# CHAPTER TWO

# CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL

# FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the goal of this research project is to show Vhembe District students'
writing in English in a sociocultural context (outlined in Chapter One), an
attempt has been made to connect the statement of the problem and the
rationale (outlined in Chapter One) to inform the conceptual and theoretical
framework  of this chapter. Salient features of this research project link it to
the work of Gibbons, Limoges, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott & Trow's
work (1994). In their work, Gibbons *et al.*(1994) distinguish two organizing
methods of knowledge production in the research enterprise, namely,
Mode 1 and Mode 2.

Mode 1 refers to the traditional mode of approaching research that is
marked by narrow fields of study that separate roles between researcher
and practitioner with problem-solving being carried out following the codes
of practice relevant to a particular discipline. This mode of operation has
entailed and has tended to imply knowledge production that is carried out
in the absence of some practical goal. On the other hand, Mode 2
knowledge is produced through a transdisciplinary team that includes both
theorist and practitioner and, as such, it is thematic, issue based and
sectorial knowledge. Knowledge production becomes diffused throughout
society. At the same time, one is not saying Mode 2 is replacing Mode 1;
on the contrary, it complements Mode 1 as this research project is linked to
problem-solving in research and the construction of knowledge.

## 2. 2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN RESEARCH

Mode 2 problem-solving has identifying parameters that include reflexivity, transdisciplinarity and heterogeneity. In reinforcing this, Gibbons e*t al.* (1994: 6) state that knowledge in the humanities and social sciences is created in the broader, transdisciplinary social contexts, because the arts disciplines, such as language, history, philosophy, literature and so forth are engaged with the human condition from its various perspectives; and this human condition can be at the individual level of consciousness or at the level of social experience (Gibbons *et al.,*1994: 95). This mode of knowledge production has arisen from the wider societal and cognitive pressures that have come out of existing dysfunctionalities and the unsuccessful modes of problem-solving (Gibbons *et al.*,1994: 29).

As the humanities and social sciences provide an understanding of the world of social experience, these fields of study also carry meaning for the entire human experience through a concern for the inner workings of society and the generation of culture. It is these underpinnings that facilitate the opening of possibilities, not only to examine one dimension of social life, but also to cut across disciplinary borders. By way of analogy, Gibbons *et al.* (1994) espouse the notion that the humanities and social sciences are the symbolic currency in the market of life-chances, just like the way new products underpin the hard currency in the markets of industry.

Those who draw on the writing of economists and business theorists have attempted to consider the implications of globalisation of production and distribution and, by the same token, Gee (1992, 1999) and Hall in Hinkel (1999) have also considered globalization issues in relation to interactional competence in second language. These implications have established an association to the changes for the discourses needed in educational and work contexts as these changes represent the context and theoretical underpinnings of literacy. These concepts are associated with proper organisational behaviour that includes attention to flexibility and adaptation to change.

Another dimension of organisational change which is of special significance to language and literacy has been the notion of team work. In applied as opposed to pure research, all members of a team continue to negotiate, interact and discuss, instead of one person or the other simply passing orders down a chain of command. For a team to accomplish its goals, all members of a particular team have to be equipped with the discursive skills that such discussions, negotiations and development involve. These are abilities, such as to present and hear arguments, collaboration, devolution and participation as well as empowering one another. That is to say that second language education programmes need to take account of the complex communicative needs of the learners in the new South Africa as a whole. Teachers or facilitators have to engage with

the reflexivity and boundary crossing required of academics working in applied areas of literacy and communication. Research has to make visible the complexity of local, everyday community literacy practices. Following through its implications for curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment/evaluation is a task that requires developed conceptualisation of the theoretical and methodological issues involved in understanding and representing local literacy practices. As literacy practices are socially imbedded (Heath, 1983; Gee, 1992, 1999, 2005; Shore, 1996), it is crucial to understand the literacy practices that target groups and communities are engaged in. Prinsloo and Breier (1996) argue that researchers in the field approach issues of literacy and discourses with the spirit of reflective and critical enquiry which can contribute to informed practice. What counts as literacy is necessary for academic staff as well as researchers, because they have to accommodate the needs of 'knowledge-in-use' just as much as they have to be accommodative to knowledge-in-theory.

According to Gibbons *et al.,* (1994: 17), Mode 2 knowledge production is embodied in people through the ways that they interact in a socially organized manner and this is the reason for the emphasis on the tacit components of knowledge which are distinguished from the codified components of knowledge. Mode 2 knowledge production operates according to imperatives that are in tension with the traditional way of doing things for it is characterized by a constant flow between the fundamental

and the applied, that is to say, between the theoretical and the practical. As it is strongly driven by problem-solving, discovery occurs in the context where knowledge is developed and is put to use; and the results thereof fuel further theoretical advances. In this connection, its theoretical and methodological core is often locally driven and locally constituted.

As Mode 2 (Gibbons *et al.,* 1994) operates within a context of usage and application, it means that the intellectual agenda transcends all disciplines, which renders it transdisciplinary. This mode of working in an application context is underpinned by pressures whose solutions demand the drawing of knowledge from a diverse array of knowledge resources. Becher (1989: 89-90) points out that because the humanities and social sciences are found in areas of close association, it makes their disciplinary borders permeable; and this permeability stems from the clustering of their characteristics as opposed to their individual effects. The transdisciplinary mode of knowledge production has certain distinctive attributes. First, it develops an evolving framework to guide problem-solving efforts. And these efforts are generated and sustained within the context of application and since the solution is underpinned by both empirical and theoretical components, it contributes to knowledge. Moreover, Gibbons *et al.,* (1994: 99) add that transdisciplinarity arises when research is based on a common theoretical understanding and is accompanied by a mutual interpretation of disciplinary epistemologies.

Secondly, as communication networks persist, the knowledge is made available to enter new configurations. In this way, transdisciplinarity is problem-solving on the move in that a particular solution can become the cognitive site to spring-board more advances. This mode of knowledge production is also marked by the closer interaction of knowledge production with a succession of problem contexts. As one discovery builds upon another, the discoveries lie outside the confines of any particular discipline as new knowledge produced in this way may not fit easily into any one of the disciplines that contributed to the solution. In this way, knowledge is accumulated through the repeated configuration of human resources in flexible, essentially transient forms of organization.

Third, reflexivity, which has been identified as a key characteristic of Mode 2 knowledge production, has always been a traditional characteristic of the humanities in the sense that the intellectual motivation comes from ceaseless interrogation of the past through the present. In this mode of knowledge production, social accountability is the norm rather than the exception in the whole process and as such sensitivity to the impact of the research is built in from the start as it forms part of the context; and the researcher functions effectively through reflecting on the values implied in human aspirations and projects.

