# The accessibility of printed news to first language speakers of Xhosa

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# Minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the degree of MA in Linguistics in the Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape

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#### Declaration:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole or in part for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to and quotation in this dissertation taken from the work or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Nobuhle Beauty Luphondo

June 2006

SIGNATURE......DATE.....



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I would like to acknowledge people who have assisted and encouraged me to finish this thesis

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#### **Abstract**

This mini-thesis profiles some aspects related to the accessibility of printed news to first language speakers of Xhosa. Specifically, it takes an interest in various kinds of information that prepare learners for access to higher education.

The major aim of this thesis is to investigate whether speakers of Xhosa do have access to printed news in English, which is not in their first language. Under "access" this study understands two things: (i) access to printed news as a material resource, where the question is whether readers actually buy or otherwise get to read newspapers, and (ii) access to the information contained in news reports, where the question is whether people who do have access to newspapers actually understand what they read well enough for it to be of proper use to them in their social setting. Therefore, this thesis investigates whether African language speakers of school leaving age understand what they read in English newspapers.

Data for this research was collected in two stages. First, a questionnaire was prepared and circulated among readers with different first languages, in order to gain insight into general patterns of access to the media among young adults in tertiary education. Second, a questionnaire was prepared in the form of a comprehension exercise to check access to the information carried in English newspapers. This questionnaire required more in terms of time and effort by respondents and in analysis. Therefore, a smaller sample of respondents was selected. Xhosa L1 readers who had indicated varying degrees of access to printed media generally were specifically targeted. The exercise was intended to check whether there is any correlation between regular access to the printed media and better access to the information communicated in such media.

Using CDA and aspects of text analysis as a theoretical framework (Fairclough 1989, 1995 a & b, 2001; Wodak 1996, 2001; Eggins 2004; Martin & Rose 2004; Christie 2005), the study draws a profile of trends in patterns of reading and comprehension of media texts. This is used to make informed predictions on more general patterns, on the reasons for the patterns observed, and on ways to improve the access of Xhosa L1 speakers to the media, the information carried in the media, as well as on the 'social capital' this may provide particularly in preparing learners for higher education.

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# **Chapter 1: Background**

#### 1.1 Introduction

This mini- thesis profiles some aspects related to the linguistic resources and experiences of students who are studying in a multilingual setting. It considers questions related to accessibility of printed news to first language speakers of Xhosa. Specifically, it takes an interest in various kinds of information that prepare learners for access to higher education. I assume that there are at least four sites of social interaction where learners are prepared for higher learning and that are rewarding in terms of providing *cultural* and *linguistic capital*. These sites are

- 1. Family background
- 2. Formal schooling
- 3. Community structures
- 4. Mass media



Corson (1993) talks about language as the vehicle for identifying, manipulating or changing power relations between people. Schools, communities and public areas such as mass media are referred to as systems, which pass societal and cultural knowledge on to the learners. Language is seen, as the vehicle for distributing this knowledge and for ensuring that what is valued in the community will be established for the future as well.

French social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, (cited in Fowler, 1991:206) explains cultural capital as "culturally esteemed advantages that people acquire as part of their life experiences, their peer group contacts and their family backgrounds". He identifies linguistic capital as the ability to produce grammatically well-formed expressions and forms of language, and as the ability to apply appropriate and acceptable norms of language use.

This thesis will consider how first language speakers of Xhosa in a particular area of the Western Cape are included or excluded from gaining valuable cultural and

linguistic knowledge through the mass media. It will focus on the printed media as means of access to socially valued information. It will focus particularly on matters of comprehensibility for a multilingual readership with Xhosa as a first language and English as a second language (these respondents will be referred to as "Xhosa L1 readers"). The project is a pilot study in that it works with data from a limited sample of 120 respondents. Although some statistical calculations will indicate how many young adults have access to local media and how access to English newspapers correlates with a particular kind of comprehension, the focus of the analysis will be on the qualitative rather than the quantitative data. This study analyzes Xhosa L1 readers' responses qualitatively, and draws a profile of trends in patterns of reading and comprehension of media texts. This will be used to make informed predictions on more general patterns, on reasons for the patterns observed, and on ways to improve the access of Xhosa L1 speakers to the media, the information carried in the media, and the 'social capital' this may provide particularly in preparing learners for higher education.

#### **1.2 Aims**

The major aim of this research is to investigate whether Xhosa L1 speakers have access to printed news in English, a language which is not their first language. Under "access" this study understands two things: (i) access to printed news as a material resource, where the question is whether readers actually buy or otherwise get to read newspapers, and (ii) access to the information contained in news reports, where the question is whether people who have access to newspapers actually understand what they read well enough for it to be of proper use to them in their social setting. This research is based on an assumption that there is a lack of printed news in African languages generally and therefore also in Xhosa, and that access to such news then is dependant on access to English newspapers. Therefore this research investigates the extent to which African language speakers of school leaving age understand what they read in English newspapers if they do read them.

#### 1.3 Research questions

- 1. What kinds of access do (the selected sample of) Xhosa L1 readers have to the printed news? Do they read newspapers, if not why not?
- 2. In terms of language proficiency and participation in public discourses, what are the effects of less access to the newspaper on the (selected sample of) Xhosa L1 readers?
- 3. If (the selected sample of) Xhosa L1 readers read newspapers, do they understand what they read?
- 4. Is there a marked relation between the region in which (the selected sample of) Xhosa L1 readers were schooled, and their levels of access to English news and news media?
- 5. Which categories do these Xhosa L1 readers prefer to read the most, i.e. to which public discourses do they gain access by reading newspapers?
- 6. How does the interpretation and comprehension of news published in English relate to the access these Xhosa L1 readers have to such news?

#### 1.4 Hypothesis

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The research is based on the following general hypotheses:

- 1. It is rare to find printed news written in African languages generally and therefore also in Xhosa.
- 2. Printed news requires daily availability of extra cash. Many cannot afford to buy newspapers.
- 3. Most of the newspapers are written in English.
- 4. Xhosa L1 speakers may have problems in comprehending news printed in English

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This study used the following literature:

- 1. Literature on socio-linguistic situations and policy issues in South Africa.
- 2. Literature on media and communication and access to information
- 3. Literature on the theoretical, conceptual and analytical framework.

#### 2.1 Introduction

South Africa is no different to other countries in Africa in that it has a vastly multilingual population. To manage the linguistic variety in a way that will respect the language rights of the majority of citizens, this country accepted 11 official languages in the new constitution of 1995<sup>1</sup>. It is said that South Africa promotes a policy of multilingualism. According to Coulmas (1997) multilingualism can refer to either the competence or the language use of an individual or to the language situation in an entire nation or society. He goes on to say that language policies or community attitudes may enforce, support, accept, or reject multilingualism or give special status to one or more than one language. Research shows that the term *multilingualism* is often interpreted very differently by different groups and is used differently in many different contexts.

In practice, of all of these 11 official languages in South Africa, English is the one language that is used, developed and thus promoted the most (Alexander, 1995; Heugh et al, 1995; Heugh, 2002; Ridge, 2000; Pluddemann et al, 2004). Alexander (2003) laments the fact that although language-planning units in South Africa are aimed at promoting the use and the development of African languages, as well as the legitimacy and significance of multilingualism, in practice the hegemony of English continues. He argues for the use of African languages in electronic and the print media, and the encouragement of creative writing in African languages in order to establish a culture of reading in African languages.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1995.

Only reading, writing and learning/teaching in African languages will ensure inclusive citizenship on the continent (Alexander 2005; Prah 1995). This was not lost among participants at a recent intergovernmental conference of ministers on language policies in Africa, where the African vision of establishing a democracy where development is not construed in terms of narrow economic goals but in terms of a culturally valued way of living together and within a broad context of justice, fairness and equity for all, was reiterated (Alexander 2005). This included highlighting respect for linguistic rights as human rights, including those of minorities. Participants resolved that such a democracy should seek to enhance the active participation of all citizens in all institutions - social, economic, political and others. The use of African languages in all spheres of human endeavour is critical in this respect.

With regard to the language situation in South Africa, the constitution guarantees, amongst others, the following rights for citizens: (1) the right to be addressed and to be heard in their own language or at least in the language of their choice (2) the right to have their home language and your linguistic identity respected (3) the right to be educated and trained in the language of your choice (4) the right of access to information and (5) the right to participate in all aspects and at all levels of public life. Thus, if the national media supplies information using languages people do not fully understand, the media effectively denies them the right of access referred to in (4) above. In fact the media then also denies the right referred to in (1) above, namely rights to be addressed and heard in the language people are most proficient in. As Prah (2002) argues, people need to be able to fully express themselves everywhere in their mother tongues, or in their national language. It is in recognition of this that the Western Cape language Committee has striven to promote the use of three official languages. Those languages are English, Afrikaans and Xhosa. One of their goals is to encourage language use that is accessible to all.

Granted that government can exercise control over language issues pertaining to media channels and that they have jurisdiction over state run entities such as SABC; in practice, however, in a democracy, not even government can force the media to use a particular language or languages. According to Fairclough (1995)

media practices and texts are shaped by commercial environment and are symbolic cultural commodities. Thus, like other commodities, the media also answer to the dictates of global market forces. Therefore this affects both the content and communicative style and also the language of content. He believes that patterns of ownership influences indirectly media discourses. From critical discourse/media analysis perspective, then, media owners aim at ensuring that the dominant voices are those of political and social establishment. In essence, the dictates of the commercial environment constrain what is in the media and indirectly controls access to media (Fairclough, 1995, 2004). This has given rise to what Fairclough (1995, 2001, 2004) calls orders of discourse, or disorders of discourse (Wodak, 1996), in which societal power relations and values are reflected in particular discourse. In this regard, discourse or choices people make with regard to language are not only a source of societal difference, but also produce and reproduce such difference.

In essence, the choices made about whether to publish in English or Xhosa, as well as the choices people make, e.g., about whether to watch the news in English or Xhosa, is both a source of difference and reflection of the (re)production of such difference (Banda 2003).

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It is in part because of this that considering the provisions of the constitution, this research is interested particularly in the last two provisions of access to information and the right to take part in all aspects of social life. We need to investigate the extent to which first language speakers of other languages than English, particularly indigenous African languages — and in the case of my research Xhosa L1 speakers— have this kind of access that the constitution promises.

#### Theoretical framework

This mini thesis looks at the accessibility of Xhosa L1 speakers to newspapers, the choices they have to access (media in mother tongue vs media in English) and whether they can comprehend them. In trying to understand this issue I draw from aspects of critical discourse analysis, specifically the analysis of identities, values, ideologies, and power relations (Fairclough 1995, 2001, 2004; Wodak & Meyer

2001). These factors can be used to explain certain social processes. The way Xhosa L1 speakers interact with the text will reveal the attitude and values towards these languages and the ideology behind the choices they make. This entails problematising discourse as an abstract noun in which language is used as a social practice with particular emphasis on lager units such as paragraphs, utterances, whole texts or genres in social contexts (Locke 2004; Eggins, 2004; Christie 2002, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2003). Wodak (1996) believes that discourse is connected to power and ideology. Fairclough (2004) defines ideologies as representations of aspects of the world that can be shown to contribute to establishing maintaining and changing social relations of power domination and exploitation.

In Banda's (2003) study, it was perceived that students found it difficult to translate materials into Xhosa as they lacked the skills to effectively translate the material between English second language and their mother tongue. The lack of skill could be explained in part as due to their resistance to have instruction in Xhosa, which in turn could be said to result from social attitudes, and practices that are all in favour of English. Thus, socially established values and ideologies have played a critical part in maintaining the status quo in favour English to the detriment of indigenous African languages (Banda, 2003).

Institutions play a critical role in producing and maintaining hegemony. Moreover, as Fairclough (1995: 27) notes, social institutions embody diverse ideological-discursive formations (IDFs) linked to different groups within the institution, and "one IDF ... clearly dominates." In another study, Braam (2004) states that media is the most significant institutional influence. His study concludes that the majority of black-African learners prefer viewing English television, and that this provides a powerful institutional influence in shaping learners pro- English attitudes. Fairclough (1995: 27) gives an indication of how this happens when he argues;

"Each IDF is a sort of 'speech community' with its own discourse norms but also, embedded within and symbolized by the latter, its own 'ideological norms.' Institutional subjects are constructed, in accordance with the norms of an institutional subject positions whose ideological underpinnings they may be

unaware of. A characteristic of a dominant IDF is the capacity to 'naturalize' ideologies, i.e., to win acceptance for them as non-ideological 'common sense'".

Therefore, as Devine (1994) puts it succinctly, the learners have learnt to filter their values and experiences through the dominant culture. The learners' action does not only reflect the unequal power relations between English and Xhosa, but also (re) produce difference and domination, or hegemony in Gramsci terms (cf. Ives, 2004).

ABSA Bank in its quest to promote multilingualism has translated ATM instructions into indigenous languages but anecdotal "evidence" from the writer's family and friends suggests that because African language speakers are "used" to the dominant language, they always scroll for English.

My argument is that the speakers of dominated languages (re) produce aspects of their own domination by filtering their values and experiences through the dominant culture (English culture) (cf Banda 2003). However, the question is: can they comprehend English texts? To assist in answering the above question and particularly research questions set out in chapter 1 above, core literature on the following topics has been studied; VERSITY of the

# \* Domains of language use TERN CAPE

All the languages of a multilingual society are not used in all domains. One needs to consider scholarly work on how the use of various languages is distributed in a multilingual society. This research is particularly interested in the use of language(s) in the public domain of printed media.

#### \* Language and culture

Language is seen as a marker of culture. One needs to consider scholarly work on how language reflects and shapes culture.

#### \* Assessing reading and interpreting skills

To gain an impression of the access Xhosa L1 readers have to information circulated in the printed media, one needs to be properly informed on how to assess reliably their reading and interpreting of news reports.

#### \* Text and context

One needs to understand two essential terms for accessibility to newsprint, namely text and context. These two terms work together in meaning making; context makes the text relevant whereas the text gives life to the context.

#### \* Lack of shared cultural customs related to literacy

It is possible to know a language and still not follow the full intent of a written text if there are not shared literacy customs. One needs to consider scholarly work on differences in patterns of reading and interpreting across cultures.

#### \* Media and power

Much has been written on the power of the media in giving access to socially valuable information. One needs to be informed on this body of literature to assess how the language of the media can support or hamper the access of Xhosa L1 readers to valuable information.

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I will now address each of these topics in turn. A P R

#### 2.2 Domains of language use

Coulmas (1997) defines domain of language use as the conceptualized sphere of communication. Joshua Fishman (1972) categorizes day-to-day language use according to domains where people interact socially with particular attention to those domains that are interesting in multilingual communities. Fishman (1972:19) indicates that understanding a domain enables us to understand that language choice in a multilingual context is related to socio- cultural norms and expectations. Greenfield (1968) listed five primary domains, namely family, friends, religion, education, and employment. He defines a domain as a sphere of life in which verbal and non-verbal interactions occur.

Both Greenfield and Fishman note education as a sphere of interaction that has had primacy of focus in the recent history of applied linguistics. This domain includes areas of language use in education such as native speaker interactions in the classrooms, as well as second language development. This is where you refine your native language and second language. The media as a site of interaction in which a less formal kind of interaction may take place is not specifically singled out.

