a OBE because of that OBE is a new study and don't understand what means's.

In South Africa education is also a facing because of the goverbody have no ashain for improve the education in South Africa. When were see in another provise is very expressive education like tuber cause education is very good than the South Africa. Always in South Africa the is no improvement.

Essay No. 9

We are facing challenges in education because if you are educated at sametimes you communicate with uneducated people. Those people uneducated they challenge yourself.

In South Africa you get challenges facing education because if you educated for example you are teacher at school you are facing challenges. While you are in class you get some students are no displine. Because those students are coming from different home.

Onether challenge facing education is when you are the first student at school for example at Techinkon you arrive at that school you get a students while are know everthing at that school you get a students while are know everthing at that school like third year students.

Those students are challenges you because they know you are not know the things of that school. They challenge you to give negative attitude. Some students challenge you to give a positive attitude.

In south Africa we are facing challenges in education for example you work at bank you get people challenge you. They challenge you to know how to respect people coming at that bank.

You are facing challenges in education while you are in practical times. How because if are in time of taking practical teaching. You must go to primary school. So you get challenges because some of students in that school are no respect.

Really there are challenges facing education in South Africa.

Essay No. 10

There are many things that we are challenges facing Education in South Africa. In the case of education many people we not like to do Education course says that many teachers is South Africa were staying their homes.

Because some of people were not understanding that education is very important. Unlike in the case of Basic Education and training many peoples were undermine this course. But tjhis case is helping that person not given a chance for study enough time.

Challenges facing Education in South Africa . I know that many peoples were want other courses because they says that education is lowest course important courses is the another courses like management courses. But I'm say that it is false statement.

If you doing Education that is good because if you area of you town thre is no ABET schools of no Pri-schools its you chance because if you finishing to study you may open one of school its adult school and that area you may help many persons. Because long ago the chance of study was not present. That challenge in not present in Eastern cape only.

Challenges facing Education in South Africa, I know that Education always undermining. But Education in South Africa is very important because all people was born but most of all we no writing. But if were grow four years you may try to write you name.

Many years ago in the rural areas schools there is no there but now there are many schools. And Adult basic school. If you not study and now you are employee is the chance of you now . Because mining works there's Adult School there . In the prison there is Adult shool there.

Education is to give more and information in our peoples because if the Department of Education is not created in South Africa. Many people were died because space of jobs development Education Department. And now developing Adult schools in South Africa.

Challenges facing Education in Soth Africa . In South Africa Education is very very important because of there are doctors and lawyers of South Africa because of Department of Education. There are many teachers because of Department of Education.

Essay No. 11

As we all know that there are challenges in every department of this country, education has the most number of challenges and some of them lead to success while others may lead to failure.

The first challenge that mostly affects education in this country is the lack of properly trained teachers. These days no one wants to be a teacher because of certain reasons and this leads to few teachers. We all know that teachers play the most important role in education so they need to be taken care of and nurtured in order to improve the standard of education in this country.

Secondly in schools we can have teachers but if we do not have properly built schools, education will never grow. Building up to the standard schools encourages students and teachers to attend classes especially in the rural areas. These days kids go to school because they have to even if the school buildings are not up to standard but by building new classrooms will not benefit students only, the members of the communities will be encouraged and they will start encouraging their kids to go to school because the buildings will be safe and good for students to learn in them.

Books, we can have professional teachers and fancy schools but if we do not have books there is no way we can achieve goals. Every parent wants his/her child to be something in life and that can only be done if books are supplied in schools. There is nothing that can play a big role in school more than the books because of them kids and teachers are able to do what they go to school for and feel satisfied at the end of the day.

The biggest challenge facing education in this country is to make the above mentioned facilities available to every part of this country not only on paper but in the communities. Delivering these facilities can save lots of lives and families and can also participate in building a brighter future in the next coming decade for this beautiful South Africa.

Essay No. 12

Today south African education is facing a number of problems. The government has done a lot to improve South African education. In some places it has worked but in others there's still a room for improvement.