As the above-mentioned attributes work together to give stability to this mode of knowledge production, creativity is manifest as a group phenomenon, and the individual's contribution to this creativity is taken as a subset of the whole process. Quality control is exercised as a socially extended process which accommodates many interests in a given application process. Gibbons *et al.* (1994: 18) argue that the pressure for social accountability also leads to a shift in criteria from narrow to wider criteria as quality becomes more responsive to other considerations. The intellectual values in this mode of operation are shaped by the social context and application.

The resources necessary for scholarship and the professional structures are a result of the social transformation created by the expansion of educational opportunities, especially at university level. In other words, as societal links between agents and structure loosen, individuals are freed from the constraints of social class identities or prescribed workplace and gender roles. This freedom facilitates an environment that is conducive to the modification of constraining structures through individuals' own reflexive behaviour (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994: 104). Individuals, who have been freed from their collectively imposed identities, choose cultural habit, objects and references to construct their new reflexive identities which, in turn, makes this methodology so eminently suitable for this present

research project with its emphasis on language in action in a sociocultural

context.

In the humanities and the social sciences, ideas and social practices are

intimately related. In this respect, Gibbons *et al.* (1994: 99 ) sagely point

out that the emergence of literature as a field of academic study has been

closely related to the growth of the reading public in Africa and elsewhere

in the world and subsequent extensions of that public have accounted for

the frequent turbulence in literary, cultural and critical studies. The

turbulence created by the literary works having to meet the expectations of

hybrid communities reflects the relationship of tension and balance that is a

feature of changing demographics of mass higher education generally.

In addition, even those individual lives and social experiences that are

outside the academic system also become increasingly dissimilar as family

structures shift, occupational patterns are transformed and class loyalties

wane to be replaced by new identifications determined by new parameters

such as individualism. This social differentiation is accelerated by cultural

diversification. Gibbons *et al.,* (1994: 99) state that the mixing of norms and

values in the different sections of society creates a dispersal process,

which acts as a catalyst for communication among the different sections.

These varied institutions (such as Univen, in the context of this study)

generate new forms of communication to facilitate links to one another and

it is within these links that the explanation for the emergence of a new hybrid community partially lies.

The hybrid community (Gibbons *et al.*, 1994: 37) tends to consist of people who have been socialised in different subsystems, disciplines, Mother Tongues and work environments; and these same people could possess different styles of thought, modes of behaviour, knowledge and social competence that they have acquired. The hybridization process enhances and reflects the need for different groups to speak in more than one language to facilitate communication at the margins and in the spaces between the systems and the subsystems. Gibbons *et al.,* (1994: 38) point to the fact that the willingness, and the availability of a people to become members of hybrid communities has to come from the fact that they are prepared to embrace scientific attitudes (which are loosely defined as a greater readiness to accept change in general, to ask questions, and to seek answers through reason and evidence) from universities and society at large. In this sense, communication becomes intensified in line with the evolution of societal complexity while at the same time social norms and expectations held by different institutions and communities are brought to the research communities. This, in itself, gives added impetus to this research project and its focus on argument writing abilities in an historically disadvantaged academic community.

Gee (2005: 78) astutely states that communication with nature or with society remains linked to the interests and social practices of the people who communicate. In this sense, all sciences have to make sure that communication remains authentically communicative, because not all possible interpretations or answers are acceptable as meaning is local. And this is where the link to both essay and authentic classroom interaction in terms of writing tasks/activities comes into play. The essay which is the preferred genre for Mode 2 knowledge production features qualities of creativity and imagination which are the mainstay of discursive writing. Barnett (1999: 65) suggests that writing in order to respond to short answer questions has no long term impact, because the tasks fall short of providing students with opportunities to explore and elaborate on possible interpretations.

Gibbons *et al.*, (1994: 42) highlight the fact that communication can spread if local sites in which this form of communication is practised multiply, as happens when the number of competent speakers in English increases. It must be pointed out, however, that any form of communication is not first and foremost quantitative, but is a qualitative undertaking as the richness of any communication depends primarily on the words used and the context in which they are used. This is because semantics is a pervasive feature of communicating. The humanities and the social sciences together, therefore, share a common interest in the human dimension of

reality as both are concerned with actual and potential objectives and values of the individual and human communities. On this note of communication being a qualitative undertaking, the thesis moves to the issues that connect this chapter to Gee ( 2005), who conceptualises language as being realized through discourse, and as discourse is action and affiliation, it is also functional.

Function is a term used to describe the illocutionary force of what is written or uttered. An example of a communicative function could be when a writer has to persuade/argue, instruct and so on. Functionality, therefore, is a fundamental principle of discourse which is closely related to interpretation. As discourse means, 'inspired' by the relation of language to the environment, it is this relationship that renders it functional in nature. The highlighting of the functional nature of language is important because functional linguistics is a question of language use and it draws on a long tradition in sociology and anthropology (Hymes, 1974). Ellis (1999: 83) argues that, the fact that discourse is functional, means that

> it is more involved with the specification of speech acts,  ways of writing (speaking), the gamut of stylistic devices, the variations in language use, the cognitive processes involved in interpretation, strategic communication, and the social relationships that provide the contexts for communication.

Halliday (1978) has also conceptualized "text" as functionally related to the environment because a speaker or writer's semantic system is activated by

the environment, and the language and discourse are shaped by the environment.

Thus, a discourse is a semantic system and it is expressed in text as part of that system. The distinguishing feature of a semantic system is its organization into functional components, not units of different sizes (Ellis, 1999: 82). A discourse can, for example, be a paragraph, or any other communicative use of language that serves some purpose. The underlying essential operating principle of semantics is interpretation; and interpretation of discourse is concerned with assigning meaning to the various textual expressions in a discourse. These interpretations are entirely dependent on contexts, motivations, goals, desires, obligations, abilities and social relationships. Arguably, the basic hurdle that a communicator needs to resolve is the exertion of control on the way s/he is understood, for it is every communicator's aim to maximize the chances of attaining his/her strategic purposes by projecting his/her interpretive consequences on his/her readers/hearers. In the context of this study, as a student increases his/her skill in such projections, s/he is simultaneously attaining communicative competence (refer to 3.11 in this chapter for details).

And a communicator's sentences acquire meaning as a result of their internal lexical components and syntactic relations; and it is also true that

the meaning of sentences can depend on assumed knowledge and the sequence of the sentences as a whole. This is to say that a discourse is not simply a string of sentences that an individual puts together randomly, they are sentences (or phrase units) that are ordered according to some idea. There is general agreement (Halliday, 1993; Gee, 1999, 2005) that coherence is concerned with "connectedness" and some form of macro-level proposition, and cohesion is established through textual devices. Global coherence is the macro-structural organizational scheme that is at the apex of a discourse (Gee, 2005). Van Dijk (1985: 115) explains:

> Thus a macrostructure is a theoretical reconstruction of intuitive notions such as "topic" or "theme" of discourse. It explains what is most relevant, important, or prominent in the semantic information of the discourse as a whole. At the same time, the microstructure of a discourse defines its global coherence. Without such a global coherence, there would be no overall control upon the local connections and continuations. Sentences might be connected appropriately according to the given local coherence criteria, but the sequence would simply go astray without some constraint on what it should be about  globally.