According to Boxer (2002:4) family life, social life and work life are important domains for the study of real world linguistics. These domains refer to how we use language to interact with family members, friends, acquaintances and colleagues. The family domain is seen as fundamental to the building of identity through language socialization. This is where a person acquires his/her native language. Through the exposure to family members speaking their language, people start to identify themselves as members of that family. It is often in this domain that people are introduced to literacy practices that may include reading newspapers and discussing what is topicalised in the news.

However, because of language contact and the multilingual nature of African society, it is not always possible for a person to be socialized in the home or family language, leading to language shift (cf. Mesthrie, 2002). Counteracting the notion of language shift is language maintenance, which requires the use of the mother tongue at home. As De Klerk's (2000) study of Xhosa L1 speakers has shown, maintenance of African languages, whose speakers find very little economic value, is extremely difficult. She reports that some Xhosa parents' speakers demand that their children be taught in English, and that there is a steady increase in the use of English in home domains that used to be the preserve for Xhosa. However, using language vitality tools, a recent study by Pluddemann et al (2004) suggests that there is much more use of Xhosa as a L1 in the houses than some studies suggests. In fact Pluddemann's study suggests that it is Coloured speakers of Afrikaans who are currently undergoing a major language shift to English.

The domain of work life, according to Greenfield and Fishman, has become more diverse, with women, different ethnic groups and various racial groups having

increased access to a wider range of jobs. The analysis of work place interaction has become ever more important in assessing access to information, the media and career opportunities. In South Africa, English is becoming the language of the workplace. In fact it is increasingly becoming the de facto prerequisite in the job market (Banda, 2004; Heugh 2002).

Boxer discusses religion as one of the domains for language use. He stated that it has become more important to modern individuals and families. As the forces of modern society move people away from their families for career and educational opportunities, more and more individuals are turning to religious organizations for their sense of community. Interaction in religious life is seen as a way to build a network of friends in addition to finding spiritual comfort.

When there is a shift from one language to another in various domains, there is a concern that some languages may not be maintained. According to Coterill and Ife (2001) a major finding of some studies is that community languages are only maintained in the home domain. Then, despite the enduring maintenance in the home domain there is evidence of shift to English a second language for most, outside the home domain. As argued elsewhere, this is the case in South African context, as parents are encouraging their children to speak English all the time sometimes even if they are at home (De klerk 2000; Banda 2004).

Coulmas (1997) states that the limitation of a language to use in one domain could mean an impoverishment of the language; not using it in the home domain detracts from its liveliness and endangers its transmission to future generations. On the other hand using a language solely in the home domain limits its ultimate usefulness, since speakers will be unable to cope with the interpenetration of domains such as talking about work or school at home. According to Fasold (1984) as cited in Du Plessis and Pretorius (1999:2) for a language to be regarded as official it needs to function in at least the following domains: the spoken language of government officials in the exercise of official duties at the national level, the language of written communication within government agencies, the language in which government records are kept, the language in which laws and regulations are originally written. Following such a directive, there is a need to extend the use of African languages beyond the home domain. An alternative

would be to strengthen the bilingual skills of African language speakers considerably so that their L1 is maintained and developed while they gain proficiency in English. There is no doubt that English will remain dominant in the public sphere, but this does mean that African language speakers should not 'lose out'. There is need to find a balance between the need for a global language and national need for cultural heritage through use of African languages. This is where the media comes in. Because of the strong role of the media in providing access to information and social mobility, the country's mass media should be maximally accessible – also to L1 speakers of African languages. Unless African languages are used in the primary public domains such as official government and the media, they are not going to be regarded with pride by those who use them as L1. Then these languages and by extension their speakers, will continue to have a low status. Therefore African languages should claim the right to participate in all aspects and at all levels of public life, locally and nationally, privately and publicly.

### 2.3 Languages and Culture

Fairclough (1989:3) states that language has become a primary medium of social control and power. This, as we saw earlier, has led to language being at the centre of hegemony pitting the English speaking elite against the poor who mainly speak an African language. The problem here is that for one to break the bonds of poverty one has to learn and do well in English.

This undermines the notion of language, as Schiffman (1996:58) puts it, a primary vehicle of acculturation of learning ones culture. All the South African languages have the capacity to function as media languages, but practically this has not happened. Cotterill and Ife (2001:85) states that language develops as a result of the interaction of individuals with the larger society. The social and political hierarchies in a community often determine who in the society have access to English and able to learn it well. Their case study of language used in a predominantly in Urdu – speaking community, indicates that English is seen as a dominant language of the wider community. This is a pattern repeated in very many multilingual societies.

However, even where languages are mutually intelligible as is the case with Zulu, Xhosa and Swati, and Sotho, Tswana and Pedi, speakers of these languages do not want to come together and have a common writing system, and thus share literature and other reading material (cf. Banda 2002; Prah 2002). In fact, Africans would rather read an English text than one from a related Bantu language, thus diminishing the pool of readers of literature in African languages, and hence handing publishers on excuse not publish in these languages for lack of a market (Banda 2002) Similarly, American and other foreign TV programmes are more popular than those made locally in African languages (cf. Banda, 2004). This undermines African languages and associated culture.

Burke, Crowley and Girvin (2000:318) see English language not only as a tool of power and domination, but also as a vehicle for elitist identity and culture across continents. This means English is an integral part of a new complex sociolinguistic setting. It cultivates a group of people who will identify with the cultural and other norms of the political elite. It also provides a bonus as a medium for understanding technology and scientific development. Legal systems, national media and important professions in multilingual communities are often conducted in English. Therefore English neutralizes identities. Burke, Crowley and Girvin (2000:318) also argue that different forms of languages serve as markers of cultural differences and social distinctions. Newspapers, according to them, can be understood in terms of the creation of social and cultural sense by means of structured interrelations. It can be argued then, that since the media in South Africa is mostly in English, it helps in cultivating and shaping a Western culture and identity at the expense of an African one.

Fowler (1991) in *Language in the news* argues that news is a practice, and a product of the social and political circumstances on which it reports. He examines the crucial role of language in mediating the reality. His challenge is that people who are involved in the production of news should be aware of how language can shape rather than just mirror the world. He sees language as a highly constructive mediator. He argues that language, the code, endows the world with meaning or significance by organizing it into categories and relationships which are not there naturally but which represent the interests, values and behaviors of human

communities. Communication is one of the functions of language. Language provides an organized mental representation of our experience. The main argument here is that the news should represent the experiences of the communities. For example here in South Africa DSTV is almost exclusively in English so is ETV. Not only that, the content in TV programmes is mostly foreign with little to do with South Africa's aspirations. It is not surprising then that in the *Sunday Times* (11 September 2005) a disgruntled reader complained about ETV's News content which usually have very few African news items.

Halliday as cited by Fowler (1991:30-31) also states that language influences thought in the sense that its structure channels our mental experience of the world. Halliday argues that there is a correlation between differences of code and differences of social settings. In agreement with such an argument each newspaper style is different to the other and the readership of these newspapers is very distinct. Thus socio-economical, educational and other differences will be reflected. Fowler believes that as a semiotic code the language of the news gives an interpreted and interpretable representation of the world.

My argument is that in South African context news are presented in a language that a large number of people might not understand sufficiently. Therefore if the language of the media reflects social settings, channels mental experiences, mediates the reality of a community, then what is reflected, channelled and mediated for African language speakers?

Morgan (2002:37) also believes that cultural practice and language ideologies are mirrors and the tools that probe, refract, subvert and exalt social and cultural production. Therefore language reflects social class, region urban areas, gender, education, age, cultural background and speech community.

Cotterill and Ife (2001:186) state that in translated texts, often a short cultural explanation is provided that highlights the underlying cultural framework for the text to prepare the reader for concepts that would be unfamiliar to them. Therefore they make the point of culture that shapes the way we organize and filter the intake of input that consequently affects what we read into the text and what we understand from it.

Fairclough (1989:57) refers to Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. He associated cultural capital with capital class interests. To this class Standard English is an asset because its use is a passport to good jobs and positions of influence and power in national institutions and communities. This is the type of language used in the mass media. People who have access to good jobs and good housing are people who are richer in cultural capital. According to Hayes<sup>2</sup>, Bourdieu uses the term cultural capital to represents the collection of non-economic forces that influence academic success, such as family background, social class, varying investments and commitments in education, different resources etc. He defines social capital as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of durable networks of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition. He also states that cultural capital and social capital are fundamentally rooted in economic capital but they can never be completely reduced to an economic form.

Mccullagh (2002) states that audience interpretations can be influenced and structured by factors in the media text that encourage ways in which the text should be interpreted and viewed. Some media texts are less open in terms of accessibility than others and this may be the direct intention of their producers. He says that cultural capital, social class, cultural context and personal experience have an impact on the ways in which audiences respond to and understand media material. Cultural capital in this context refers to the social and media knowledge that groups and individuals bring to their encounter with the media. The argument here is the possible mismatch between cultural capital (e.g. knowledge of Standard English and Western culture) assumed in certain media texts, and the knowledge black readers or viewers possess.

#### 2.4 Testing reading and interpreting skills

Therefore, in the case of my respondents they may not have the experiential background knowledge that would enable them to access directly what they read. That means they may not understand what is being stated if they do not share the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Www.english.upenn.edu/-jenglish/courses/hayes-pap.html

background knowledge of the established cultural context in which public media collect and print their news. Thus, they may not understand as much of the text as is actually given, if they do not read in a context that informs the larger text. This needs to be investigated.

Fairclough (2004) focuses on texts as elements of social events and also interactive processes of meaning making. He says that these texts are shaped by social structures and social practices. Social practices are seen as articulations of different types of social elements that are associated with particular areas of social life. Fairclough argues that interpretation is a matter of understanding, that is to understand what words or sentences of a text mean. The argument is that in the multilingual nature of South Africa with different cultures, there are different theories of social processes and different ways of interpreting them in different contexts (Eggins, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2004).

Many texts are mediated by mass media (Fairclough 2004). Silverstone (1999) defines mediation as the movement of meaning from one social practice to another, from one event to another. According to Dainton and Zelley (2005) mediated communication refers to any communication in which something exists between the source and the receiver.

In looking at interpreting social practices, a speaker sometimes uses prior knowledge and L1 experiences of a concept to create knowledge and L2 experiences in different socio-cultural context (Banda 2003). This requires effective and competent language use. In this regard, Banda (2003) argues that Xhosalization of English texts is often problematic as the speakers have difficulty in transforming and recontextualising isiXhosa and English texts. Thus, some of Xhosalized texts, after translation, made little or no sense for lack of intertextuality. I will elaborate below.

Genre is defined as discoursal aspect of acting and interacting in the course of social events. Semantic relations or grammatical categories and relations are associated with genre (Fairclough 2004). Analysis of semantic relations refers to meaning relations between words and longer expressions of text and grammatical

relations deals with morphemes in words. Those are internal analysis of text. In contrast the external analysis focuses on relationship between one text and other texts that are externally related to it. That is, the intertextual relations of text. Intertextuality includes implicitness that is distinguished as presuppositions, logical implications and implicatures. Ballard (2005) says that when people encounter a text they tend to use their knowledge of the genre to which it belongs to help them to assimilate it. Once they have become familiar with the style and the layout of the text, they bring this intertextual knowledge to each edition. He went on to say that although we rely on our knowledge of different genres to help us interpret the texts we encounter through our daily lives, it is important to remember that a genre is not a fixed or rigid category. It can change over time, and in any one text, and it may be possible to identify features drawn from more than one genre. Intertextuality refers to links and connections on a much larger scale. The argument here is that lack of intertextual knowledge on the part of Xhosa L1 speakers trying to understand and interpret English texts could lead to miscommunication, or misreading of an item. As will be argued below, intertextual knowledge is critical to reading and effective interpretation of what has been read.

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Fairclough believes that genre is important in sustaining the institutional structures of contemporary society such as relations between government, business, universities, media and others. Media genre recontextualizes and transforms other social practices such as politics and government and in turn recontextualized in texts and interactions of different practices including everyday life to shape how we live and the meaning we give to our lives Silverstone (1999).

The views of Andrew Bennet (1995) provide a basis for consideration of reading and interpreting skills relevant to my research. Reading, he says, is a solitary affair, involving one person and a book. It may be understood in terms of transformation or translation. Bennett (1995: 20) sees reading as an interaction between the reader and the text. There are two types of reading: (i) reading for understanding the content of the text, and (ii) critical reading which starts with reading for understanding and then quickly moves to a type of reading which is characterized by careful and exact evaluation and judgement. That means critical

reading is about thoughtful analysis of the relationship between ideas, evidence and language in order to judge the worth of the ideas. The study about reading, interpretation and criticism adapted from Robert (1985) supports that, by saying reading are an unconscious activity and you are more skilled and knowledgeable in the area of reading than you may realise<sup>1</sup>. In order to read a text we must know and understand the clues and conventions, which operate within a text. These clues are often referred as codes. There are clues known as generic codes, these are the features of the text that tells us about the type of a text, distinguishing other genres of writing. There are also clues known as cultural codes that tell us in which history or culture the text is situated. Therefore we learn to construct a whole world from a few indications, fill in gaps, and make temporal correlations and inferences without hesitation or difficulty. (See Eggins 2004 and Martin & Rose 2004 for similar arguments).

Blanchot cited by Bennet (1995:188) describes reading as a creative and anonymous act. It involves dissolution of the reader's sense of self. He continues to say that reading does not require any gift but due to its social situatedness it has become a natural privilege. Reading is distinguished from comprehension. Cortez cited by Cotterill and Ife (2001:185) states that readers can only enhance foreign language reading comprehension when they have an appropriate schemata activated for both content of reading and underlying culture that shapes the reading in question. Cotterill and Ife (2001) believe that reading comprehension can only be successful when there is an interaction between the reader and the text. Some text consists of pre reading and post reading activities. That means the reading for the readers will involve a constant comparison between what they anticipated about the text and what they are actually experiencing while reading. In terms of reading media texts, the readers either confirm or disconfirm their pre reading speculations. That helps to keep the readers engaged throughout the reading process. Therefore a reading that has little or no relevance or importance to the reader will hardly engage the reader. On the other hand, an engaged reader will be receptive to comprehensible input. My argument is whether an engaged reader will be assisted or hampered if s/he does not have L1- proficiency in the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://www.english.uiuc.edu/lit-resources/ENGLISH%20103/Fiction%20 Extras/reading-int....9/21/2004

language in which the text is written and whether engagement may not improve L2 proficiency.

According to Silverblatt (1995) reading is generally a primary experience. It requires a relative solitude. A person may have the ability to read but can s/he also make up her/his mind of what s/he is reading? According to Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, in Austin, Texas, in order to have good language comprehending skills, the reader must know the world in which s/he lives and must have background knowledge that is relevant to what the reader is trying to understand. In order to understand the text the reader needs to know more than the definitions of words in the text. There is a need to have a frame of reference shared with the writer, so that the reader can make sense of the text. Therefore, intertextual knowledge becomes paramount to reading and understanding.

Thus, as Cotterill and Ife (2001:138) argue, for the reader to be able to interpret the text s/he has to have a large mental encyclopaedia and there must be a sufficient amount of shared knowledge between the text producer and a reader. They believe that shared knowledge entails various subtypes such as knowledge of the world in general, knowledge of the reality represented in the text, knowledge of textual genres and their conventions. It is said that knowledge is acquired through language that is part of culture. This implies that speakers of different languages and members of different cultures differ in the typical knowledge they have. Thus, different cultural interpretations could lead to misunderstanding.