The problems that South African education are for instance the shortage of teachers in some schools, learners who are not committed in educating themselves, teachers who come to school drunk and are too tired to teach because of hangover, or teachers who come to school with personal problems and taking their problems out on the learners by not teaching them well, by getting bored when a student ask questions about something they did not understand In some schools there's still racism, they won't

allow black or coloured learners to learn in their schools because of the colour of their skin and when they do allow them they want to teach them in Afrikaans, and they will give them hard time because of the colour of their skins. The other problem is the shortage of books. Some schools have a serious shortage problem of books. In some cases 5 students sharing one book. In the rural areas there are few schools and these schools are far, so most of the children in rural areas don't go to school.

The other problem is students are given too much freedom. They don't attend classes if they feel like it, some come to school drunk and when the teacher talk with them about it they say they have right to do what they want. So those are the problems facing education in South Africa.

The solution of these problems are the government should build enough schools closer to the children in the rural areas. To give the teachers more right track. To those schools that have racism problem the government should come up with a plan that would help those who are discriminated because of the colour of their skin. As for those teachers who are corrupt the department of education must send the subject adviser of that teacher on weekly basis to check o him/her wether the school work is up to date. Those are the solutions.

Essay No. 13

I think the level of education in South Africa is greater than any country. The education system we follow is in such a way that it makes education an endless experience.

Not all of us are privileged to have a chance to expand our minds in the spheres of education. Many struggle to make or find funds for their education and most of the time you find that it is the people that come from rural areas.

Schools in the out skirts of town have the same subjects as in the town, but don't have resources to help them. The image of the school plays a pivotal role on the level of education given, which I think is wrong. Schools must be treated in the same respect.

South Africa is trying to updated or make easy the subjects in mostly high schools. Reason being that children do subjects that they don't like or just pass matric. When they get to tertiary they don't know what to choose and end up changing courses every year, this is one of the challenges facing South African education.

Funds should be provided for school in the rural areas so that pupils are educated equally. I think money is the biggest challenge facing South African education. Children don't go to school because their fees have to be paid. Parents have to buy expensive uniforms, shoes and books. Education is very costly, but does pay off at the end. In tertiary this is very different.

NESFAS is a student loan, but students have to pay it back when they get work, some have to pay it for the rest of their lives. Then we get students that get unemployed they don't have funds to finish what they failed.

Education doesn't come in a cheap price . Education is the key to success this would be harmonic music to every living being if only education was free.

Essay No. 14

There are various challenges that are facing education in South Africa such as students who do not have money to complete or further their studies, after matric that is also a challenge. The students who do not have the necessary equipment to further their studies they need assistance from the different organisation or institutions who can help them.

The most common challenge facing education in South Africa, is the money that has to assist those who have financial problems at home. Nowadays students are very fortunate because there are busaries and loans. Students then can get help when they need financial support when they need to further their studies

There is also a problem that affects education in South Africa, when people study very hard and graduate and not find employment. This is one problem that has to be looked at. A student studies for about 3 or more years in the hope of thinking that they might get employed and it does not happen which is not fair for and his/her parents.

Sometimes the students don't do well in their exam that is also a challenge because it is a loss for them and for country as well. If the pass rate drops then it hardly affects country as a whole. Sometimes the teachers who are lazy to teach or maybe the teacher who come to school drunk that also affects the country because how can people pass when there is no teacher in front of them.

Even the students, who do not study and expect to pass at the end of the day it is a challenge. In order for a person to do the best they must work very hard and also aim high and being the best. So therefore there are a lot of challenges facing our country and the students, parents and teachers need to work together for brighter future for the children.

Sometimes the students who do not work accordingly with the teachers is also a challenge facing education in South Africa. In order for the country to have better results, the students have to work very hard, the parents must see to it that happens. In most cases some people fail because they don't get guidance from their family.

Our country is facing lots of challenges but with positive attitudes will make it through. People need to have dreams in order to achieve what they want and be successful.

Essay No. 15

Some educational experts once stated that South Africa has one of the lowest standards of education in the world. One would automatically reply that the country also has the lowest standard of living in the world which in turn affects education in South Africa. True, there are more challenges facing education in South Africa than poverty.