Therefore, global coherence provides an overall unity and a sense of order and direction. It is not at all uncommon for texts to provide explicit cues about global coherence and a thesis sentence is one example of this. Topic is essential to the notions of coherence and can be said to be the primary organizational principle of global coherence. Principles, such as those of organization, relevance, and comprehensibility in written discourse, are all enshrined in the topic of the discourse. This is because individuals communicate "about" something.

## 2. 3 LANGUAGE IS ACTION AND AFFILIATION

Although "exchange information" is the most readily acknowledged function that language is supposed to serve, Gee (2005: 1) highlights two other functions that are pertinent to this thesis. These are 'to scaffold the performance of social activities and to scaffold human affiliation within cultures and social groups and institutions'. He underscores the fact that these functions are linked because cultures, social groups, and institutions shape social activities. It is the power of social groups, and institutions to share and shape that which is of relevance to the sociocultural context. Since the details of language get recruited, "on site", to "pull off" specific social activities and social identities, one realizes that language-in-use everywhere is always political. By "politics", Gee (2005: 2) is referring to everything and every place where human social interactions and relationships have implications for how "social goods' are or get to be distributed. And the "social goods" stand for anything that a group of people believes to be a source of power, status, or worth (which includes, among other things, academic intelligence, control, verbal abilities, knowledge, literacy, and so on).

When an individual communicates, for example, when s/he is writing, s//he is taking a particular perspective on what the "world" is like; and this is recognized as politics and politics is part and parcel of using language. As politics has its lifeblood in details of language interaction, there is

automatically an inherent demand for engaging in the empirical details of language and interaction, for it is in this sphere that social goods are created, sustained, distributed and redistributed, and it is in the same sphere that people can get harmed and can get helped too in terms of effective participation in the country's economic activities.

Gee (2005: 35) states that all languages are composed of many different social languages; and social languages are what is learnt and what is written while each social language has its own distinctive grammar. There are two different sorts of grammars and these are important to social languages. One grammar is the traditional set of units like nouns, verbs, inflections, phrases and clauses, and Gee (2005: 41) refers to them as "grammar one". The other grammar (which is less studied, but is the more important and crucial grammar) is the "rules" by which grammatical units, like nouns and verbs, phrases and clauses, are used to create patterns which signal or "index" characteristic who's-doing-what-within-Discourses, as Discourses always involve more than language. They entail the coordination of language with ways of acting, interacting, valuing, believing, feeling, and with bodies, clothes, non-linguistic symbols, objects, tools, technologies, times, and places. That is, writers design their texts in such a way that the texts have patterns in them to enable interpreters to attribute situated identities and specific activities to the authors. This is what is referred to as "grammar two". Linguists call "grammar two" "collocation

patterns." This means that various sorts of grammatical devices "co-locate" with each other. The patterns are "co-relations" (correlations) among many grammatical devices, from different "levels" of grammar one. These correlations, in turn, also co-relate to (coordinate with) other non-language "stuff" to constitute (for historical, that is, conventional reasons) "whos"-doing-"whats"-within-Discourses (Gee, 2005: 22).

This means that second language students have to be enabled to realize that the features associated with different contexts which trigger the application of a word(s) are not just a random list. Rather, "they hang together" to form a pattern that specific sociocultural groups of people find significant. A student comes to form a "theory", comes to share with his/her community a more or less tacit "theory" of the particular domains about things, such as (to borrow Gee's shoes example, or another example, the meaning of concepts, such as marriage. Such theories are rooted in the practices of the sociocultural groups to which the individual student belongs. According to Gee (2005: 61), cultural models (discourse models) are "theories" (storylines, images, explanatory frameworks) that people hold, often unconsciously and use to make sense of the world and their experiences in it because meaning is local.

What is also noteworthy here is the fact that the mind is an adept pattern recognizer and builder. It operates primarily with flexibly transformable

patterns extracted from experience not with those that do not tie back to real contexts, situations, practices and experiences. Thinking and using language is an active matter of assembling the situated meanings that are needed for action in the world. McKay (1996) adds that the assembling that goes on is always relative to an individual's socioculturally defined experiences in the world as Discourse models do not exist in people's minds, but are shared across people, books, other media and various political practices. The same applies to situated meanings: they are not situated in individual minds, but are very often negotiated between people in and through communicative social interaction.

As a link to the social mind in a socioculturally defined experience, Gee ( 2005: 68) points out that the world is full of potentially meaningful patterns and sub-patterns in any domain and, as such, something must guide a people in selecting which patterns and sub-patterns are to be focused on. This something resides in the Discourse models of the person's sociocultural groups and the social practices and settings in which they are rooted. In this way, the mind is social (really cultural); it is cultural (really social) in the sense that sociocultural practices and settings guide and norm the patterns in terms of which people think, talk, value, and interact (Gee, 2005: 68). This does not necessarily mitigate a person's own agency and, in South Africa, each individual has to belong to multiple sociocultural groups, as the cultural models and patterns associated with each group

can influence the others in unique ways, depending on the different "mix" for different individuals. This is because the mind does not lock individuals in "private" worlds. On the contrary, it returns them to the social and cultural world. In this regard, Gee (2005: 68) states that when the patterns a mind recognizes or assembles stray some distance from those used by others to a given discourse, the social practices of the Discourse will seek to "discipline" and "renorm" that mind. This is the reason why Stubbs (1987) points out the fact that cultural continuity is ensured by the structures of communication and not the individual members.

Freire (1985) argues that all linguistic interactions reflect the social order and, as such can be used to either maintain or change the status quo as literacy can empower people to change their lives as it can be used to conscientize learners to critically reflect on reality and take steps to change the conditions of their lot. The overarching goal of literacy is to empower both communities and individuals for social transformation. The view that literacy can provide students with the means to effect changes in their lives and in the social order is one that must gain support from educators in the Vhembe District, because the language of the classroom/lecture hall needs to help students become critical writers and readers so that they are encouraged to choose or create texts to change the power relationships that they believe need changing.

In this thesis, literacy is thus viewed as a social practice and, as such, it is an essential component of the study of sociolinguistics. The thesis supports the notion that literacy is a complex interplay between both individual skills and social knowledge. In this perspective, the focus is on the interaction between language and society, and also on the ways in which literate behaviour is dependent on the social context. That is, 1) literacy is a collaborative practice; 2) literacy is a reflection of community values and traditions about how texts are approached; 3) literacy is a reflection of cultural values and traditions about text and topic development; and 4) literacy is a reflection of social relationships as well as a vehicle for changing the status quo (McKay, 1996: 420).