What must you do to make sense of the whole text? You need first to work out how the parts of the text link to each other. Secondly you need to figure out how the text fits in with your previous experience of the world (Eggins, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2004).

According to Cotterill and Ife (2001:137) coherence needs to be considered in making sense of the text. A text can only make sense when a text producer considers that the text is produced in accordance with the given situational

context, looking at grammatical norms and textual conventions of a language and making it interpretable from the readers' standpoint. Fromkin and Rodman (1993:124) states that the meaning of words is part of linguistic knowledge and is therefore a part of the grammar. Finegan and Besnier (1989: 172) in their study about semantics, talk about the importance of distinguishing the different ways of interpreting the word meaning. They talk about three types of meaning: referential meaning, social meaning and affective meaning. Referential meaning refers to the object, notion or state of affairs described by a word or sentence. Social meaning is defined as the level of meaning that we rely on when we identify certain social characteristics of a speakers and situations from the character of the language used. Affective meaning is the emotional connotation that is attached to words and utterances.

Ballard (2005) identifies one of the most important interpretative processes, which are establishing whether the meaning is literal or figurative. Figurative language involves the use of comparisons such as metaphors, metonyms, similes and personification. Finegan and Besnier (1989: 188) talk about metaphors. They define a metaphor as an extension of the use of a word beyond its primary meaning to describe referents that bear similarities to the word primary referent. According to Fromkin and Rodman (1993:151) a metaphor is a non-literal interpretation of sentences. In order to interpret metaphors we need to understand both literal meaning and facts about the world.

Fairclough (1989:24) sees a text as a product rather than a process; he uses the term discourse to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part. This process includes a text as product and as a resource (in the process of interpretation). He continues to say that it is important in reflecting on the process of interpretation to consider resources which people have in their heads and drawn upon, including their knowledge of language, presentations of natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, norms and assumptions.

Fairclough (1989:63) points out that there is a lack of access to various readings and of writing abilities. Skills that he sums up with the word "literacy". Access to high level of literacy is a precondition to a variety of socially valued "goods"

including the most rewarding and well-paid jobs. Yet it is evident that access to literacy is unequally distributed.

According to Fairclough (1989:141) interpretations are generated through a combination of what is in the text and what is in the interpreter in the sense of resources. Formal features of the text are cues, which activate elements of interpreters' resources, and interpretations are generated through dialectal interplay of cues and resources. In their role of helping to generate interpretation we may refer to resources as interpretative procedures. Resources are often referred as background knowledge.

Iyengar (1991) cited by Mccullagh (2002) states that people draw on cultural resources such as experiential knowledge and popular wisdom to understand and to interpret what the media are telling them. Media knowledge is sensitive to cultural background, and media texts have considerable influence on audience interpretations. However, equally important to successful understanding and interpretation is being sensitive to text-type and context of particular news items. This is the point I turn to below.

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#### 2.5 Text and context

Two terms that are essential to understanding accessibility to newsprint are text and context. Text has been used in English as a metaphor, having been borrowed from weaving or as Christie (2005:10) puts it "a woven cloth was a text because it hung together". Therefore, a text becomes a meaningful passage of language if it 'hangs together' "to serve some social purpose" (Christie 2005:10). The text is surrounded by the context. The relationship between the two is such that whereas the text gives life to the context, the context makes the text relevant.

In this study, students' understanding of the relationship between a news text and its context of situation is critical to interpreting the message. However, effective interpretation of newsprint entails our understanding that a text is also a product of a context of culture. Whereas context of situation refers to the environment around a text, context of culture refers to wider sphere in which people operate (Christie 2005). Both need to be understood for one to reconstruct and understand

a text. As Christie (2005:11) argues "there are immediate meanings of the context of situation, but there are also the meanings of the context of culture, and these differ."

In this thesis it will be argued that how well a student will understand a particular text will depend on how well the respondent understands the features of the context of situation. These relate to aspects of register such as the nature of the relationships of the interlocutors in the context, the tenor of the discourse or interpersonal meanings, and the nature of the language used or mode of communications or textual meanings (cf. Christie 2005; Eggins, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2004).

Access to a text will also be dependent on features of the context of culture that are to do with the type of text or genre selected. Therefore, accessing newsprint in English Second Language, entails Xhosa L1 speakers to have an understanding not only of the grammar of English, but also an appreciation of ways of meaning making that are valued in English speaking culture. This necessary involves both mastering the (English) language system and learning to deploy or use the language to construct the various areas of newsprint knowledge of importance. (See Christie 2005; Eggins 2004, for similar arguments).

In essence, successful interpretation entails students' ability to select from the possible range of meaning making choices available in English newsprints to enable them understand texts in context of use. The choices are in part a function of register and the immediate context, and in part a function of the broader culture in which the newsprint was conceived.

#### 2.6 Lack of cultural customs related to literacy

Douglas (1992) in his book about media and meaning states that the mass media influence how we see the world, its people and their interactions. In this book he indicates how and why the media influence and affect our negotiation of meaning in everyday life. He believes that the media provide an ideal means for giving

information, for public persuasion, political manipulation and commercial exploitation.

According to Douglas, people of different languages and different cultures often have difficulty understanding one another because they lack a common language or a shared set of cultural customs. South Africa is a country with many different cultural communities, who have different customs, values, beliefs and languages that contribute to the difficulty of understanding what is said and meant in mass communication. He points out that our use of language code varies according to our communicative needs and intentions. Then the use of language in print needs to be carefully controlled so that we convey accurately what the writer intends. Douglas finds that to negotiate meanings effectively, we need to tolerate different language codes and varieties. What is important is that senders and receivers of messages have agreement about which codes to be used and why.

Boxer (2002:177) points out that miscommunication and misperceptions are based upon norms of interaction across societies and speech communities. Burke, Crowley and Girvin (2000:380) stated that language and culture are closely associated and when they are not then we may naturally expect contradictions and lack of agreement. Morgan (2002:14) finds that the lack of awareness and cultivating cultural practices in certain African communities may result in citizens adapting to the behaviour of their white counterparts. This may underlie some communities' acceptance of English language newspapers rather than insisting on setting up newspapers in indigenous African languages.

#### 2.7 Media and power

According to Fairclough (1989:49) mass media discourse is interesting because the nature of the power relations related in it is not clear and there are reasons for seeing it as involving hidden relations of power. Producers exercise power over consumers in that they can determine what is included and excluded in print, how events are presented and even the subject position of the audience.

Curran and Guravitch (1990) researched mass communication and society in a way that led to reassessment of the relationship of media organisations to the

structure of social power. They emphasise the role of the audience as an active creator of meanings, and they consider how television has brought a shift from political to popular aesthetic. They show that media texts can have differing interpretations and that in general media content is more diverse and contradictory than we would assume.

According to Gurevitch one function of the media is to enable individuals to reinterpret their social experience and question the assumptions and ideas of the dominant culture. The democratic role of the media system is to act as an agency of representation. It should enable diverse social groups and organizations to express alternative viewpoints. According to Curran the mass media are currently influenced by dominant elites. Another function of the media is to assist the realization of the common objectives of society through agreement between conflicting interests. Silverblatt (1995) states that mass communicators have learned to manipulate the language of the media to influence the audience. A familiarity with various production elements therefore should enhance the audience understanding and appreciation of media content.

Mccullagh (2002) says that the media have been credited with fabulous powers to change people and have been blamed for contributing to most social ills. He finds that every new medium with a potential to reach a mass audience has been conceptualized in negative terms. Radio, newspapers and television carry information to us about events that we do not witness personally and that happen in places to which we have no access. Therefore the role of the mass media in contemporary society is that of information delivery. Silverblatt (1995) supports this by saying that newspapers also provide vital information about the reader's local community.

The mass media brings to the audience the information about the events both in – and outside our own society. In consequence Marshall Mccullagh (2002) claims that the media made the world into a 'global village'. Information the media brings to the audience about their own society includes stories of people, events and places to which readers do not have easy and routine access. Banda (2004) argues that English is increasingly becoming the language of the market and

globalisation as well as the language of the new world order. Mccullagh sees the media as a window on the world. Like the glass in the window it should be clear and must not distort or refract what we are looking at; it must allow us to see the world as it really is.

The media reports on some events and issues but not on others, and the ones they bring to our attention may not necessarily be the most socially or politically significant. This means that the media is selective in what they tell us about the world. One can look at the way the South African media reported on the Zimbabwe issue where the focus has been on the loss of farms by whites, and very little reporting on the plight of displaced black farm workers. As a result of this, through selection, the media can be said to have been instrumental in garnering sympathy for whites, while ignoring the injustices done to blacks, which in fact will suffer more than whites.

Therefore the media can control and shape the knowledge and the understanding that we their audience develop about the world. According to this argument our images and knowledge of social reality are formed and shaped by the images and information that the media deliver to us. Thus the media have the power to define our sense of the social reality of the society and the world that we live in; they achieve this through control over the information that they present to us. Therefore, the mass media controls the information that is available to media audiences and so has the potential to shape or to set limits to their social knowledge and to the images that they can construct of the world in which they live. McCombus and Shaw (1972) argue that public opinion is shaped, in part, by media coverage, particularly with regard to political news and political campaigns rather than providing a reflection of the public interests (cited by Dainton and Zelley 2005). They conceived that the news media present audiences with an agenda for what events the public should consider as important.

On the other hand the audience also has power to decide what will be presented to them. They influence the production of the media messages. First the media organization needs to attract an audience and to do this they must cater for its needs. Secondly the media has to look at the nature of social communication.

Successful communication requires us to have some idea about the people with whom we are communicating. To be sure that they will understand us we must adapt our style of communication to fit the mental image we have of them. That means the image media organizations have of the audience is decisive for the message they produce.

According to Silverblatt (1995) the newspaper audience is relatively anonymous since the reader is physically removed from the writer. Although the newspapers are readily available the audience is selective; reading presupposes a certain level of education. The typical member of the newspaper audience is older, well educated and has a relatively high income. He argues that people tend to read the newspapers for the following reasons:

- Immediacy and thoroughness
- Local awareness and utility
- Habit
- Entertainment
- Social extension or gossip
- He also states that young people often regard newspapers as:

- An older people's habit while they are waiting for a bus
- Speaking for the status quo and against societal change
- Being cold and impersonal
- As a medium middle aged

Silverblatt argues that College students are far more likely to read the newspapers if their parents routinely read them. In fact, students are likely to read the newspapers at the same time of the day in the same location as their parents. This would suggest that one way for parents to encourage their offspring to read the newspapers is simply to read the papers themselves. This relates to what one of my respondents said which that s/he only read the newspaper when his/her parents bought it.

In summary the above literature review is valuable for the study I have undertaken in a sense that it gives me an idea of how the languages are used in the public domain of printed media; secondly how language reflects and shapes culture; thirdly how to assess the reliably of Xhosa L1 reading and interpreting of news reports; how the language of the media can support or deny the access of Xhosa L1 readers to valuable information (intertextuality), and crucially, that since media is mediated communication, it is never neutral. Thus, the media is not only biased (despite contrary claims by the media itself), it is also potentially loaded with values and ideologies. Now I will go ahead and present the method of collections, the data and the analysis in the following chapters.



## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

#### 3.1 Kind of Data

In preparation to finding answers to the particular research questions, the relevant literature discussed in chapter two has been consulted. The literature has been useful in determining what research has been done and which results have been found in the field of access of L2 readers to information in the media. The literature also gives pointers as to the most useful framework in which to analyze the data collected for answering the particular research questions.

Data for this research was collected in two stages. First, a questionnaire was prepared and circulated among readers with different first languages, in order to gain insight into general patterns of access to the media among young adults in tertiary education. Second, a questionnaire was prepared in the form of a comprehension exercise to check access to the information carried in English newspapers. This questionnaire required more in terms of time and effort by respondents and in analysis, therefore a smaller sample of respondents was selected. These respondents were specifically targeted Xhosa L1 readers who had indicated varying degrees of access to printed media generally. The exercise was intended to check whether there is any correlation between regular access to the printed media and better access to the information communicated in such media.

The first questionnaire was used to collect data on

- (i) The kinds of access young adult readers have to the printed news (question 1),
- (ii) The patterns of newspaper reading among young adults and reasons they give for these patterns (question 1),
- (iii) The possible transfer of patterns newspaper reading from the communities in which respondents grew up and were educated (question 4),

(iv) The kinds of media discourse to which respondents were most likely to have access due to their reported preference for reading particular sections of the printed newspapers (question 5).

The second questionnaire was used to collect data on

- (i) How much selected respondents, namely Xhosa L1 readers, could make in terms of access to the information carried in a regular written news report (question 3),
- (ii) What kind of correlation may be found between regular access of Xhosa L1 readers to printed media and understanding the content of written media reports (question 2),
- (iii) What kind of correlation may be found between regular access of Xhosa L1 readers to printed media and aspects of English language proficiency (question 2),
- (iv) What kind of correlation may be found between regular access to printed media and the region in which the respondents grew up and were educated (question 4),

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The second questionnaire was administered to Xhosa L1 readers only due to the specific interest of this research into access that such readers may have to information in English newspapers, and the effect such access may have on their English language proficiency. This research did not, at this stage; work comparatively with how Xhosa L1 readers' responses relate to those of readers with other first languages. It is likely that Afrikaans L1 readers may have presented similar patterns of access to information carried in English media texts; it is even likely that some English L1 readers may have presented similar patterns of access to information carried in English media texts. These possibilities were not specifically tested; therefore the research will not draw conclusions in such a comparative manner.

In the first questionnaire data was obtained from respondents' answers to short questions on personal background, reading habits, and access to printed media, types of newspapers they read and categories they like to read the most. This information provided numerical data in terms of group profiles, specifically different first language groups.

In the second questionnaire data was gathered from Xhosa L1 readers only. These respondents had all taken part in the first questionnaire, and were selected on the basis of (i) their L1 and (ii) varying indications of regular access to the media. This selection was specifically done to be able to gauge possible correlation between the regularity with which Xhosa L1 readers had access to English newspapers and their English proficiency as well as their access to information in English. These second questionnaires differed from the first in that besides direct, closed questions, they also made use of open-ended questions to media reports taken form those sections that had previously been indicated as specific preferences. It was presumed that personal responses to open-ended questions are more effective in checking understanding and obtaining attitudinal data. Some answers could provide unanticipated information that would give more validity to the interpretation of the responses.

# 3.2 Respondents and sampling VERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE

The respondents of this study were all students at the University of Western Cape who were first encountered at entrance level, i.e. in the first year of academic study. For the study I selected specifically students who were doing "Communication and Media Studies" as one of their modules. The reason for choosing them was because I wanted to work with students who were likely to have an interest in the field of media and to see whether they understand what they read from the newspapers. My research questions specifically are focused on how the media could function as a source of knowledge and information. In the first questionnaire respondents were asked whether they considered working as journalists. Therefore my interest is in students who are likely to have some access to printed media. The group of respondents consisted of both males and females who were between the age of 20 and 25 years old. The majority of them have English as their second language; only a few of them indicated that they have English as their first language. A total of 160 questionnaires were filled out.

From these I gained the particulars of respondents' personal background, the type of access they had to printed news and how well they could access what they read in the newspapers.