The first and most overlooked of these challenges is lack of emotional and financial support at home. Parents often undermine the fact that problems start at home where children are concerned. There is no emphasis on basic things like reading to ones child from an early age and encouraging children to read instead of watch television. What about having confidence and determination in a child so the child learns that they are two of the most important elements of success.

In most cases there is the problem of poverty where while the child may want to study lack of funds prevents him from doing so. Or in other cases there is abuse in the home, the child ends up not going to school ends up thinking crime is the only way out. South Africa loses a nurse a civil engineering or a doctor. This is your typical South African situation. Insufficient teachers is also one of the most important problems facing South Africa. One teacher has the task of advocating sixty pupils instead of twenty. Lets face it, their task is quite strenuous . The results is that teachers look for greener pastures. The government employs untrained people to do the task and children especially the younger ones get an unstable foundation.

With the government not giving school enough learning material education suffers especially in the case of the poor. At the beginning of almost every year television shows about five students sharing one textbook, broken or lack of school furniture and teaching conducted under trees . Such an environment is demotivating especially to the young children who are almost always looking forward to school.

The last most important challenge facing education in South Africa is lack of commitment from the students themselves. The fact that hard work pays and that you don't pass unless you learn is basic but ignored. While we may complain about the government commitment, dedication and motivation are the keys to good education.

Essay No.16

As South Africa is going through a lot of changes it has been discovered that education has resulted in it being a concern for all parties involved in it. As education

in most years was divided between black and white people it has made it difficult for people living in the new South Africa to adapt to the challenges facing them.

Education in South Africa in the apartheid was great disadvantage to the people because then it was individually up to them to educate themselves to the standards of white people and thankfully some of them achieved their goals.

Due to the new South Africa education has made people realize that it is up to them to keep up with the challenges facing them. Things have changed because everyone is being educated in the same way and this has forced a lot of people who have lived in the past to move on with the time and make a mark in the new South Africa. A lot of people still withdraw because they are afraid of taking up challenges facing them not knowing that it is no longer just them who are going to be helping themselves but everyone is involved.

WE all need to be educated so that we can educate the coming generation and so on. Education is knowledge that has to be passed on to those that are willing. Its no use trying to help someone that doesn't appreciate anything because at the end it is them that are going to loose out. Education will always be a challenge that is why we are privileged and that is why we always have to know of changes that occur. It is up to those that are willing to be committed to face the challenges facing South Africa.

Essay No 17

South Africa as a liberated country has brought up so many changes since its liberation. It is indeed a rainbow nation diverse cultures and of course viable citizens.

South Africa has always had education as the key to many doors since its existence. It had its politics. On the years of the 70's where pupils were only allowed to certain subjects and the problem rose when there was Bantu Education. The governance of that time expected students to be taught of Western History so a to hide away their identity and the history of South Africa as a whole. That was fought for by the students until it was introduced. There was also classification of school where some were for blacks and some for whites.

Systems changed we the had multi-racial schools, free and fair education for all. Not only students are fed with books but sports activities as well. We nowadays find people in sports field with a little base of education. Our foreparents never even had the chance to go to school but with the new government and new rules we have the Adult Basic Education which has no age limit, the abolishment of corporal punishment, the implementation of foundation programmes and the learnership programmes

The Education Department and its governance decided to put-up with those measuers so as to upgrade the standard of South African education.

These programmes not only helped students at tertiary levels but to anyone who needed education. In high schools implementation of foundation programs now always been the best so as to help learners to make good career choices.

Internship and learnership programs in tertiary levels has opened job opportunities. What's even more exciting is a system of exchanged from high school to tertiary level.

It is this advanced and promising to prosper due to its rainbow glamour and the corporate neighbouring country.

Essay No. 18

South Africa is a rich and beautiful country with an outstanding history. This beautiful land needs to be kept as more beautiful as ever and as more developed as possible. To make these things possible South Africa has to have many educated people and well informed individuals. Actually the needs of South Africa cannot be provided to her if there are still obstacles and challenges facing the education of her.