Wells (1987: 110) delineates four levels of literacy: 1) the performative, that is, an individual's ability to decode a written message into speech in order to ascertain its meaning; 2) the functional, which entails the ability to deal with the demands of everyday life that are expressed in the written word; 3) the informational, which involves the ability to process the written word in order to attain information; and 4) the epistemic, which entails the ability to act upon and transform knowledge and experience that are not available to those who are not literate. In this connection, biliteracy is defined by Read and McKay (1984: 5) in terms of the level of skill one attains in the second language. These levels include *initial literacy* (writing one's name); *basic literacy*, or the ability to 'read and write short simple sentences on everyday

life'(ibid.); *survival literacy* or the ability to read, write and comprehend texts on familiar subjects and to understand whatever signs, labels and instructions and directions are necessary to get along within one's environment; *functional literacy*, or 'the possession of skills perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups to fulfil their own self-determined objectives'(ibid.): and finally, *technical literacy*, or the 'acquisition of a body of theoretical or technical knowledge and the development of problem-solving capacities within that specialized field'(ibid.).

It is noteworthy that the taxonomies of literacy are set forth as hierarchical levels of literacy skills. But it is more important to note that the ability of an individual to have competence in one of the specified levels is not just a matter of acquiring a specific skill level, for the acquisition of a particular level often provides one with a social identity. For example, the attainment of what Wells (1987) terms the epistemic level may provide one with an identifiable position in the academic sphere, that is, the identity of an academically educated person. The attainment of what Read and McKay (1984) refer to as technical literacy gives one the status of being a specialist in a particular field.

Thus, the level of literacy a person achieves has an impact on that person's perceived role in the society. But the crucial question to pose is what

determines who should have access to what level? The answer to this question touches on politics and ideology in the socialization history of a given society for strategies of language use may establish and maintain differential power relationships between members of different socioeconomic strata. The implications in an educational domain are especially significant, because gate keeping encounters between the receivers of education and those in power (officials) often determine access to career paths, and therefore, to future power. Gate keeping is directly related to the process of segregating a group of people or students for socialization (as happened in the apartheid system) and limiting transmission of knowledge in some areas for a chosen few. Segregated socialization may exclude access to learning the language of transmission so that others cannot understand the content (Mckay & Hornberger, 1996: 355).

From the foregoing discussions, it has become obvious that language in all its manifestations both influences and is influenced by education. This is because education is the site where, on the one hand, a spectrum of social and political forces are reflected through the kinds of educational opportunities and varieties are offered to second language learners. On the other hand, second language use mediates the participation of the same learners in the opportunities that are made available to them and, ultimately, their envisaged contributions to the larger society. And with this

view, language is both rhetorical and epistemic. In other words, it becomes according to LeFevre (1987: 106) 'a way of knowing'. Thus the goal of the next section is to weave in the discussion on problem-solving through transdisciplinarity, reflexivity and heterogeneity to enhance the construction of knowledge in writing (especially in discursive writing).

## 2. 4 MAKING KNOWLEDGE IN WRITING

The art of writing in English remains part of tacit knowledge which needs to be transmitted through methods of apprenticeship, imitation and learning-by-doing. When one is involved in essay writing, one is immersed in the construction of knowledge. Chang-Wells and Wells (1993: 58) argues that there are two types of knowledge namely, propositional knowledge and procedural knowledge. There is a distinction between "knowing how to" and "knowing that", although it is apparent that both the procedures and the activities to which they contribute are best described in terms of "knowing how to". They also assert that much of what a person knows consists of procedures, routines and strategies that one deploys to achieve targeted goals of all sorts. When one is writing a report, for instance, one needs to know, in addition to the topic (propositional knowledge), how to select the relevant points, provide support, justification, and then compose these elements into a rhetorically effective structure (procedural knowledge). One might talk both of knowing how to ride a motorcycle or to write a conference/workshop report and of knowing how to apply corrective

feedback when surfing the net on a computer or how to justify beliefs and opinions. This kind of knowledge may be described as procedural, although the actual emphasis may depend on the kind of activity one is engaged in. Furthermore, just as much as procedural knowledge has to be constructed through personal engagement in the activities in which such knowledge is activated, propositional knowledge requires the same. It is noteworthy at this point that although formal propositional knowledge tends to be tied to specific domains, the sorts of routines and strategies that constitute procedural knowledge can be applied in principle across a varied range of domains once they have been learnt and mastered by learners.

On the other hand, Chang-Wells and Wells (1993: 59) observe that when it is said that all types of knowledge are individually constructed, the role of other people in the process should not be ignored. In fact, numerous studies of language acquisition (Heath, 1983; Hall, 1999; and Gee, 2005) have highlighted the contribution of those who surround the learner, starting with the parents, caregivers and other facilitators of learning in providing the evidence on which the learner builds his or her representation of the language system. It is a fact that every new step in this building process is a result of previous activities in which what is already known (prior knowledge and previous experience which constitute background knowledge or world knowledge) is brought to bear on new information, thus creating new meanings and enhancing understanding and control. There is

a further suggestion from Chang-Wells and Wells (1993: 59) that knowledge is accumulated through consistent encounters and constant practice. In fact, after several practice sessions of solving similar or related problems, according to Chang-Wells and Wells (1993), what was originally unknown by the learner can be applied to other related problems. In this way, a basic foundation of knowledge (which has been "internalized") facilitates future learning in the learner. Therefore, as well as the presentation of new information, Chang-Wells and Wells (1993: 59) reiterate that,

> …there needs to be extended opportunity for discussion and problem solving in the context of shared activities in which meaning and action are collaboratively constructed and negotiated.

In this connection, Chang-Wells and Wells (1993: 60) state that school/university learning involves three dimensions of change in mental functioning of the learner. The first dimension is the 'intellectualization' of mental functions, which is the process of bringing mental functions under conscious and voluntary control. This process relies heavily on the mediational function of the symbolic-communicative systems of language as both the written or the verbal systems create an enabling environment for the mental functions themselves to be made the object of attention and reflection.

The second dimension is 'decontextualization', that is, the ability to detach a concept from the particular context in which it was first encountered or,

even at a different level, to distinguish what is said in a text from what the text means in a particular context. This ability is crucial for the exploitation of the symbolic property of linguistic signs when reasoning. The decontextualizing, carried along with the drawing of appropriate inferences from the set of propositions that make up a text is an instance of the sort of know-how that is referred to as procedural knowledge as well as the recombining of propositions in a different way in order to make a point in an effective rhetorical manner. Procedural knowledge, once mastered, enables a learner to weave across knowledge boundaries and those of disciplines in an academically acceptable manner.