From the large set of questionnaires used in the first survey, I selected 20 respondents who indicated Xhosa as their first language and English as a second language. These respondents all achieved a mark of more than 5 out of 10 in the question that tested how informed they were on current news affairs. Thus the second survey worked with a sample of students who were comparatively well informed via some form of the media. I contacted these respondents and asked them to take part in answering a second questionnaire that was a comprehension exercise on a report published in one of the local newspapers that covered a topic regularly reported on. The text was selected from one of the newspapers that they indicated that they had access to, or in some cases actually read the most. These 20 comprehension exercises form the core research sample.

### 3.3 Ethics

I obtained permission from the University of the Western Cape and students concerned to collect the first set of data (from students) in the first year of the "Communication and Media Studies" module. The questionnaires were filled out in controlled circumstances after a lecture. Participants who were not interested in participating were allowed to leave. The respondents were free to omit their contact details, although most did indicate such information so that it was easy for me to trace them and ask those selected for the second survey if they would do the comprehension exercise. I have protected the identities of these students by referring to them merely as "Xhosa readers", with no personal references in the analyses. The 20 respondents subsequently selected, agreed to take part and suggested a suitable time for taking the comprehension exercise. For the second questionnaire I gave the respondents sufficient time to read through the text and then answer the questions. It took none longer than one hour to write this comprehension test.

### 3.4 Facilitator

In both cases I personally monitored the filling out of the questionnaires, making sure that instructions were clear, answering questions and giving them some explanations if the students did not understand what was required of them. Questions as what was required in terms of the task were answered; I did not, to my knowledge, suggest responses that would be expected or valued to the students.

#### 3.5 Data collection

At the first occasion of data collection students were assembled in a lecture hall. The procedures for answering the set questionnaire were explained, and then the students were given the opportunity to fill in their responses. This was the first questionnaire and they were working with a view to finishing within an hour, with the facilitator at hand for assistance. The Xhosa L1 students relied more on the facilitator than the speakers of other languages. Most of the explanations were given in Xhosa for Xhosa speakers and they understood the instructions, and for speakers of other languages answers were given in English. It was clear that Xhosa speakers were struggling to follow the spoken and written English used in this context and in the questionnaire.

The venues were big enough for students to sit apart and to work on their own. Thus I could secure that students gave their own responses without copying or taking cues from their friends. As the first questionnaires were taken in regular lecture time with permission from the responsible lecturer, such lecturers were present during the session and they could check that the students were cooperating well.

After the first set of questionnaires had been analyzed a selection of student responses was made to assure an even distribution of respondents with varying levels of access to printed media. This was done in order to allow an investigation into how access to printed media may correlate with information on current news affairs and with comprehension of media texts. Following this, an exercise was

composed and the selected group of Xhosa L1 speakers was approached to write this comprehension exercise. At a later agreed time the new exercise and questionnaire was administered, again with a view to completion within an hour. This time, regardless of the indications of varying kinds of access to media (and thus to patterns of media language use and information carried in the media), respondents required less assistance than with the first questionnaire. Perhaps this could indicate that the first round of questionnaires assisted in informing them about how to respond to such written assignments.

A question might arise whether the students took the questionnaire and the comprehension exercise seriously in that they gave honest and reliable responses. My impression was that most respondents did their best to provide me with the information that the questionnaire set out to elicit. Nevertheless, some of the answers left doubt as to the commitment of the respondents. In such cases their answers were disregarded and removed from the sample.

### 3.6 Translation of responses

The respondents were encouraged to write their answers in English. First, studies have shown that L1 African language speakers prefer questionnaires in English rather than their home language (Pluddemann et al 2004; Banda 2004). Secondly this would allow for the drawing of preliminary conclusions about the levels of English proficiency of the various respondents. Also, it would allow for gaining an impression of what the impact of reading English newspapers may be. This would at least informally test whether more access to the English media correlates with higher levels of English proficiency, and whether limited access to the English media correlates with lower levels of English proficiency. It has to be made clear that this "test" is not a calibrated and completely reliable one. It was intended simply to gain a first impression as to possible connections between access to the English media and developing of English language proficiency.

The first questionnaire gave me information about the schools the respondents had attended and I could gain an impression as to whether there may have been any correlation between various areas of schooling and English language

proficiency (cf Banda 2004). Other information gained from the first questionnaire related to whether respondents were interested in eventually being employed in a field such as journalism. These responses were correlated with the kind of access students indicated they had to the media, and with the scoring on the current topical information test included at the end of the questionnaire. I assumed that if a respondent wanted to work as a journalist, then such a person would indicate that he/she does read newspapers regularly. This could be verified (or falsified) from the responses.

Secondly the comprehension exercise was done in which they had to answer questions based on the text they read. The answers to the set questions would also indicate whether they could identify the genre.

A memorandum was made according to which those comprehension exercises were marked. The information that I got from there assisted in answering my research questions.

### 3.7 Analysis and interpretation of results

After the data was collected, the questionnaires were manually sorted and information gained was categorized according to the particular research questions. Respondents to the second questionnaire were selected after the processing of the first questionnaire. Data was interpreted (i) on the basis of reader responses themselves, and (ii) in the light of the reviewed literature. The following chapter in which the data will be presented, analyzed and interpreted will elaborate on this.

# Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis: Questionnaire 1

### 4.1 Introduction

The first questionnaire (appendix 1) was made up of 5 questions. The first question required respondents to indicate whether they have regular access to printed news media, radio and television or not. From this it was possible to find out if the respondents have access to information about the world through any kind of media, i.e. newspaper, radio or television. The second question required respondents to number the categories they prefer to watch, read and listen to in order of priority from 1 to 3. From this it was possible to see which news the respondents are interested in. It is assumed that respondents, who have access to the various forms of the media, would choose to access those sections that relate to their interests. At least in these areas of interest one would expect to find improved knowledge of current affairs and understanding of texts taken from these sections. The third question required the respondents to indicate whether they consider working as a journalist. This will give the researcher insight into whether the respondents have an interest in information typically circulated in the media. Correlated with other questions, responses to question 3 would indicate whether students have a realistic understanding of what a profession in journalism would require. The fourth question is about the categories respondents would prefer to cover if they were to work as journalists. The fifth question required the respondents to answer questions based on recent news stories. From this the researcher could gain insight into whether (i) the respondents had access to printed news as often as they claimed, and (ii) the respondents could comprehend what they read in the newspapers they claimed to have access to. It could be considered that respondents who claimed that they have regular access to printed news, in fact did have such access, but performed poorly in the quiz due to a short memory. However, the questions were on very prominent news issues across a variety of topics; the multiple-choice format limited heavy reliance on memory. Therefore, question 5 could be used to check the claims of regular access and acting on the interest in the media.

The respondents to this questionnaire were students in their second year at university who were studying Linguistics as one of their courses. The information was collected in the Critical Media Studies module where it could be expected that there would be a reasonable amount of interest in media of various kinds. In this sample, respondents were first language speakers of various South African languages, mostly Xhosa, Afrikaans and English. This mini thesis focused on the access of Xhosa L1 speakers to printed media, therefore for the second questionnaire respondents were selected from the Xhosa L1 group only to test whether they can comprehend what they read in text.

An analysis of the regional and linguistic positions of the full group of respondents revealed that there were 45 female and 75 male students in the group. Of these, 65 students were from the Eastern Cape and they did their schooling there; 55 of them were from the Western Cape and they also did their schooling in this region. Out of the 120 respondents 28 of them were English or Afrikaans L1 speakers and 92 of them were Xhosa L1 speakers.

### 4.1.2 Particular media accessed

To determine the variety of newspapers to which students in the respondent groups may have had access, various internet media sites were consulted. According to a Stanford University survey of internet media sites<sup>2</sup> there are 43 South African Newspaper sites. However, not all internet media sites are linked to printed versions of newspapers. As this research focuses on printed media, South African internet media sites mentioned in the Stanford University survey were investigated to check whether there is a printed version in circulation. Information found on *The Independent Online* website indicates eleven newspapers that are available as printed versions; the *NEWS24* website lists another nine newspapers available as printed versions. These newspapers are:

Independent Online	NEWS24
maebenaem Omme	IND W 324

Cape Argus Beeld

Cape Times Die Burger

<sup>2</sup> http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/southafrica/rsanews.html 9/21/2004

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Daily News Volksblad

*Isolezwe* Rapport

Post Sake

Pretoria News Finasies & Tegniek

Sunday Independent Natal Witness

Sunday Tribune City Press

The Independent on Saturday Finance Week

The Mercury

The Star

In regions of the country where the majority of respondents come from, the papers which were most likely available to the respondents from the Eastern Cape region are Daily Dispatch printed in East London, The Herald in Port Elizabeth and Intsimbi in Umtata.

In the Western Cape region, the regular newspapers most likely to be easily available to respondents from this area are Cape Argus, Cape Times, Die Burger, and some smaller regional community newspapers, such as Helderberg Post, Paarl Post, City Vision, Eikestad Nuus, Tygerburger, Metro Burger, Hermanus Times and Overberg Venster.

In these regions there are of course also newspapers that are circulated nationally, such as the weekly editions of Mail & Guardian, Sunday Times, Sunday Independent, City Press and Rapport. There is also a special interest weekly publication that is part of the MEDIA 24 network, namely Laduma. Reporting specifically on the national soccer league, Laduma appears every Wednesday. A number of widely circulated regional newspapers from Gauteng are also available at a number of outlets. Here the most likely to be accessed would be The Star and Sowetan.

Newspapers that the respondents to the first questionnaire indicated they actually read, amount to only 8 of the full range available in the regions where they come

from. Those listed (cf. table 1 below) are local daily newspapers Cape Argus, Cape Times, and Die Burger, a local community newspaper City Vision, and national weekly newspapers City Press, Sunday Times, Sowetan and Laduma. There are 18 respondents who indicated that they have access to Cape Argus printed newspaper. Of the respondents, 35 showed that they have access to Cape Times printed version of the newspaper. Nine (9) respondents indicated that they have access to Die Burger newspaper. There are 8 of them who showed that they have access to Sunday Times newspaper; 2 respondents read City Vision, 2 read Sowetan, 1 read Laduma and 1 read City Press. According to Banda (2004) the regular use of radio, television and reading newspapers does not necessarily mean the respondents actually buy and owns these items due to the fact that not many blacks can afford to buy daily newspapers. In black townships, people find it acceptable for one to watch television from a neighbour's house as well as borrow a newspaper (Banda 2004).

### 4.2 Responses to Question 1

The first question indicated the respondents' reported access to the media. They indicated (i) whether they had regular access to any form of news media and (ii) where they had regular access; they indicated which particular media they used

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### 4.2.1 Regularity of media access

Of the 120 respondents 78 indicated that they did often read newspapers. This would make up a percentage of 65%. Of course, students' unchecked information on their own reading patterns is likely to have some errors as not all would be completely honest or accurate in their answers. Therefore, I checked the answer sheets of the readers who said they had regular access, by looking at their score in the general news section in question 5 (discussed below).

This question distinguished between different modes of news media. The following table indicates the pattern of access reported on (i) newspaper reading, (ii) listening to the radio, and (iii) watching (and listening to) television.

Table 1 Access to three modes of news media

	Regular access	Specific	Specific paper /	Specific paper /	OTHERS
	= YES in answer	paper/radiostation/TV	radio station/ TV	radio station/ TV	REPORTED
	to questions	channel	channel	channel	
	1.1/1.2/1.3	MOST REPORTED	2nd MOST	3rd MOST	
			REPORTED	REPORTED	
Newspapers	78	Cape Times	Sunday Times	Sowetan	Die Burger
		Cape Argus			City Press
					City Vision
					Laduma
Radio	74	Metro	Umhlobo	5 Fm	Good Hope
			Wenene		KFM
					YFM
TV	76	SABC 1	E-tv	SABC 2	SABC 3

This table confirms that it is only 78 respondents out of 120 that reported that they do read newspapers. All of these respondents also had access to radio and TV. The remaining 42 of my respondents, who said they do not read newspapers, reported that they used other means of media (radio and/or TV) to get information about what is happening in the world around them. Banda (2004) in his study about *literacy practices*, found that there is a regular but restricted access to reading material, particularly free community weeklies, as well as passive listening to radio and television.

### 4.2.2 Profile of accessed media

The Cape Times, a printed local daily newspaper published by Independent News and Media of South Africa, is circulated in the Western Cape region. Similarly, the Cape Argus is also a daily newspaper printed in Cape Town. It has an addition in the form of the Weekend Argus that appears on Saturdays and Sundays. Independent News and Media of South Africa also print it. Die Burger is another local daily newspaper printed in Cape Town by Naspers and Media 24. This newspaper is printed in Afrikaans. City Vision is a community newspaper by News media 24 also printed in Cape Town. It circulates in the areas of Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Langa, Nyanga, Phillipi, Mfuleni and Crossroads only. It covers events that taken place and are of interest particularly to the communities living in these areas.

The Sunday Times is a weekly newspaper that is published in Johannesburg and circulates nationally. This newspaper has a number of sections that cover many

areas of interest such as sport, life style, business, and so on. Some respondents indicated a particular interest in the section titled *Career Times*, which features mostly employment opportunities. *Sowetan* is another weekly newspaper that is printed in Johannesburg by Nail Media Companies and is circulated nationally. Another weekly newspaper that circulates nationally is *City Press*, printed in Johannesburg. This is a Sunday paper published by RCP Media group (wholly owned subsidiary of Naspers. Nearly half of the readers are from Gauteng Province and they are identified as the "Black market". *Laduma* is also a weekly newspaper that appears on Wednesdays and circulates nationally. This paper is published by Naspers and Media 24 and specifically covers the news about the national soccer league. The majority of readers of this newspaper are men who are mostly single and who are considered to be working class<sup>3</sup>.

### 4.3 Responses to Question 2

### 4.3.1 Areas of Interest

This question was intended to gain insight into the kinds of news reports the respondents liked to read (or access otherwise) most.

## Column2 – indicating general interest

In entering information into the second column, 11 respondents apparently did not properly understand the question. Instead of entering "yes" or "no" in this column to indicate their general interest, they just marked with x's. Due to a custom sometimes followed, of marking positive responses with " $\sqrt$ " and negative responses with "x", it was not possible to interpret such answers. Therefore the assessment of respondents' interests in domains of media news is based on 109 responses.

Table 2 shows the number of respondents who showed particular interest in each of the categories. Their interest is indicated according to the most chosen categories and the least chosen categories.

Table 2 Summary of preferred areas of interest

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Information on the publishers and intended readership of each newspaper has been taken from the websites of each. Cf. list of references for particular details.