South Africa's education really faced by so many challenges and has to face them. Some of the challenges facing education of South Africa are that South Africa has a shortage of educators in schools which is a disadvantage to both teachers and students. This is a disadvantage because one educator cannot afford to teach three different subjects in three different classes for example, or even three subjects in one class. On the other side of students; students cannot possibly afford to listen to one teacher for more than three hours, they get bored, sleepy and exhausted and that results to lack of concentration and co-operation.

Another factor is the issue of unemployment and lack of jobs. Unemployment affects the Education of South Africa and is a major effect and a challenge because for instance if no one in my family is employed or receiving grants. I will not be able to convince with my studies or even start schooling if I had not started yet. People get educated and others get their diplomas for teaching but after graduation they hardly get employed and that results to the lack or shortage of educators in schools. There are people who learn and strive to get these challenges done with but they also get unemployed or given a chance to show and demonstrate their ideas.

The uprising of crime rate in South Africa is one of the biggest challenges facing South Africa as a whole. We South Africans are not yet aware of the dangers brought by criminals in South African education. Some criminals burn down school buildings and damage all the necessary property for education, some even hijack students and innocent teachers when they are on their way to school or from school, and these things disturb the education process of South Africa.

Essay No. 19

Education is a key to liberation. There is a need for each and every person in South Africa to be educated. Our government give this right to everybody.

Many people in South Africa were un-educated due to some reasons like poverty. If a person is to get education he/she needs money. As most people are unemployed it is not easy for them to have money for fees. Most schools have no equipment for science and Maths learning areas and those subjects are in most need, for the developing country.

Government pilot adult learning centres for those people who were not given the basic skills to develop and help them survive in their business but the challenge is that there is no equipment to help them. For example if a person is supposed to learn a skill of dressmaking and there is no machine, it is difficult for him /her know how to operate the sewing machine, it is difficult for him/her to understand the skill easily. It may happen that in other centres the educators are just educated for that skill but have no experience.

Government pilot pre-school and reception classes for those kids between three years and six years but the challenge is that educators for those classes need to be given skills and that needs money. Even the equipment used in those classes need money.

Most of the challenges is HIV and Aids because the government use money by giving busarries to students and some of them die before they pay back that money.

Many Africans were farmers and they saw no need for their children to be educated, instead they forced them to help in farming.

I think each and every person is supposed to be educated because education is the mother of success. Even our libraries especially the former Transkei need to be improved so that children get more information from grade R. Even those teachers who have not been given skills of OBE like grouping learners and others need to be educated so that they can educate learners well.

Essay No. 20

South Africa is growing as a country and part of its growth is the Education Department. The level of education in South Africa is not up to standard as compared to developed countries like the USA and Europe. There are various reasons for the challenges faced by the South African Education.

In order for education to be advanced there has to be funds. These funds will be used to buy equipment for students and to build learning facilities. At the moment most areas especially rural areas do not have school buildings and the necessary equipment

for learning. Computers have become a necessity in schools because they carry a lot of information and they broaden a persons mind. At the moment South Africa nearly half of the schools where there are computers the teachers do not know how to oprate those computers. This sets back the Education Department because teachers have to be trained to use computers.

The expense of education also puts a strain on South African education. Advanced schools are expensive and not everyone can afford them. It is mostly private schools that offer almost every equipment needed for a better education which comes at an expense. The teachers are well paid and well trained. Government owned schools lack facilities and the teachers are under-paid. In most government owned schools the classes are cramped and not every student is being attended. Promises have been made about the building of new bigger schools, but little has been accomplished.

A certain amount of money is given to the South African education Department a very year to improve the level of education. I believe the Department misuses the funds and that educational officials are over-paid. If the government would take care of government owned schools and supply them with the neccessary equipment, there would be less problems.

The subjects taught at secondary level are irrelevant to the type of career options pupils tend to choose. I think they should prepare pupils at an early stage for the career they hope to follow. Teach pupils the basics of a certain career so that when they reach tertiary level they have an idea of what their chosen career is about.