The third aspect of the change in mental functioning, which is associated with schooling/university, is a movement toward the integration and systematization of what is known within the formal frameworks provided by theoretical knowledge. This may and can be viewed as an outcome of the two types of change (intellectualization and decontextualization) that are mentioned above. When what has been assimilated from experience can be symbolically represented and deliberately thought about, patterns and connections even among disparate issues that could not be noticed by an individual (whose mind has not been trained to make connections) become obvious.

In other words, the learner should be able to represent his or her beliefs in the form of coherently related sets of propositions as well as being able to formulate knowledge in a variety of written genres according to the task on hand. This involves being able to use the narrative mode as well as those genres that are associated with argument, reporting and so on. Procedural knowledge can be potentially applied across domains of knowledge. But the extent to which propositional knowledge can be formally organized in terms of explicit theories is not so prevalent across substantive knowledge domains. Likewise for individuals, knowledge in some areas of experience is formally organized in terms of coherent overarching theories, and in others it takes the form of ad hoc assemblages of information with no consistent organization. This explains the reason for some people becoming more competent in using the English language than others; and one of the major goals of schooling according to Chang-Wells and Wells (1993: 61), in the light of the above, is

> by systematically engaging with specific substantive areas of experience to enable learners to develop metacognitive and procedural knowledge, which can then be brought to bear in formalizing their propositional knowledge in yet other domains.

The underlying principle to the above dimensions of change in mental functioning is that they are dependent on literacy, that is, when literacy is seen as engaging with texts of all types in ways that exploit the symbolic representation of meaning. It is a means of empowering intrapersonal mental activity (Wells, 1987; 1994). It is exactly the development of this

ability and disposition to engage in literate thinking through the use of texts that is the school/university's major responsibility. It is also argued, here, that this responsibility can only be fulfilled when learners are enabled and encouraged to engage with texts in an epistemic mode across a wide range of domains and for a variety of purposes, and when literate thinking becomes pervasive in their lives both inside and outside the learning context. When learners are encouraged to engage with texts in an epistemic way, it is argued, they discover certain important functions that literacy is supposed to serve, in addition to the transmission of information to facilitate social action as pointed out above by Freire (1985). According to Chang-Wells & Wells (1993: 62), literacy facilitates:

- The accumulation and organization of information in a systematic and formal manner

- The fixing of meaning in a permanent, decontextualized form, which allows for comparative interpretation and revision, and

- The objectification of the outcome of thinking, which facilitates reflection on the thinking processes involved.

University research needs to play an active role in appropriating and adapting knowledge for the development of society. This stance is reinforced by Gibbons *et al., (*1994: 15),  who state that

> the effectiveness of governments' brokering abilities now underlies the competitiveness of their national innovation systems. This will be reflected  both in their ability to participate in knowledge production that may be taking place anywhere in the world but also in their ingenuity in appropriating that knowledge with the innovation system.

And Bereiter and Scardamalia (as cited in Rose, 1985: 145) have this to say:

> When we think of knowledge stored in memory we tend these days to think of it as situated in three-dimensional space, with vertical and horizontal connections between sites. Learning is thought to add not only new elements to memory but also new connections, and it is the richness and structure of these connections that would seem to spell the difference between inert and usable knowledge. On this account, the knowledge-telling strategy is educationally faulty because it specifically avoids the forming of connections between previously separated knowledge sites.

For instance, when a student learns to reproduce a set of names, dates, places, and canonical interpretations (the student is "telling somebody else's knowledge". But s/he has to learn to "think" (by learning how to write) as an historian. The first requires memorization, while the latter requires a learner to assemble a text from the texts that represent the primary materials of history or science and in accordance with the texts that define history as an act of report and interpretation. In other words, students should be able to construct meaning from and for text, because once this becomes the norm, rather than the exception, learners will be able to formulate their own discussions and arguments about history and about other aspects of their work and lives.

In order to be able to recognize and be able to describe the various sociocultural settings, psychology or English has to work together with geography, anthropology, sociology and so on. That is to say that

researchers involved in learning and instruction must recognize the cultural and institutional tensions that are the focus of study for scholars from other disciplines. Teaching content through second language requires collaboration among all staff members. The socioculture of mediated agency has to be grounded in the perspective of a variety of academic disciplines. In this respect, constructing a successful piece of discourse requires that the writer galvanizes cognitive, linguistic and rhetorical skills. What is of vital importance in the second language communication situation is the identification of what a learner must know in discursive writing in order to communicate appropriately. That is, the learner has to elaborate and provide explanations to ensure clarity and to establish the purposes of the sentences or paragraphs. In this manner, the learner establishes objectivity and credibility as well as certainty about the content. The essence of any successful writing lies first in constructing a thesis or a viewpoint or proposition upon which to base one's argument and then essentially in the overall structure of the argument, its development and cohesion, and then, whether or not the accruing text is written in appropriate language for the intended purpose.

Thesis development in the process of discursive writing is an extremely crucial factor for it marks the central idea around which the argument revolves, otherwise there is no argument. The rest of the text has to define and elaborate the ideas that support the thesis. External validity

development gives rise to a recognition of an alternative point of view and qualifies the initial position that has been stated by means of the content presented and content validity is the degree of relevance of the supporting evidence. Thus learners have to show that they are aware of the importance of communicating the semantic content of their presentations in order to be understood. The task of constructing a successful piece of text requires that the composer of the text harnesses cognitive, linguistic and rhetorical skills.

In conclusion, the significance of Mode 1 and 2 knowledge production is that it foregrounds vital links to the sociocultural context, pedagogy, society in flux, writing and to the literature reviewed in the chapter that follows.

# CHAPTER THREE

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this chapter is to situate the issue of the sociocultural learning environment of the Vhembe District within the wider body of scholarly perspectives on writing in sociocultural contexts, that is, within the body of research on writing, in general, and argument writing, in particular. The following literature reviewed describes interconnected issues that are of relevance to this research project.

The interconnected issues are: the sociocultural context and its role in the pedagogical process; the socio-emotional characteristics of second language students/learners; and the challenges faced by these learners in composing their own texts in a second language. For ease of reference, these earlier studies have been sequenced as follows: (1) definition of sociocultural theory and literacy. This serves to contextualise and set the pointers to the learning of the second language (English), which is steeped in the sociocultural milieu of the Vhembe District, as this might either substantially militate against or ameliorate writing efforts. The next aspect discussed is (2) literacy and composition writing; then (4) the nature of the written text is explored, followed by (5) writing, second language and literacy. (6) A discussion of writing, value orientation and society is next. The focus then, moves to (7) writing, second language learning and group dynamics. Thereafter, (8) writing, second language learning and affective variables are considered, followed by a discussion of (9) communication;

then (10) language, communication and culture; and this is followed by (11) communicative competence. (12) Acquiring second language in school prefigures (13) open and closed role systems. (14) Writing, reading and content learning is next, followed by (15) discursive writing and finally, the last part of this chapter presents (16) a conclusion and summary of the chapter.