Most chosen	Interest	Medium				Access	Time
categories	At all		1	2	2	spent	
Formal news	55	2newspaper	30	20	5	7 hrs	
broadcast	33	35 television	30	20	3	4hrs	
oroudcust		18 radio				3hrs	
International	48	6 newspaper	18	20	10	2hrs	
news		6 radio					
		36 television					
Front pages	52	47Newspsper		10	42	3hrs	
		2 radio					
		3 television					
Soapies	48	1 newspaper 47 Television	28	12	8	5hrs	
What's on theater, film arts	41	15newspaper 26 Television	20	15	16	6hrs	
Sport	43	6 Newspaper	20	20	3	101	
		5 radio 32 television				10hrs 5hrs	
Crime stories	40	10newspaper	10	30	10	2hrs	
	-	7 radio					
		23Television					
Local Affairs	42	14Newspaper	22	15	5		
		15 radio				6hrs	
		13 television					
Least chosen	Interest						
Business	15	7 Newspaper		3	12	3hrs	
section	-	1 radio					
		7 television					
Cartoons	34	8 newspaper	14	10	10		
	<u>, III.</u>	1 radio	и_ш,				
G:4	26	25 television	- 12	12	1 1		
Sitcom	36 UN	36 television	12 th	e 13	11		
Chat shows	39 W I	1 radio	20	19			
		38 television					
Competition	24	8 newspaper	12	10	2	3hrs	
		5 radio					
		11Television		_			
Music &	24	20 Radio	20	2	2	12hrs	
Political		4television					

## Column 3 – indicating medium most used for access

Table 3 Media most accessible to the respondents

Medium chosen	
most	
Newspaper	43
Radio	40
Television	70

This table shows that television is the medium most used by the students to gain access to their areas of interest regularly. About 58% respondents indicated that they get their information from the television; this is opposed to 36% of them who stated that they receive the information from newspapers, and 33% who stated that they access most information by listening to the radio. From these figures we can expect that better performance on the general news quiz should correlate with access to TV rather than with access to the printed media. As this research is primarily interested in the effects of printed media access, this will be checked in considering responses to question 5 of the questionnaire. The finding is consistent with Banda's (2004) finding that black students are mostly involved in watching television and listening to radio, rather than reading newspapers or books.

### Column 4 – Preferences across all areas

Table 4 Preferences rated from 1-3

Preference	Preference Preference rated				
rated 1	rated 2				
Formal news	Sitcom	International news			
broadcast	UNIVER	SITY of the			
Music	Sport	Front page news			
Local affairs	Soapies	What's on theater,			
		film,			

About 33 of the respondents seem not to have understood the part of the question requiring them to select only 3 categories (entered in the 4<sup>th</sup> column). Instead of selecting the three they most preferred, they rated each category on a 1-3 scale. Therefore for interpreting this column, I worked with only 96 respondents. The majority of the students showed that three media categories were equally rated as first choice; the preferred categories are the ones identified as "Formal news broadcast" (accessed by radio or television), "Music" (accessed by radio) and "Local news" (accessed by all 3 media). They rated as second choice, in equal measure, "sitcom" (accessed by television), "sport" (accessed by television and newspaper), and "soapies" (accessed by television). As third choice they elected

"International news" (accessed by television), "Front page news" (accessed by newspaper), and "What's on" in theaters (accessed by television).

### Column 5 – Average time spent in accessing particular areas of interest

This question was intended to check how much time the respondents spent reading newspapers, listening to the radio or watching television – not overall, but specifically in attending to the topics they said they were most interested in. The majority of the respondents who indicated Xhosa as their L1 confirmed that they do not have access to newspapers very regularly. Banda (2004) also found that Coloureds are more likely to have regular access to daily newspapers than Blacks (59% vs 48%). Of the 28 respondents who gave English as their first language, only 3 confirmed that they read newspapers everyday. Across all language groups many showed that they listen to the radio and watch television every day. This indicates that access to newspapers cannot be related purely to the language in which it is published – there have to be other circumstances that would support or go against accessing the news via the printed news media. Clearly values attached to particular media (cf Fairclough 2004) as well as an individual's personal costs to possess a particular media (Banda 2004) are also defining factors.

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### Time spent in accessing information RN CAPE

In this section I focus only on those who indicated that they have access to newspapers. Out of 120 respondents only 43 (=36%) of the respondents preferred to read the newspapers. The amount of time that they spent in reading the paper(s) is given as follows:

16.3 % read newspapers more than 10 hrs per week. 60.4 % claimed to read the newspapers between 4-and10 hrs per week. While 23.3 % said they read the newspapers less than 4 hrs per week.

Table 5 Average time spent in accessing information per week

Reading newspapers	Reading newspapers	Reading newspapers
-4 hours per week	4-10 hours per week	+ 10 hours per week
Out of 43 students 10 of	Out of 43 students 26 of	Out of 43 students 7 of

them who indicated 2 hours	them	who	indicated	5	them	who	indicated	12
per week	hours	and ab	ove per wee	k	hours	per we	eek	

Table 5 shows that those who spent less than those 4 hours per week in reading the newspaper, on average spent 2hours reading newspapers. The respondents indicated that they were reading 4 to 10 hours per week on average spent 5hours reading newspapers. Students who confirmed that they were reading above 10 hours per week in reading the newspapers, on average spent 12 hours doing this. This indicates that a very small percentage of the full set of respondents spend enough time reading newspapers for it to be a significant source of information (i.e. 21% spend about 5 hrs/week, 6% spend about 12 hrs/week). The scores in the current news quiz that are correlated with these details below testify to this.

# Correlation between time that respondents spent on reading newspapers and the score they obtained in the quiz of current event news.

Table 5.1 Correlation of time spent in reading newspapers and the scores obtained in quiz.

Hours	% of the 43 Score in new		s quiz		
	newspaper readers	< 50%	> 50%		
10+ hrs	16.3%	4	3		
7 students	UNIVERSIT	Y of the			
4-10 hrs	60.4% ESTERN	17, DE	9		
26 students	WESTERN	CAFE			
-4 hrs	23,3%	3	7		
10 students					

Table 5.1 shows that only 3 respondents obtained more than 50% in the quiz in those who claimed that they read the newspapers more that 10 hours per week (i.e. less than 50% of these respondents), got a score of more than 50% in the quiz. This table further shows that only 9 of the respondents who claimed that they read newspapers between 4 and 10 hours per week, (i.e. about 35% of these respondents) got a score of more than 50% in the quiz. In contrast, 7 of the respondents who claimed that they read the newspapers less than 4 hours per week, (i.e. 70% of these respondents) got a score of more than 50% in the quiz. This means that time spent on reading the newspaper does not guarantee significant access to more or less information on current news events.

Additionally, spending more time in reading newspapers does not guarantee that readers understand and/or retain what they have read.

Table 5.2 Correlation of time spent in listening to radio and scores obtained in quiz.

Hours	% of the 40 radi	Score in news quiz		
	listeners	< 50% >50%		
10+ hrs	11 = 27.5 %	6 5		
4-10 hrs	9 = 22.5%	4 5		
- 4 hrs	20 = 50%	7 13		

Table 5.3 Correlation of time spent in watching television and scores obtained in quiz

Hours	% of the 70 TV watchers	Score in news quiz		
		< 50%	>50%	
10+ hrs	31 = 44.3%	14	17	
4-10 hrs	21 = 30%	12	9	
-4 hrs	18 = 25.7%	12	6	

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 show great similarity to table 5.1 in the profiles they give of the correlation between regular access to news media and meaningful access to information on current news events. In both cases the tables show that more time spent on listening to the radio and/or watching television does not guarantee better or more meaningful access to the information carried in such media.

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### 4.4 Responses to question 3WESTERN CAPE

Question 3 tested first the interest of respondents in journalism as a profession. The responses from them are listed in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Interest in becoming a journalist

Yes	No
64	56

There were 64 (i.e. 53%) of the respondents who indicated that they would consider working as a journalist. There is no positive correlation between interest in journalism as a profession and regular access to the news media. Similarly there is no positive correlation between interest in journalism as a profession and knowledge of current news events. This would indicate either a limited understanding of the kind of interest and skills required for a profession in any of

the public media institutions, or lack of insight into their own achievement of the required level of understanding and skills in this field.

The second part of question 3 tested the particular medium preferred by respondents who were interested in journalism. To this question only 12 respondents indicated an interest in newspaper journalism. The correlation between this particular interest in newspaper reporting and scores in the current news events quiz is as follows: 5 scored more than 50%, and 7 scored less than 50%. This supports the conclusion that an interest in a career in (printed) news media and understanding of the knowledge and skills this would require is insignificant. However, since journalists or more precisely writing in English is associated with power, the students' choice to work in the media could be taken as a reflection of their attitudes and values towards the language of power (cf Fairclough 1989; 2004).

### 4.5 Responses to question 4

Question 4 asked for more information on the particular area of interest of respondents who would like to work in journalism. The question intended to test whether the genre they would choose may be outside of current news events, e.g. in sport or soap opera rather (e.g.) than international, local or front page news.

Table 7 Journalism: categories of interest

Category	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice
Front-page news		1	
Formal news	12	2	1
broadcast			
Political reports	2	6	5
International news	7	9	10
Crime stories	2	8	6
Sport	9	9	6
Business			3
What's on in theater,	1	4	5
film, arts			
Cartoons		1	
Soapiest			2
Sitcom	2		
Chat shows	3	2	1
Competition	1	1	1
Local Affairs	9	6	5
Entertainment	1	2	
Music	2	2	2

About 10 of the respondents seem not to have understood the question. This table shows that the majority of the respondents, who understood the question and indicated their preferences, would prefer to be journalists on formal news broadcast (12), sport (9), local affairs (9) and international news (7). Interestingly, only one respondent indicated an interest in reporting on front-page news; this respondent scored 1 out of 10 on the current news events quiz. Clearly, this supports the conclusions above that there is limited understanding of the requirements of a career in journalism. As this question did not distinguish between the various forms of media, it is not clear whether those interested in (e.g.) political reporting or international news reporting had printed or other media in mind. It is highly likely that respondents who were interested in formal news broadcasting had television in mind, and then it is also possible that they did not distinguish between collecting and writing up the news as opposed to being a newsreader.

### 4.6 Responses to Question 5

Question 5 comprised a quiz testing respondents' knowledge of recent news events. The questions covered mainly front-page news of the time, with one question on sport and one on financial matters, notably on the Rand – US dollar exchange rate. The quiz was intended to test whether there is a correlation between interests in the news media generally, access to the news media, interest in the media for career purposes and knowledge of current/recent news events.

There were 10 questions designed in this section, which aimed at checking whether respondents knew what is happening around the world as this information was published in recent newspapers, through radio broadcasts and on television. For their responses to this section, a score out of 10 was calculated.

### 4.6.1 Correlating access to media with knowledge of current news

Of the 78 respondents who indicated that they had regular access to newspapers, 25 (32%) scored 50% or more in the general news quiz. Two (2) of these respondents achieved a score of 10 out of 10; three (3) of them achieved a score

of 8 out of 10; four (4) of them achieved a score of 7 out of 10, 8 of them achieved a score of 6 out of 10; 8 of them achieved a score of 5 out of 10.

The two respondents (out of 120) who scored 100% in this quiz both indicated an interest in newspaper journalism. Their particular preferred choice of news category was sport and political reporting respectively. As second choices they indicated political reporting and international news respectively. And as third choices they indicated International news and crime stories respectively. The two, according to their response in question 1.1, have regular access to the printed media, and according to their response in question 3 are interested in the printed news media as a possible career. This access correlates with them being well informed on current news events. They were not Xhosa L1 speakers.

Interestingly, among the 42 respondents who indicated they did <u>not</u> have regular access to newspapers, there was a respondent who scored 9½ out of 10 in the quiz. However, s/he reported that s/he did have regular access to radio and television on a daily basis. Also, in this group of respondents there were three (3) who scored 8 out of 10 in the quiz with a similar indication of regular access to radio and television access. All four of these respondents were Xhosa L1 speakers. One can very tentatively, due to the small number of respondents here, conclude that Xhosa L2 speakers who are interested as well as informed on current news events gain their knowledge of what is happening around them from other media than the printed form.

Our interest here is in how students who did have regular access to the newspapers processed the information given in those newspapers in the form of the news. The 78 students who said they had regular access, scored as follows on the news quiz:

Table 8. Scores on news quiz – regular newspaper access.

Score	Number of respondents
10	2
9	0
8	3
7	4

6	8
5	8
4	15
3	15
2	7
1	13
0	3

Therefore 32% of the respondents who regularly had access to newspapers obtained scores of 50% or more, and 88% of them obtained scores below 50%.

Comparing knowledge of current affairs (i.e. scores on question 5) to responses given in question 1, the relatively low scores indicate that respondents either over-reported their access opportunities, OR they were not able to fully understand what they had been reading when they did have access. It is also possible that they only read very limited sections of the paper; however, this is an unlikely explanation for low scoring because the questions were set on the very obvious and most directly accessible headline news of the day.

There are of course other media than the printed for getting information on current affairs, like radio and television. Out of the 120 respondents 73 (60.8%) indicated that they have access to information through a radio. Even this kind of access did not secure higher scores. ERSITY of the

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Table 9 Scores on news guiz - regular radio and television access (no newspaper access)

Score	Number of radio respondents	Score	Number of television
10		10	respondents
10	3	10	3
9	0	9	1
8	6	8	6
7	5	7	5
6	11	6	11
5	8	5	8
4	19	4	18
3	10	3	12
2	7	2	7
1	3	1	4
0	1	0	1

Of the 73 respondents who had regular access to *radio*, 33 (45.2%) of them obtained scores of 50% or more, and 40 (54.7%) obtained scores below 50%.

Of the 76 respondents who had regular access to *television*, 34 (44.7%) of them obtained scores of 50% or more, and 42 (55.2%) obtained scores below 50%. Out of 3 respondents who scored 100%, 2 of them indicated that they have access to all 3 kinds of media (newspaper, radio and television) and 1 respondent indicated that s/he has access to the radio and television only. There is only 1 respondent who scored 90%; s/he indicated that s/he has access to television only. From the 6 students who scored 80% 3 of them indicated that they have access to all 3 media and 3 have access to the radio and television only. Out of the 5 students who scored 70%, 4 of them have access to all 3 media and 1 has access to radio and television only. This shows that the students who scored 70% to 100% of the quiz have access to at least the radio and television, but the majority of them could regularly access all 3 kinds of media (newspaper, radio and television).

### 4.6.2 Correlating first languages with knowledge of current news

Out of 120 respondents 21 (17.5%) of them were English L1 speakers, 12 (10%) were Afrikaans L1 speakers, and 87 (72.5%) were Xhosa L1 speakers. Of the 33 (27.5%) English and Afrikaans L1 speakers, all indicated that they read the newspapers often; 4 of the Afrikaans speakers read an Afrikaans newspaper (*Die Burger*) and all the others read English newspapers. Interestingly, the Afrikaans speakers who reported regular access to an Afrikaans newspaper all performed significantly below 50% in the news quiz. On the other hand, the Afrikaans L1 speakers who reported regular access to an English newspaper all performed between 60% and 100% in the news quiz. Overall, the English L1 and Afrikaans L1 respondents scored as follows on the news quiz:

Table 10. Scores of the English L1 and Afrikaans L1 readers on news quiz

Marks	Number of
	respondents
10	2
9	0
8	2
7	3
6	7
5	1
4	7
3	4
2	5
1	2
0	0

Out of the 33 English L1 and Afrikaans L1 respondents, 15 (45%) obtained scores above 50% and 18 obtained scores below 50%. In comparison, out of the 87 Xhosa L1 speakers only 19 (22%) of them who obtained scores above 50%.

Tables 8, 9 and 10 above show that Xhosa L1 speakers on average have limited access to newspapers, and that compared to English L1 and Afrikaans L1 speakers they have similar kinds of access to radio and television. Generally Xhosa L1 speakers with better scores on the quiz, thus with more information on current affairs, had more access to radio and television than to the printed news. On the whole the exercise showed the unequal access to the media, which also correlates with the statuses of languages (English, Afrikaans and Xhosa in that order) and the orders of discourse (Fairclough 1995,1989; Wodak 1996). This also demonstrates that those competent in English or have English as L1, do not only have several papers and media at their disposal, they are also likely to have

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easier access to information in these media.