The outline of the themes to be included in this chapter, illustrate that the study of language in use is broad and interdisciplinary. One of the approaches that is distinguishable is the attempt to relate linguistic structure and use to social structure and social institutions. This approach hinges on the interaction between linguistic structure and development with culture, and the functions of language in social control, social status, or group solidarity. According to Gee (2005), human beings are socialised into the language of their communities, and in addition, they are socialised into the values and meanings that are prevalent in the particular community.

## 3. 2 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND LITERACY

Scholars from a number of disciplines that include psychology, education, linguistics, and sociology have found consensus on the sociocultural theory to literacy as this theory does explain how language education is conceptualized. The Vygotskian sociocultural theory (1978) has been

endorsed by D'Andrade and Strauss 1992; Shore 1996 and Gee 2005 has contributed three strands to the interpretation of literacy, namely, the concepts of (1) genetic analysis, (2) social learning, and (3) mediation.

> First, genetic, or developmental analysis suggests that it is possible to understand many aspects of mental functioning only if one understands their origin and the transition they have gone through. These origins include microgenesis (the unfolding of particular events), ontogenesis (the development of the individual) and sociocultural history. From genetic analysis, one realizes the futility of seeing literacy as an isolated event. A proper understanding of the emergence of literacy has to take into account broad social, cultural, and historical trends related to the significance of reading and writing for human cognition and communication of a given society. A second major point of sociocultural theory is the notion of the social origin of mental functioning.

In Hinkel's (1999) view, the development of conceptual thinking is considered the most significant.  This is because concepts regulate all the facets of humankind's daily activities and also 'structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 3).  It is, the "inter" that becomes the "intra" which Vygotsky (1981) refers to as "internalization" or "interiorization". In other words, instead of an isolated individual carrying out mental processes alone, it is the group that provides the appropriate locus for any evaluation. Shore (1996: 47) contends that concepts have their origin in personal mental models and in cultural models. Cultural models are the shared cognitive resources of a society. These models are reinscribed by each generation in the minds of its members so that these models become personal cognitive reservoirs. In other instances of his writings, Vygotsky

(1981: 164) further notes that 'humans' psychological nature represents the aggregate of internalized social relations that have become functions for the individual and that form the individual's structure'.

Gee (2005) has further endorsed the view that inner speech development for a learner (child) takes place principally through a form of apprenticeship learning. This apprenticeship learning is the social learning (2) mentioned above. This is the interaction that takes place between children and parents, teachers and learners as well as expert and novice. In this relational hypothesis, students/learners advance through their zone of proximal development (that is, the distance between what they could achieve by themselves and what they could achieve when assisted by an experienced person). In this activity, the learner works with a knowledgeable other at a level beyond his/her capacities to achieve a goal, such as solving a problem. Activities engaged in by the learner and the teacher are shared using materials such as books and an appropriate curriculum. This is the mediation (3), that is referred to above. In this regard, books, the facilitators and the curriculum have perceived authority that is expressed through language.

The  major thrust of a sociocultural perspective to literacy is that literacy practices involve particular kinds of thinking which are realized through either written or oral language. This is, accepting the premise that 'oral and

written language mix and blur'. Gee (1992: 32) maintains that literacy practices are 'almost always fully integrated with, interwoven into and part of, the very texture of wider practices that involve talk, interaction, values and beliefs', and he refers to such practices as "Discourses" with a capital D. (Gee, 1992: 33; 1999: 17). Gee further adds that literacy is inherently plural (literacies) and that writing, reading, and language are always imbedded in and inextricable from Discourses (social practices, cultures, and subcultures, or whatever analogous term is used). According to this premise, reading and writing are not private affairs involving a set of discrete skills but, rather, social acts that one engages in within a community. For Gee (1992: 33), Discourses are not mastered merely through formal instruction only, but through a supportive environment in which there is vibrant 'interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse'. In this way, an individual (student or novice) becomes literate through social interaction with those who know (experts, teachers, parents) how to use a text to serve a particular social purpose. This means, both the individual literacy skills and social knowledge converge in any literacy endeavour and without exception, successful literate behaviour entails the ability to decode written symbols as well as to interpret these symbols against a backdrop of social convention. Thus literate behaviour is a complex interplay between individual skills and knowledge of social practices.

It has already been pointed out that literacy is a collaborative practice. One way in which the social context impacts on literacy is through influencing who reads and writes in what language and for what purpose. The literacy history of a community often determines the distribution of literacy skills more especially in the so-called diglossia community of the Vhembe District. According to McKay (in McKay & Hornberger, 1996: 431), collaborative literacy practices involve three possible modes of engagement. The first is *technological engagement.* This is when an individual is engaged in the actual technology of writing or reading. The second is referred to as *functional engagement.* That is, when an individual applies knowledge or expertise necessary for the enactment of the literacy practice. The third is the *social engagement* in which individuals could have knowledge of the nature of the practice and its implications for the community, although it could happen that they are not able to technologically or functionally engage in the actions that entail these skills. Each of the three modes of operation has to be learnt as a practice  and being knowledgeable in one area of engagement does not translate into being an expert in another. Collaborative engagements may arise because powers in the larger social context have influenced who is literate and in what language.

As the sociocultural perspective takes literacy to be social and cultural, it means that literacy exists among a people and, as such, it connects every

individual to a range of experiences. Gee (2005) is in agreement with Street's (1984:110) earlier observations that in particular cultural contexts, oral and written language assume certain functions in which 'there is an overlap and a "mix" of modes of communication'. As a result,  what society means by being literate depends on the literacy values, and standards of that period. When a person does not gain the level of literacy skills valued by a society at a particular time, s/he is regarded as "illiterate" because s/he is unable to meet the literacy skills of that time.

Another aspect that illuminates the relevance of socioculture to this research project is the dimension of the human mind. According to Gee (2005), the human mind is able to operate more efficiently primarily with (flexibly transformable) patterns that are drawn from experience and, as such, does not function very well with general or patterns that have no reference to reality. Although the mind is forever ready to adapt and transform patterns it only recognizes (or assembles) them in context when contexts, times, and worlds change. And, it is this view of the mind that has important implications and consequences for education. The level at which knowledge is most useful for practice in an individual is when the particular person is able to recognize, work on, transform, and talk about mid-level generalizations. Put differently, thinking and using language is an active matter of assembling the situated meanings that one needs for action in the world. And the assembling has its point of reference in the socioculturally-

defined experiences in the world as these experiences are more or less, habitualized (normed) through cultural models and various social practices of the sociocultural groups to which one belongs (Gee, 2005). The bottom line is that the context of a written or spoken utterance is everything in the material, mental, personal, interactional, social, institutional, cultural, and historical situation in which the utterance is being made that could conceivably influence the answer. This is to say that even words have histories as they have been in other people's mouths and have been derived from other people's writings.

The understanding of sociocultural and linguistic theory then, is premised on  'the concept that mental functions develop as a result of the child's [learner's] appropriation of modes of speaking, acting, and thinking that are first encountered in collaboration with adults or more capable peers [such as teachers and experts]'. This research project seeks to integrate language, literacy, and human mind. This conception has important implications for the nature of writing, both cognitively and socioculturally as cultural institutions, such as schools/universities, homes and others systematically impact the structure of interactions that take place among people or between individuals and cultural artefacts like books. Another component is that language is realized through a multitude of speech genres and semiotic devices that are connected to particular social institutions and with particular social practices. Human interactions within

an educational setting happen between people who develop a variety of interpersonal relationships with each other in the course of the shared educational activities. Therefore, in drawing the threads of sociocultural elements together, Minick, Stone and Forman (1993: 5) underscore the fact that 'modes of thinking evolve as integral systems of motives, goals and values that belie concrete forms of social practice' in the development of the mind.

Furthermore, Wertsch, Tulviste & Hagstrom (1993:337) endorse Vygotsky's claim that agency 'extends beyond the skin'. The fact that 'human agency extends beyond the skin is, first of all, because it is frequently a property of dyads and other small groups rather than individuals'. And this agency prevails at the "intermental". For 'it is in dialogues that children [learners] appropriate the words of others through listening to others speak to them, and in so doing appropriate the organizational patterns (concepts) of the culture, including a concept of self' as well as at the "intramental' sphere of functioning (Ushakova, 1994; 138). The second way in which agency extends beyond the skin is the involvement of cultural tools or 'mediational means'. These mediational means have an impact in terms of human action which is 'inherently tied to historical, cultural, and institutional settings' (Wertsch *et al*., 1993:337) and hence to a wider sociocultural milieu. Another noteworthy aspect of embracing sociocultural theory for this study is the perspective that mediated agency is not grounded in any

single academic discipline. To understand and describe varied sociocultural settings within the learning/teaching context, researchers have to recognize the cultural and institutional forces that are at play and are the pivot of study for scholars from other disciplines. This aspect of involving other disciplines threads in the connection to the transdisciplinarity discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

Therefore, sociocultural theory is descriptively powerful while at the same time applicable to a practical situation in an educational setting, such as the one being pursued in this research project. A relevant development in the area of skills for second language learners is that cognitive models of the writing process lack the very vital social dimension. In describing learners' actions in second language, their history, their social context, their educational development stages form an integral part of their achievements and that is why remediation does not work in the absence of holistic information that embraces psychological and social models. In this connection, Swales (1990: 4) reinforces the argument that

> …writing, especially student writing in colleges and universities, should not be viewed solely as an individually-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process, but as much as an acquired response to the discourse conventions which arise from preferred ways of creating and communicating knowledge within particular communities.

That is to say, the mental act of knowing is not a private state of being or condition, which occurs in isolation from other members of society. It occurs in cooperation with other members of the community. What people

mean when they say that someone knows ways of creating and communicating knowledge has to do with the regularities in writing, speech and other observable behaviour that obtains in that particular society. For, as Bruner (1987: 283) states:

> One of the most central and distinctive principles of the Vygotskian perspective is that the formation of mind is essentially and inescapably a sociocultural process; consequently, it can be grasped only by situating individual development in its sociocultural context.

Sociocultural theory is premised on the principle that in order to understand the human condition, one should interpret it in its social, cultural and historical context. As Bruner (as cited in Luria, 1987: xii) astutely observes: 'the explanation of any human condition is so bound to context, so complexly interpretive at so many levels, that it cannot be achieved by considering isolated segments of life 'in vitro'.

Furthermore, Minick, Stone and Forman (1993) note that sociocultural theory has contributed to the development of useful notions of the relationship between cognition and psychological functions; more advanced understandings of sociocultural and linguistic theory; and because it consists of components that make it relevant in its application to education. Any form of behaviour of an individual or group is the function of the interaction between the individual and his/her environment. This is the basis for building a case for any researcher in the human and social sciences and in education to consider the context of the behaviour one is

studying as a necessary condition for understanding that behaviour. The more anchored the frame of reference within a multiple frame of reference in which the learner is operating, the greater is the chance both to understand the difficulties and to attempt to resolve them. Therefore a person who invents is socially influenced, and even socially constituted.

On cultural repertoires, Gee (2005) endorses Vygotsky's (1987) view on words as possessing both 'meaning' and 'sense' when 'sense' is seen as the sum of all the psychological events aroused in the consciousness by a word. Meaning is observed as being stable, but sense is 'dynamic and fluid' for it shifts with the context of interaction or inner speech. And in the inner speech, sense predominates over meaning because 'sense' is cultural rather than individual. This is the reason for Harris's (1989: 268) statement that:

> We write not as isolated individuals but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns, and practices both instigate and constrain, at least in part, the sorts of things we can say [or write]. Our aims and intentions in writing are thus not merely personal or idiosyncratic, they are reflective of the communities to which we belong.

Sociocultural theory, thus  entails paying careful attention to the institutional context of social interaction. Cultural institutions, such as schools, universities and homes, tend to structure the interactions that occur among people or between people. The same applies to cultural artefacts, such as books. Minick, Stone and Forman (1993) underscore the fact that a viable sociocultural conception of human development can only come out of

examining the way cultural institutions, such as schools/universities and homes, and artefacts, such as books, are linked to one another as well as to the way in which social life is organized within these institutions and around them.

Minick, Stone and Forman (1993: 6) also point out that language is holistically made up of a myriad of speech genres and semiotic devices that are linked with particular social institutions and particular social practices. In these institutions, there are speech genres that mediate specific forms of social and psychological life in very distinct ways and are therefore, not uniform.