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# Chapter 5: Data presentation and Analysis: Questionnaire 2

### 5.1 Introduction

The second questionnaire (appendix 2) was drafted in order to check, at least on a preliminary level, how Xhosa L1 speakers are able to access information given in an English medium newspaper. For this, 20 respondents were selected from the 120 that answered the first questionnaire. These 20 respondents were selected on the basis of (i) their claims to regular access to printed newspapers (excepting 1) and (ii) their performance on the quiz. A relatively even spread of high and low performers on the quiz was selected: eleven (11) respondents scored more than 50%, and eight (8) scored below 50%; one respondent who scored 95%, but indicated limited access to printed media, was included in case he could shed more light on how he gains access to texts with limited exposure to the written word. All these respondents had indicated that they have access to other kinds of media (radio and television) besides the newspapers.

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Before this group started writing the comprehension exercise I had a discussion with them about their access to printed media, checking whether they can still confirm that they have access to newspapers. This discussion was aimed at checking more precisely how often the respondents have access to the *Cape Times* in particular, i.e. if they claimed regular access (in question 1 of the introductory quiz), the question was how often counts as "regular" to them – would it be daily, weekly, at odd intervals, only when there is news of special interest, etc. Banda (2004) used similar criteria to determine the frequency of everyday reading. He defined regular use of information sources as being once a week or more and infrequent or not regular use as being those who never or do not know whether they have ever used the sources. In the discussion I asked them to explain more about why they choose to read the *Cape Times* or other printed newspapers. The reason why they were asked this question was that the *Cape Times* was the newspaper which most of the first set of respondents indicated that they do have access to. Of the 20 respondents selected for the second questionnaire, 14 had

indicated in question 1 of the first questionnaire that they read the *Cape Times*. The 6 respondents who did not indicate that they read the *Cape Times* reported preference for community newspapers like *City Vision*. These respondents said that when seeking jobs, they will have to get access to newspapers, but for the time being they stated that they prefer reading free community newspapers rather than regular local ones because

- i. They do not have money to buy newspapers.
- ii. They do not have much time to read newspapers.
- iii. They do not like reading.
- iv. Their parents in their homes normally do not buy newspapers.

Banda (2004) found that the weekly community newspapers are popular in both Blacks and Coloureds due to the fact that they are offered free of charge in South Africa. Of the 20 respondents 14 indicated that they do read the *Cape Times* even if it is not on a regular daily basis. They indicated how they manage to get newspapers: some said that they borrow the *Cape Times* from people who buy it more often. Those who read newspapers often read them even if they are a bit outdated. The following reasons were given for why they prefer to read the *Cape Times*.

- i. They want to know what is happening nationally and in the world outside.
- ii. They want to be updated for the Media Classes (where they need information to take part).
- iii. They want to check on sport.
- iv. They want to see the career opportunities.

According to Silverblatt (1995) some college students indicated that they read the newspapers only if their parents routinely read them. That is why Banda (2004) says those respondents who have access to newspapers do not necessarily buy them themselves. The argument here however, is the instrumental use of the media e.g. as a resource or to gain employment, which relates to the *uses and gratification theory* (Dainton & Zelley 2005). This theory focuses on why people use the media. It stresses that people have a free will to decide about which media to use and when to use it. These choices are based on personal needs and values

that one wishes to fulfill. Consequently, people rely on it because they use it as a tool to source information for careers.

The second questionnaire (appendix 2) was based on a text taken from the *Cape Times* of 3 April 2003 written by Evelio Contreras. The questions were divided according to:

- i. General structure of the news report
- ii Content (information on particular topic)
- iii. Grammar, looking at form and meaning.

### 5.2 General structure of the newspaper

Regarding the general structure of the newspaper, 3 simple questions were designed, checking whether the respondents (i) can identify the writer of this text, (ii) can identify typical features of newspaper reports (Fairclough 2004), and (iii) can identify the way in which different kinds of reports are organized in the layout of a newspaper. They were asked to motivate and explain their answers to these questions.

### **Responses to question 1**

Question 1 is about the writer of this article, the respondents were asked to give the name of the writer. In this question all respondents were able to identify the writer of this article as "Evelio Contreras". This clearly shows that through the access the respondents had in printed media, they can easily identify the writer of the article. They know where to find the writer's name in the article.

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### Responses to question 2

In question 2 the respondents were asked to give any two characterizing features of the newspaper article. These are features that make the newspaper article different from an article in a book (for example) (Eggins, 2004; Martin and Rose 2003). The generic features of the news report that could have been mentioned are as follows:

- i. One sentence per paragraph
- ii. Wide use of citations of prominent people's views
- iii. Very little of the writer's own view is given directly

- iv. A general point is made at the start, then motivation and elaboration is given in following paragraph
- v. Repetition of main points
- vi. Attempts to convince and influence readers
- vii. Headline in bold
- viii. Byline that gives the name of the writer
- ix. Lead that summarizes the main point
- x. Final paragraph gives a conclusion

Only ten (50%) of twenty (100%) respondents managed to identify at least one of these features. Four (20%) of them identified two features, as was asked of them. Specifically, they named the use of a headline and a byline. Another six (6) of them identified only one feature. Here, they mentioned one of the following: the byline, the headline or citations of prominent people's views. However the remaining 10 respondents couldn't identify any of these features. Three (15%) of them did say something about boldness of the lettering, but not in referring to the headlines as bold. They are only able to answer the more obvious questions. Seven (35%) of them clearly showed that they could not recognize or identify any characterizing features of a newspaper article.

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### Responses to question 3

Question 3 asked the respondents to state the section in which they would normally expect this type of article and to give reasons for their answer. The newspaper consists broadly speaking, of five sections, namely:

- i. Front Page
- ii. Middle Page
- iii. Editorial Section
- iv. Back Page
- v. Special Supplement

Thirteen (65%) of the respondents failed to state the most likely section for this article. All of these respondents indicated that they expected to find this kind of an article on the front-page. They seem not to know what to expect in which section and they didn't state the reason for their choice. This would be expected to

be on front page only if it was published in KwaZulu- Natal' newspaper directly as the new research results. It is generally too elaborate and it is based on research rather than on fresh, breaking news for a front-page article. Seven (35%) of the respondents did make a more likely suggestion, but they failed to give a reason for their choice.

The middle section of a newspaper is a section where this article could be expected. The editorial section could also feature such an article if the editor topicalizes this. Lastly the special supplement section is also possible if there is a special section on HIV/ AIDS.

In summary, regarding recognition of structural features of newspaper articles, thirteen respondents couldn't place this article in terms of the organization of information in a newspaper. What is significant here is the fact that students are not able to answer correctly questions that are cognitively demanding. This finding is in line with other studies that show that English Second Language learners in South Africa often have difficulty coping with context reduced tasks (Gough & Bock 2001) and cognitively demanding English Second Language tasks (Banda 2003). The discussion below will in part give an indication why this is so.

### **5.3** Content (information on particular topic)

Interpretations are generated through a combination of what is in the text and what is in the interpreter in the sense of background knowledge (Fairclough 2004). According to Mccullagh (2002) people tend to draw on cultural resources such as experiential knowledge and popular wisdom to interpret what the text is saying. Therefore intertextual knowledge becomes paramount to reading and understanding. The content section of the questionnaire questions 4 to 17 required of respondents to show how they draw information from the text directly, or how they are able to interpret what is given on the basis of prior knowledge of the particular topic, and on the basis of their knowledge of language (grammatical aspects) that is typical of news reports.

### Responses to question 4

In question 4 the researcher asked the respondents to summarize the text in three lines. In this question they were expected to summarize the content of the text by showing their understanding of the text and using their own words. This is the internal analysis of text looking on meaning relations between words and longer expressions of text (Fairclough 2004). They were expected to say for example, "HIV/ AIDS research at the University of Natal was reported at the forum in Cape Town. The report at the forum criticized government policies and actions as inadequate. Particularly under fire, was then Deputy President Jacob Zuma. This report pleads for more statesmen instead of politicians".

Twelve (60%)of the respondents seemed not to understand what is meant by "summary". In fact they seemed not to recognize the main point and the main argument of this text. In correlation with the quiz scores these respondents had obtained scores below 50%. Eight (40%)of the respondents did show that they have an idea of what this report entails. They summarized the report by saying for example,

"There is a complaint against government and politicians reaction towards HIV/ AIDS and there is a need for statesmen to deal with HIV/Aids",

"Community need statesmen not politicians to deal with HIV/Aids in South Africa",

"This report is about a criticism of political reaction towards Aids, and its emphasis on how Aids is killing people in South Africa."

My argument here is that the students not only do not appear to know what "summary" entails, but also they do not have the English Second Language grammatical knowledge to enable them comprehend the textual meanings and relationships, to enable them make use of what they already know about HIV/Aids. As systematic functional linguists have argued, knowledge of grammatical aspects of a language is critical to textual comprehension (Martin & Rose 2004; Christie 2005) thus students are unable to make use of intertextuality to interpret and summarise the HIV/Aids text (cf Fairclough 1995, 2004). Effectively there is a mismatch between the context of situation and the students own context of culture (cf Christie 2005; martin & Rose 2004; Eggins 2004).

### **Responses to question 5**

In question 5 the respondents were asked to state the profession of Alan Whiteside. They were expected to identify him as a Director for HIV/ AIDS research at the University of Natal from line 2 of the text. 19 (95%) of the respondents responded correctly to this question; only 1 respondent said that he is just a researcher. This answer is acceptable, but it has to be remembered that the question does not require reading with understanding.

### Responses to question 6

Question 6 was about the kind of meeting that Alan Whiteside attended when he made his statement that this article has cited. Respondents were expected to find the answer in line 5 of the text where it says that it was a SADC regional governance and AIDS forum.

Only nine (45%) of the respondents were able to identify the meeting that Mr Whiteside attended. Eleven (55%) of them couldn't identify this. They seemed to be confused about what "meeting" entails and could not recognize the reference to the kind of meeting. Seven (35%) of them stated that this was an HIV/AIDS treatment plan meeting. Four (20%) of them interpreted the word "kind" as asking whether it was a public or formal meeting, reporting or presentational meeting or conference meeting. That the respondents could not link Aids forum with 'meeting' shows their lack of understanding of textual meaning (Eggins 2004; Martin & Rose 2004) as well as their inability to use that prior knowledge of what meetings entail and mean, e.g. intertextuality (Fairclough 2004). This is also much more context reduced question than the one in question 5. If the study by Gough & Bock (2001) is anything to go by, this explains why the student performed worse in question 6 than in question 5

### Responses to question 7

Question 7 was about the place where this meeting was held. The researcher expected the respondents to find the answer in line 5 of the text where it states that this meeting was held in Cape Town.

Seventeen (85%) respondents got this right. However, two (10%) seemed to have confused the place where Mr. Whiteside was a director of research and the place where the meeting was held. One (5%) of them didn't indicate where this meeting was held at all. These three respondents clearly had some difficulty in correctly understanding the various references to place in the text. This was a context-loaded question not requiring high level abstraction (Banda 2003) and the high percentage of students who got it right is indicative of that.

### **Responses to question 8**

Question 8 was testing whether the respondents could recognize the difference between the statement of Mr. Whiteside and Deputy President Zuma. These two speakers, as they are cited in this article, do not agree with each other. Mr. Zuma is saying that as a government they have an HIV/AIDS strategy and action plan, which focuses on prevention, care, support and treatment. On the other hand Mr. Whiteside is berating the government by saying they are slow in responding to the crisis and their measures are inadequate. Eighteen (90%) respondents recognized that the opinions of the two public speakers differ. Two (10%) were not able to recognize these differences.

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### Responses to question 9 WESTERN CAPE

Question 9 is about Mr Whiteside's speech when he refers to soldiers in Iraq in this article on Aids in South Africa. This question was testing whether the respondents could understand the comparison he was making. He is comparing American deaths in Iraq in the first week of the war that had recently broke out with the number of deaths on account of AIDS in a similar week in South Africa. With this comparison he intends to point out the irony that in the South African media American deaths in Iraq get more attention than Aids deaths in this country. Only two (10%) of the respondents were able to figure out why Mr. Whiteside is referring to the deaths in Iraq while speaking about Aids deaths in South Africa. This indicates an inability to interpret what is implied, but not explicitly stated. It is not unusual for second language speakers to find implicature (pragmatic meaning) in English difficult to recognize. The answers to question 9 suggest that the majority of the respondents do not have a well-developed pragmatic competence of English language use. Using agenda setting theory, it

could be argued that the media perceived the Iraq war as new and more newsworthy than news on Aids (cf Dainton & Zelley 2005). However, what is important here is the fact that the learners missed the implicature. This means that they are also unlikely to understand the issue of news selection and its implications (Fowler 1991) and how this impacts on ideological formation and hegemony (Fairclough 1995, 2004).

### **Responses to question 10**

This question is about the profession of Anne Shongwe. The respondents were expected to find the answer in line 24 of the text that states that she is a policy adviser for the SADC governments. Eighteen (90%) respondents were able to state her profession, while two (10%) could not. This is a very clear and explicit statement, so certainly the latter two respondents had difficulty in understanding what they were reading. The overall score of these 2 respondents on relatively direct informational questions is 5. Their scores on general information section of the first questionnaire correlate with this in that they achieved below 50% in question 5.

## Responses to questions 11-14 NIVERSITY of the

Questions 11 to 14 were set to test respondents' knowledge of the general context of current affairs in which this article was published, that is, their background knowledge was investigated.

Question 11 checks whether the respondents were able to identify the governments that are included in SADC. Ten (50%) of the respondents gave a full explanation of what the SADC acronym stands for, namely the South African Development Community. However, only one (5%) attempted to mention the countries included, though s/he named only Botswana. Nine (45%) of the respondents could neither give an explanation for the acronym nor list any country.

Question 12 tested whether the respondents would know the meaning of the acronym, UN as an abbreviated reference to the United Nations. Here nineteen (95%) respondents were right. The one who did not recognize it, took an educated

guess, and decided that it must refer to the University of Natal. This showed that the respondent lacks intertextual knowledge of text and that led to miscommunication (Ballard 2005).

Questions 13 and 14 were about countries that are (or are not) in sub-Saharan Africa, as a test to general geographical knowledge. Twelve (60%) of the respondents could recognize Egypt as not part of "sub-Sahara", and Kenya as indeed part of "sub-Sahara". Eight (40%) of them were not able to give an indication of such background knowledge about what the term "sub-Saharan Africa" refers to. They tried to guess – but were unsuccessful.

### Responses to question 15-16

Question 15 is about the number of people who are HIV positive world-wide. This question was based on the figures stated in this article in line 26 of the text. The respondents were expected to find the answer of 42 million, which nineteen (95%) of them did. One (5%) respondent said that it is 47 million people who are HIV positive in South Africa probably misread the figure.

Question 16 is about the large institutions that this article stated as being slow in attending to Aids. The respondents were expected to find the answer in line 28 of the text where it refers to Southern African governments and United Nations development programs. Fifteen (75%) of the respondents managed to identify these 2 institutions that had been slow in attending HIV issue. Five (25%) of the respondents gave answers like "doctors, and researchers", "health and political institution", "leadership and single-minded". This most probably shows that they did not understand the meaning of the term "institution".

Question 17 is about the average years that a person with HIV is expected to live. The respondents were expected to find the answer in line 31 of the text where it says 38 years. Seventeen (85%) respondents had no difficulty here. Only 3 (15%) of the respondents failed to state the life expectancy of the HIV person in South Africa. These 3 respondents gave answers like "10 years", "20 years"," life expectancy is lower than the day of independent".

In summary, regarding the information carried in this article, for questions 4 to 8, 10, and 15 to 17 that could be answered directly from the text, the respondents generally had minimal difficulties in finding the answers. However, on question 9, where an ability to deduce implied meaning was required, the performance generally was very weak. Questions 11 to 14 that required knowledge not given in the text showed similar low scores, except on the recognition of the acronym for the United Nations. Three conclusions can be drawn from all of this:

- Most respondents could generally understand surface meaning given in the written text.
- ii. Few respondents could show that they were generally informed on the meaning of textual markers such as SADC and on wider general geographical orientation.
- iii. The majority of respondents had difficulty in interpreting implicature (Brown and Levinson 1978), context reduced tasks (Gough & Bock 2001) and cognitively demanding tasks (Banda 2003) that required intertextual knowledge (Fairclough 1995, 2004).

# 5.4 Grammar looking on form and meaning UNIVERSITY of the

In the third section the questions were designed to test knowledge of grammatical form and meaning of the English used in the printed media. These questions checked respondents' recognition of synonyms, opposites, meaning of phrases, metaphoric meanings and so on that were used in the particular article. I worked with the assumption that the level of grammatical complexity (or simplicity) of this article is representative of what is typical of news reports of this kind generally, and that knowledge of grammar is equally important to understand textual meaning (Christie 2005).

### **Responses to question 18**

Question 18 refers to the negative tone that the writer is using when he talks about "politicians". He uses another word related to, but with an opposite, connotative meaning to "politicians". The respondents were expected to recognize that word as "statesmen". Only ten (50%) of the respondents got this correct. The other ten (50%) of them did not understand what was required from them. They gave words

that are describing politicians negatively, words like "inadequate", "slow", "single- minded". It seems that this question was either not worded clearly enough, that some respondents did not read the question properly, or that they could not recognize the connotative difference between the two terms. As with interpreting implicature, this may be an indication of lesser-developed ESL pragmatic competence in that the respondents showed limited sensitivity to connotative or affective meanings of English words (Brown and Levinson 1978), or that for some reason they were unable to access intertextual knowledge (Fairclough 1995, 2004).

### Responses to question 19 and 21

Questions 19 to 21 tested the ability of respondents to recognize synonyms and antonyms of words or phrases as they are used in the text. In questions 19 and 21 the respondents provided a good response in the sense that they understood correctly what was requested from them.

............

Question 19 tested the respondents' ability to recognize synonyms. Only two (10%) respondents scored 5 out of 5. There were four (20%) of the respondents who scored 4 out of 5, while seven (35%) of them obtained 3 out of 5. Seven (35%) of the respondents performed badly in this question, for example two (10%) respondents scored 2 out of 5, another two (10%) of them who scored 1 out 5 and three (15%) respondents scored 0 out of 5. These respondents gave answers like for "single- minded" for "believable" instead of "credible", and "does not exist" for "insufficient" instead of "inadequate".

Question 20 tested whether the respondents could find another word referring to "doctors and researchers". They were expected to find the answer in line 11 where the same people are referred to as "delegates". Here fifteen (75%) succeeded in getting the term right, while five (25%) of them failed to give the correct answer. They offered words like "epidemic" and "government officials" as co-referent to "doctors and researchers" in this text. In correlation with the first questionnaire these respondents obtained scores below 50% in question 5.

Question 21 tested the respondents' ability to recognize antonyms. Only two (10%) respondents obtained 3 out of 3 and eight (40%) of them scored 2 out of 3. On the other hand ten (50%) of the respondents performed poorly in this question. Five (25%) respondents scored 1 out of 3. These respondents only got right the antonym of the phrase "an opening statement" as "a closing statement". Another five (25%) of them scored 0 out of 3. These respondents gave answers like "first thing he said ", "not secret", "introduction", "speech" and "first speaker" for an opposite to "opening statement". In correlation with the first questionnaire these respondents obtained scores below 50% in question 5.

### **Responses to question 22**

Question 22 was about giving an explanation about the meaning of the word "single-minded" in viewing HIV/AIDS as a health issue. The researcher expected the respondents to state that in this context, to be "single-minded" means not to recognize the full complexity of the issue; people who are single-minded in the way they view HIV, see HIV/Aids as a health issue only and they neglect the fact that it is also about life style, policies, community, care, etc. The majority of the respondents didn't know what being single-minded means. Only three (15%) of them seemed to have an idea of what this could mean. For example, they said it means they are not broadminded about HIV – which is not an exact rendering, although it shows reasonable understanding. Seventeen (85%) of the respondents didn't know the meaning of this compound word at all. They gave answers like, "it refer to stereotypes" or "Aids kills".

This clearly demonstrates the students' inability to use textual clues as one aspect of competent readers, to draw out meanings (Eggins 2004). As will become clear below, it can also be argued that students failed to activate appropriate schemata and underlying culture of the texts in question (Cotteril & Ife 2001). Following Robert (1985) Eggins (2004) and Martin & Rose (2004) it could also be argued that students failed to recognize the generic features or codes contained in the text to enable them decipher it.

### Responses to question 24 and 25

Questions 24 and 25 were about the respondents' understanding of phrases that refer to statistical information. Here they needed not only to understand the phrases "HIV prevalence" and "life expectancy" but also what *high* or *low* rates actually referred to.

Question 24 asks the respondents about the term "HIV prevalence", expecting to check whether they understand what "prevalence" means, and how the modifiers "high" and "low" are used in relation to this term. The respondents were expected to give an answer that says a few HIV cases in an area are "low prevalence". Only eleven (55%) respondents succeeded to give the right answer. The other nine (45%) respondents failed to give the right answer. In correlation with the first questionnaire the latter respondents obtained scores of 50% and less in question 5.

Question 25 asks the respondents about the term "life expectancy rate" expecting to check whether they understand what "rate" refers to in this context and what the modifier "life expectancy" means in this phrase, and what the modifiers "high" and "low" mean in relation to the whole. The respondents were expected to give an answer that says an average life expectancy of 60 is "high". Twelve (60%) respondents succeeded to get this answer right, while eight (40%) respondents failed to get this answer right. In correlation with the first questionnaire these eight respondents obtained scores below 50% in question 5.

### **Responses to question 26**

Question 26 requested the respondents to find a metaphor in the text that gives an image of how HIV/Aids affects the country. A metaphor is the use of a word or a phrase to mean something other than what it literally denotes. Metaphors often involve a comparison between what the words literally refer to and what is non-literally implied (Ballard 2005; Finegan and Besnier 1989). The respondents were expected to find an answer in lines 19-20 of the text which state that "HIV is the water that slips into the cracks of the society" or "AIDS is the ice that splits us apart". Here HIV is compared to water, and AIDS is compared to ice; the effect of HIV is compared to water running into cracks, and the effect of AIDS is compared to the ability or ice to cut things apart. Twelve (60%) of the

respondents gave a good response to this question, indicating that they knew what is meant by a metaphor. The other eight (40%) of the respondents failed to give a correct answer to this question. They quoted descriptive words, i.e. adjectives, like "epidemic" and "pathetic" as metaphors. This clearly showed that they do not know what a metaphor is. Unfortunately, in these cases it is not possible to determine whether they understood the intended meaning of the metaphoric language.

# Responses to question 23 and 27

Questions 23 and 27 were about explaining meaning differences that are the result of (i) use of only one of the meanings of a homonym, and (ii) stylistic change.

Question 23 requires the respondents to explain the difference between a "projected figure" and a "real figure" by recognizing at least that "figure" here has the meaning "number". Their response to question 23 was fair in that most had an idea of what is meant by the phrases. A "projected figure" is calculated numerically on current information; it is not precise but is used to make a prediction. A "real figure" is a verified number that represents what is true right now. It is thirteen (65%) of the respondents who performed well in this question while seven (35%) of them performed poorly. In correlation with the first questionnaire the latter respondents obtained scores below 50% in question 5.

Question 27 requests the respondents to explain how the meaning of the text would be different if the sentence in lines 15 and 16 were paraphrased, i.e. if the same content was given in a different style and sentence structure. Thus they were asked to judge what meaning effect there would be if

"We don't need politicians. We need statesmen. A politician looks to the next election; a statesman looks to the next generation"

# had been written as

"Politicians only care about getting elected to their positions again, but statesmen think about the future of the people".

The respondents were expected to state that there is no significant difference in the content of the two alternatives, but there is a difference in style that does have an affect on a connotative or affective level. The repetition and slight change in use of the phrases "We do not need x. We need y", and "A politician looks to X; a

statesman looks to Y" brings a poetic element and it focuses on the opposition between the two in such a way that it grabs the attention and is more likely to be memorized than would be the case with the paraphrase. Fairclough (2004) sees discourse as different ways of representing, such as a degree of repetition, commonality and stability over time. None of the respondents gave a satisfactory response to this question. They apparently did not understand what was required from them. They responded by giving more elaborate paraphrases, thereby showing limited sensitivity to the way in which style contributes to meaning.

### Conclusion

Following Bennet (1995) I can argue that the data suggests that the majority of students fail to interact with the text. In particular, the students do not demonstrate any critical reading for judgment and evaluation. Ballard (2005) argues that people use their knowledge of the genre of a particular text to help them understand the message. However, this shows clearly that although the majority of students in the study wanted to follow a career in journalism they show very little evidence of students using prior knowledge or intertextuality (cf Fairclough 2004) to mediate meaning. Cotteril & Ife (2001) argue that successful interpretation of a text is dependant on the reader having a large encyclopedia and a fair amount of shared knowledge between the writer and the reader or audience. In this study even though the content is about South Africa, the students still have difficult making sense of the texts. The problem appears two-fold: first, they fail to work out how the parts of the text fit together (e.g. textual knowledge, cf Roberts 1985, Eggins 2004, Martin & Rose 2004). Second, they fail to see how the text fits in with their prior experience of the world, that is, context of culture (Eggins 2004; Martin & Rose 2004) or intertextual knowledge (Silverblatt 1995; Cotterill & Ife 2001; Fairclough 2004)

All in all, even where there is demonstrated knowledge of understanding and interpretation, it is also evident that English grammar, or more precisely lack of it, plays a critical role in the accessibility of the printed media to first language speakers of Xhosa.

# **Chapter 6: Conclusions**

### 6.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to investigate the access Xhosa L1 speakers have to news published in their second language, namely English. The investigation was guided by six research questions that focused on the following:

- whether Xhosa L1 speakers have significant access to newspapers at all,
- whether there is a link between access to newspapers and the English language proficiency of Xhosa L1 readers,
- whether a specific group of young Xhosa L1 speakers actually could make sense of a real news report,
- whether more or less access to the news can be related to the region in which young Xhosa L1 speakers received early schooling,
- whether Xhosa L1 speakers have access to a limited or more extended set of news media topics (news categories),
- whether more access to printed news necessarily correlated with better understanding of printed reporting, and conversely, whether less access to printed news correlated with less understanding of printed reporting.

The research instruments used to answer the particular questions were participantobservation of the researcher and two questionnaires. The analyses of the data collected by means of the questionnaires were done in the framework of the literature discussed in chapter 2. Chapter 3 explained the research methodology. Chapters 4 and 5 reported on the analyses of the data.

# **6.2** Conclusions on questionnaire 1

Chapter 4 is about the findings or the analysis and interpretation of questionnaire 1. This questionnaire was circulated among 120 respondents between the ages of 20 and 25. It collected information on the patterns of media access, areas of young Xhosa L1 readers' interests, the time they spent in reading, listening or watching those media and at their knowledge or awareness of current news affairs.

The majority of the respondents in this questionnaire claimed that they have regular access to newspapers and they would like to work as journalists in the printed or other media. In correlation with the amount of time they reportedly spent reading these newspapers and considering their scores in the current news quiz, these respondents performed relatively poorly. This leads to the conclusion that either they had over-reported their access to newspapers, or their language proficiency was not sufficient to give them proper access to the news they read (Banda 2004). Other reasons such as limited interest in a few selected categories such as the sport section were not specifically tested. This questionnaire showed that the respondents, who had limited access to newspapers, still had access to other kinds of media like radio and television. Therefore, even without access to printed news, they could have access to the current news of the day. Even so, overall the respondents did not indicate that they were well informed on fairly widely reported matters of the day. Following Ballard (2005); Bennet (1995) and Fairclough (1995, 2004) the problem is that they failed to activate their schemata to enable them make sense of intertextual knowledge, and thus understand the news better.

# 6.9 Conclusions on questionnaire 2 UNIVERSITY of the

Chapter 5 is about the findings or the analysis and interpretation of questionnaire 2. This questionnaire was circulated among 20 respondents selected from the former group on the basis of their scores in the general news information quiz and the access they reportedly have to printed news. It collected information on their understanding and insight into a specific text from the *Cape Times*. Overall, these respondents showed a substantial degree of surface meaning understanding, regardless of their performances in the news quiz of the first questionnaire. In most cases, they showed that they are struggling with some of the questions. They found that the questions were not clear enough, or the terminology was unfamiliar to them, thus could not in particular demonstrate textual knowledge (Eggins 2004; Martin & Rose 2004). Clearly, they appeared to lack full access to the text, with regard to interpretation of implicatures and metaphoric (idiomatic) language use. This indicates their ESL pragmatic competence is not developed to the level of mature L1 speakers of English yet. At the same they could not transfer L1

pragmatic knowledge to the L2 (cf. Banda (2003) in the direct questions that were based on the text itself. Where they had to rely on implied meanings or contextual knowledge, their performance showed more uncertainty. This is in line with Gough and Bock (2001) findings.

# 6.4 Linking the analyses of questionnaire 1 and questionnaire 2.

Findings of questionnaire 1 have been correlated with the findings of questionnaire 2. The respondents, who indicated regular access to the newspapers and who also got a high score (more than 6 out of 10) in the current news quiz, were expected to know the genre of news reports in printed form better than those who indicated that they do not have regular access to newspapers.

# Research question1

Concerning question 1 of my research questions, which is about the kind of access that Xhosa L1 speakers may have to printed news, the first set of respondents indicated varying access opportunities. The second set of respondents, i.e. the selected sample of questionnaire 2, confirmed that they have access to newspapers but that it is not often. They have access more regularly to local newspapers that are free to their communities. This group gave reasons for not having access to printed news. Specifically, they mentioned that they do not have money to buy these newspapers. This is in line with Banda's (2004) findings. Some of those who read the newspapers had such access because their parents liked to read newspapers. This ties up with a conclusion drawn by Silverblatt (1995:140) when he found that College students in America are far more likely to read the newspapers if their parents routinely read them. In fact his study found that students are likely to read the newspapers at the same time of the day in the same location as their parents. This would suggest that one way for parents to encourage their offspring to read the newspapers is simply to read the papers themselves.

It is clear from the responses of both groups of students that the printed news media are not the main source of information on local and current affairs. Respondents who did, according to their own reports, have regular access to newspapers did not necessarily gain more information in that way. In the quiz on current news many who reported regular access to newspapers did not show that they had accessed the information in a significant way. For example there were respondents who obtained scores below 50% and they claimed that they had regular access to newspapers. However, some respondents who preformed well in the current news quiz, had more access to radio and television than to printed news.

# Research question 2

Research question two considered the effects of less access to newspapers on students' access to information. Regardless of how much access respondents had to newspapers, they apparently did not engage enough to remember details; it is possible that some do not have well developed reading skills (Robert 1985; Bennet 1995; Silverstone 1995; Ballard 2005). It became clear that where respondents do have access to the printed media, they only read what they found more interesting to them, for example 'sport'. As a result they appear not to have elaborate knowledge of what is happening in their own society, or further a field at the time it becomes available. Generally, they get the news later when other people are talking about what they read through the newspapers or get through other news media. Alternatively, they get direct access to breaking news through radio and television more easily than through newspapers. For example, there were some students with limited access to newspapers who performed better in the quiz than those who reported they had regular access to newspaper cf. there was a respondent who did not often read newspapers who scored 90% in the quiz. These effects of limited access became clear when respondents to questionnaire 1 could not give answers to very easy questions on current affairs; similar effects became clear when respondents to questionnaire 2 could not answer questions that did not refer directly to the given text. That means their background knowledge of local and international affairs that would in some more or less direct way affect their day-to-day lives, was limited.

The second research question also intended to check whether more access to printed news in any way correlated with better proficiency in English. Regarding access to media information by a language that is not their first language, the selected sample of respondents (i.e. those who answered questionnaire 2) had

difficulties with interpreting implicatures and the connotative meanings of words or phrases. On general linguistic questions related to the text, such as recognising and understanding synonyms or antonyms, the respondents to the second questionnaire could not be faulted in a serious way.

# Research question 3

Question 3 of the research questions checked whether respondents who did read newspapers actually could understand the texts. The assumption here was that respondents with regular access would understand the genre better, and would find access to the information carried in a news report easier than respondents who did not have regular access. That was not the case because 88% of the respondents who scored below 50% reported that they had regular access to newspapers and 55% of the students who scored below 50% in the quiz reported that they had access only to radio and television. Many respondents, who claimed regular access, acknowledged that they did not have enough time to read through them thoroughly. This was because sometimes they borrow them from friends and therefore they have to look through quickly and do not cover as much as would be possible otherwise. In some cases, as in question 3 and question 22 of the second questionnaire, they show that they do understand what is written, but they seem not to be completely at home with the language of the media, i.e. they did not show complete understanding of all aspects of the text. There are cases where the respondents showed an element of understanding and then took an educated guess of what the full text meant. For example, the abbreviation "UN" used to refer to the United Nations was interpreted as a reference to the "University of Natal" - a phrase used elsewhere in the text and thus interpreted as a clue as to the meaning of "UN". There is a lack of re-contextualizing the text and intertextuality (cf Fairclough 2004).

# Research question 4

Concerning research question 4, there is a marked relation between the region in which the selected sample of Xhosa L1 readers were schooled, and their levels of access to English news and news media. The majority of the selected sample had been schooled in the Eastern Cape. In this region there is the possibility of access to printed news in Xhosa, e.g. in 'Intsimbi' and 'Imvo Zabantsundu'. This would make it possible to gain information without high proficiency in English. This is

different in the Western Cape where respondents would need proper proficiency in English, in order to access information through local printed media. The Eastern Cape group appeared to have more difficulty than the Western Cape group. This supports Banda's (2004) finding that students from rural areas experiences more difficulties with interpreting and understanding texts written in English, than those from urban areas.

# Research question 5

In response to research question 5, the selected sample of Xhosa L1 speakers indicated that the news categories they prefer to read the most, are about sport, local affairs, political affairs, international affairs, formal news broadcast and entertainment (in the given order). Information given in these categories could be useful to them when they are engaged in public discourses that involve debates. The article used in questionnaire 2 could not check access to all of these news sections. What became clear was that the respondents could often access information given directly and literally. However, they had some difficulties with pragmatic competence and co-references. For example question 9 of the second questionnaire showed that the respondents had difficulties with the pragmatic competence of English.

# Research question 6

Concerning research questions 6, it appears that Xhosa L1 readers who have regular access to the newspapers generally have less than fair interpretative and comprehension skills of news published in English. For many the limited access to newspapers, meant a limited ability to interpret and comprehend what they have read, with non-native proficiency in English. In fact, the performance of the majority of respondents to question was better than I had anticipated not satisfactory for reasons discussed earlier.

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# 6.5 Evaluation, future research and possible improvements

In summary, the research instruments I used provided good insight into many aspects related to the access young Xhosa L1 speakers have to news printed in English. A number of the findings were surprising in the light of my hypothesis that limited access to printed news would correlate with limited knowledge of

current affairs and with lesser proficiency in English. In fact, limited access to printed news did not necessarily imply limited knowledge of current affairs. Also, understanding of a specific news text was not ostensibly dependent on regular access to printed news. Most interesting were the responses to the specifically selected text that indicated less than fair grammatical competence and less than fair pragmatic competence among Xhosa L1 readers reading an English news text. However, even though lack of English Second Language knowledge is important, in most case it was lack of intertextual knowledge that proved problematic.

Firstly, these respondents could not operationalise words such as "summarise" thus demonstrating the lack of English Second Language vocabulary. Secondly, there is nothing wrong with the choice of the text, the problem is that the students showed very little knowledge of newspapers as a genre, with different subsections or sub- genres e.g. from front page to back page (usually reserved for sport). (Ballard 2005; Eggins 2004). Thirdly, the problem is not about the topic chosen, the issue is that they could not use schemata (Bennet 1995; Cotteril & Ife 2001) or their intertextual knowledge (Fairclough 2004).

This research was interested in the access young Xhosa L1 speakers have to *printed* media. Therefore I didn't use those who confirmed that they have access to radio and television with low scores on the quiz. This means that information on how other media affect access to information could not be checked.

After the analysis, I was not certain that my selection of the 20 respondents for questionnaire 2 had been done on the best possible grounds. Perhaps only those who gave clear indications of regular access should have been used, rather than an even distribution of those who had and those who had not got such access.

It could be argued that in some cases the questions were not phrased as directly or clearly as that they could have been. This meant data that would have been helpful, did not become available.

However, what seems to be the case is that the use of English in the media meant for Xhosa L1 speakers could prove detrimental to information dissemination. In short, just like the use of English Second Languages medium of instruction has

been said to be an impediment for academic success for Xhosa learners, I want to conclude that printed news in English proves inaccessible to Xhosa L1 speakers and thus becoming an impediment to equal quality of information for all in a democratic nation.

In taking this further the researcher could put right some of the methodological difficulties and could integrate the literature related to the issues I addressed more systematically. A follow up of this work could focus on other kinds of media like radio, television and the internet. In collecting the data one might use interviews to supplement the questionnaires. This may bring more clarity on exactly where the problem lies with difficulties L2 speakers of English may have with comprehension and retention of printed news reports. A matter not addressed here, that may also be interesting, would be a comparative study that determines whether Xhosa L1 speakers show greater understanding and insight when the news is printed in their first language as opposed to news printed in an established

media language such as English.

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# Appendix 1

# **CRITICAL MEDIA STUDIES - 2002**

# **Introductory Quiz**

1.	Do you	have <b>regul</b> a	ar access t	o the	following	, media:
----	--------	---------------------	-------------	-------	-----------	----------

1.1	Newspapers	Yes	No
	If Yes, give the	name of the nev	wspaper you read most often.
1.2	Dadia	Vas	No
1.2		Yes	
	If Yes, give the	name of the rac	lio station you listen to most
ofte	n.		
13	Television	Yes	No
1.5			
	, · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	name of the TV	channel and 2 programs you
wat	ch most often.		

2. From the following set of categories, choose the 3 which you read/listen/watch most; under preferences (Pref.) number them in order of priority from 1 to 3.

Category	Interest	Medium	Preference:	Access
w	ESTED	Paper /	Select only	
VV	Yes / no	radio / TV	<b>3categories</b>	Hours/week
Frontpage news				
(newspaper)				
Formal news				
broadcast (radio/TV)				
Political reports				
Local affairs				
International news				
Crime stories				
Sport				
Business section				
What's On theater,				
film, art				
Cartoons				
"Soapies"				
Sitcom's				
Chat shows				
Competitions				_

3.	Woi	uld you consider applyi	ng for work as a <b>journalist</b> ?	Yes No		
	 If w	es, which <b>medium</b> woul	d vou profer?			
	ıj ye	es, waica <b>meaium</b> woui	a you prejer:			
		Newspaper				
		Magazine				
		Radio				
		Television				
		Internet 'online'				
		a <b>journalist</b> , which cate <b>ies</b> from the list given in	gories would you prefer to cov n 2. above.	er? Select 3		
			·······			
5.			tions on <b>recent news stories</b> . new organization established w	vith the help of		
		Pres Mbeki, that will re	place the Organisation of Afric	can Unity		
				<b>5</b>		
	5.2	Give the name of the	ANC youth leader known as ar			
	5.3		leader of the al-Qaeda organiza	ation?		
	5.4	Which African leader	visited South Africa recently v	vith his own		
		'motorcade' and a very large number of security personnel?				
		Which country does the	nis leader represent?			
		Is his country particula	arly wealthy? Give one reason	for your answer.		

# For the following questions, mark the correct answer clearly with an X 5.5 The Soccer World Cup was recently held in (i) Brazil ..... (ii) South Korea ..... (iii) Malaysia ..... 5.6 The SA Minister of Health is (i) Dr Nkosazana Zuma.. (ii) Dr Kader Asmal ..... (iii) Dr. Tshabalala Msimang ..... 5.7 The SA-Rand: US Dollar exchange rate is more or less (i) 1:10 ..... (ii) 10:1 ..... (iii) 1:15 ..... (iv) 15:1 ..... 5.8 The South African golfer who won the British Open tournament last Sunday, is (i) Retief Goosen ..... (ii) Ernie Els ..... (iii) Gary Player .....

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# Appendix 2

# 'Statesmanship' is needed to deal with HIV/Aids

By Evelio Contreras

- 1. Southern Africa needs statesmen, not politicians, to deal with HIV/Aids, says Alan
- 2. Whiteside, director for HIV/Aids research at the University of Natal.
- 3. Whiteside and other Aids researchers yesterday presented the case for a
- 4. comprehensive HIV/Aids treatment plan at the Southern African Development
- 5. Community (SADC) Regional Governance and Aids Forum in Cape Town.
- 6. In an opening statement to the forum, Deputy President Jacob Zuma said South
- 7. Africa had a comprehensive HIV/Aids strategy-and-action plan which focused on
- 8. prevention, care, support and treatment, as well as legal and human-rights support.
- 9. "We've made progress in our prevention strategy, and a number of surveys confirm
- 10. that HIV/Aids-awareness levels in SA are very high," Zuma said.
- 11. But many of the delegates said awareness of the epidemic was not enough.
- 12. "We have been late, inadequate, slow, unimaginative, lacking in leadership and single-
- 13. minded in viewing HIV/Aids as a health issue," Whiteside said, blaming politicians for
- 14. the projected figure of six million infections by 2006.
- 15. "We don't need politicians. We need statesmen. A politician looks to the next election;
- 16. a statesman looks to the next generation." Y of the
- 17. In the first week of war, Whiteside pointed out, 29 American soldiers were killed in
- 18. Iraq. That same week in South Africa, 150 times more people died of Aids alone.
- 19. "The deaths are spread across the country," he said. "HIV is the water that slips into
- 20. the cracks of this society. Aids is the ice that splits us apart."
- 21. Doctors and researchers at the SADC forum criticised government officials for
- 22. failing to present an <u>affordable</u> and <u>credible</u> HIV/Aids treatment plan.
- 23. "Despite the figures we are hearing, our response has been pathetic and slow," said
- 24. Anne Shongwe, policy adviser for the SADC governments. "It's not been good enough.
- 25. If it had been good enough, we wouldn't have the <u>figures</u> we have today."
- 26. According to UN <u>estimates</u>, 42 million people are living with HIV; of these, 70% live in
- 27. Sub-Saharan Africa, with five million in South Africa.
- 28. <u>Global</u> health organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme were
- 29. also singled out for not addressing Aids sooner.

- 30. "I don't know how you can look at this without tears in your eyes," said Whiteside to a
- 31. colleague about the life expectancy of South Africans 38 years living in areas where
- 32. HIV prevalence is high.
- 33. "These life-expectancy rates are lower than (on) the day of independence.
- 34. "These people are like you and me in their 20s and 30s."



# QUESTIONS RELATED TO PRINTED NEWS AS A INSTRUMENT OF LEARNING, and PRINTED NEWS COMPREHENSION

The article above was published in the Cape Times of 3 April 2003. Please answer the following questions based on this text as clearly as possible. In your answers you may refer to the article. The lines have been numbered for easy reference.

### GENERAL STRUCTURE

- 1 Who wrote this article?
- 2. The article is written in a text form that is typical of newspaper articles. Name TWO features of the form of writing that you find typical of such articles.
- 3. In which section of the newspaper would you normally expect to find an article like this:
  - a) front page
  - b) middle section
  - c) editorial section
  - d) back page
  - e) special supplement

Give reasons for your answer.

### **CONTENT**

- 4. Summarize in three sentences what this report is about
- 5. What is the profession of Alan Whiteside?
- 6. What kind of meeting was Mr Whiteside attending when he made the statements this article has cited?
- 7. Where was the meeting held?
- UNIVERSITY of the
- 8. a.) Does the statement of Deputy President Zuma agree with the statement of Mr Whiteside?
  - b) Explain your answer.
- 9. Why did Mr Whiteside refer to soldiers in Iraq in this article on AIDS in South Africa?
- 10. Who is Anne Shongwe?
- 11. Which governments are the SADC governments?
- 12. What does the abbreviation UN stand for?
- 13. Is Egypt a country in Sub-Saharan Africa?
- 14. Is Kenya a country in Sub-Saharan Africa?
- 15. According to this article how many people worldwide are HIV positive?
- 16. Name two large institutions that, according to this article, have been too slow in attending to the AIDS crisis.
- 17. According to this article, how long can the average person in South Africa expect to live?

# GRAMMAR (form and meaning)

- 18. In this article the writer talks about politicians in a negative tone. He uses another word related in meaning, asopposite to politicians. Name the word.
- 19. Below is a list of words that have the **same meaning** as words used in the article. For each word, give the **synonym** that you find in the text.
  - a) studies
  - b) believable
  - c) worldwide
  - d) numbers
  - e) insufficient
- Find a word in line 11 that refers to the same people as 'doctors and researchers' mentioned in line 21.
- 21. Give the **opposite** for the following phrases used in the article:
  - a) presented the case for (line 3)
  - b) an opening statement (line 6)
  - c) failing to present (line 22)
- 22. Explain in your own words the meaning when we say people are 'single-minded in viewing HIV/Aids as a health issue' (line12-13).
- 23. Explain the difference between a projected figure (line 14) and a real figure.
- 24. If an area has only a few people who are HIV-positive, is the *HIV prevalence* (line32) high or low?
- 25. If a country can expect its population to reach an average age of 60, is the life-expectancy rate (line 33) high or low? RSITY of the
- 26. Find one **metaphor** in the text that gives an image of how HIV and AIDS affects the country.
- 27. Explain what meaning difference there would be if the equivalent sentence in lines 15 and 16 were written as:

Politicians only care about getting elected to their positions again, but statesmen think about the future of the people.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION

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