The ideas of cognition in a sociocultural context have led to the recognition that modes of thinking evolve as integral systems of motives, goals, values, and beliefs that are closely tied to concrete forms of social practice. In other words, sociocultural theory highlights the very rich interconnections between cultural institutions, social practices, semiotic mediation, interpersonal relationships, and the developing mind. When it comes to situated meanings, Gee (2005) adds that thinking and using language are active undertakings of assembling the situated meanings that are needed for action in the world. In fact, he further points out that the context of an utterance (whether written or spoken) is everything in the world of an individual. To understand and appreciate the role of socioculture in second

language communication is to understand the lifelong processes that one goes through in acquiring one's first language. Learners entering school and university must acquire quite a sizeable amount of vocabulary in every discipline of study while acquiring complex writing skills. These processes continue through life as new contexts of language use are added to the learners' life experiences. As life goes on, they acquire further knowledge of pragmatics, as well as of the constantly changing patterns in language use that affect everyday written communication. That is to say, first language acquisition is an unending process throughout one's lifetime (Collier & Thomas, 1992; Gleason, 1993). Learning to write in second Language is more complex and is more subject to influence from other factors than is written development in first language.

## 3. 3 LITERACY AND COMPOSITION

All normally developing human beings learn to speak a Mother Tongue/First Language naturally. But this is not the case with written language, which is taught, almost always explicitly and consciously. In this regard, Stubbs (1987:8) states that written language 'is therefore always inherently involved in forms of social relations'. He adds that since written language is perceived as encompassing social relations, it is inherently ideological. This is  because institutions embody ideologies. Stubbs (1987:8) argues 'literacy is a set of social practices which differ in different times and places'. Thus the distinction between spoken and written media

calls attention to a significant constraint on the development of writing abilities, because writing abilities are not naturally acquired; they are culturally transmitted to every generation, whether by schools/universities or by some other facilitating environment. The logical conclusion to draw from the acquired/learned distinction is that writing is a technology, a set of skills that must be taught/learned, practised and continually acquired through experience. Thus writing becomes more political especially second language writing, as mentioned earlier.. As written language is taught, it becomes inherently involved in forms of social relations.

LeVine (1986: 6) says literacy research 'reflects the fact that we are dealing with a complex amalgam of psychological, linguistic, and social processes layered one on top of another'. He (1986: 22) adds that this 'results in identical issues being discussed in quite separate contexts with different vocabularies'. That is, literacy should not be regarded as a single unified competence and instead it should be seen in terms of a multiplicity of literacies, because literacy practices vary from group to group.

One of the important questions that is integral to the discussion is how writing, especially the type that is done in school and at university, fits into the general theory of literacy? To answer this question, one needs to start from the need for writing in modern literate societies which is more extensive than the role of writing in people's everyday lives. And meeting

the demands of writing tasks is a requirement in the education system and is often a necessity in the workplace too. One may distinguish writing that involves composing from writing that does not. This distinction is useful, because most of what is accepted academically as writing presupposes careful composition. A piece of writing which implies composing contains surface features which connect the discourse to an underlying logic of organization that is more than simply the sum of the meanings of the individual sentences (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

The composition just mentioned can be divided into writing that is basically telling or retelling, and writing that is transforming. On the one hand, retelling signifies the sort of writing that is, to a large extent, narrative and descriptive. The planning involves recalling and reiterating. Transforming, on the other hand, signifies that sort of writing for which no blueprint is readily available. The planning involves the complex juxtaposition of many pieces of information as well as the weighting of various rhetorical options and constraints (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Many sorts of what traditionally have been called expository and argumentative/persuasive texts, as well as creative writing, involve transformative techniques. Transforming knowledge into one's own way of perceiving a situation so that it demonstrates one's rational stand on some issue forms the central thread for this research project.

In most academic settings where students are learning how to structure discursive writing, the educational system assumes that students will learn to compose with the ability to transform information. One might safely assume that many students learning to write before they enter university have had little or no consistent exposure to writing demands beyond retelling. Thus the problems created and experienced by these learners as they enter the university environment are quite significant and they certainly deserve attention. Writing places constraints on student learning that are distinct from the development of spoken English abilities. It is likely that quite a substantial number of students may never develop the more sophisticated composition skills that transform information into new texts. The table below illustrates the tasks/activities that are involved in knowledge–telling and knowledge transforming in composition writing.

In Table 3.1 below, writing which entails composing shows a distinction between knowledge telling and knowledge transforming. In the table, argument/discursive writing falls under the knowledge transforming category. This is because information for an argument has to be thought out properly from different sources and then marshalled into a rationalized piece of writing. This is, therefore, labelled as text.

**Table 3.1 Patterns of composing (adapted from Grabe, W. & Kaplan, R. B. 1996: 4)**

| Writing with composing | |
|---|---|
| *For knowledge telling* | *For knowledge transforming* |
| Personal diary | Journal notes |
| Personal letter | |
| Business letter | Argument writing |
| Bible study sermon | |
| Newsletter article | Research/grant proposal |
| | Novel, Play, Short story, Poem |

## 3. 4 THE NATURE OF THE WRITTEN TEXT

A description of the way the text structure is put together takes cognizance of the writer's purpose, the topic, the message and the expectations of the audience. After taking a variety of constraints around the issue of text into consideration, Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 40) put it thus: 'a text occurs when the discourse segment is identified as possible, feasible, appropriate, and performed, and has a topic'. Recognizing that writing is produced, read, and interpreted in social contexts, Cooper (1986: 366) argues that writing cannot be seen as isolated from the social world of interaction. Rather, 'writing is a social activity, dependent on social structures'. That is, writers, much like speakers, take on roles that are defined by social structures. And by writing within socially recognized conventions and expectations, writers can also alter the situation (or reconstruct a new version of interaction); as

literacy can be a means for changing the status quo when handled appropriately.

The view that literacy can provide students with the means to effect changes in their lives and in the social order is one that must gain support from educators because the language of the classroom needs to help students become more critical readers so that they are encouraged to choose or create texts to change the power relationships that they believe need changing. Thus writing reflects ecology, that is, the totality of relations between organisms and their environment. For Cooper (1986: 367), an ecological model of writing 'is an activity through which a person is continually engaged with a variety of socially constituted systems'. A comprehensive theory of writing needs to recognize the various sociocultural factors that influence writing; but at the same time, recognition must also be given to the idea that writing itself is produced through the cognitive activities of the writer.

Another perspective on the social context defined by researchers has been the move to introduce students to "discourse communities" (Swales, 1990,1993) so that their writing becomes purposeful in the academic settings chosen for this research. In this regard, Halliday's (1994) functional theory of language is important to any understanding of writing development. In this approach to language, grammar develops out of the

need for speakers and writers to interact for functional purposes; that is, language development evolves out of a child's 'learning how to mean' (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996:105). That is to say, language is not separable from either content or context, but varies systematically with content and context, and is the medium through which meaning is realized. Halliday's (1994) emphasis on the meaningful use of language in an educational context extends further to include the ways in which language *form* gives structure to meaningful communication. Gee (2005) endorses the same view that Christie (1989: 167) states:

> Success in mastering a content area is actually a matter of mastering the necessary linguistic resources with which to deal with that content – this implies knowing how one's discourse is to be structured.

Students learning to interact orally and in writing need to come to understand how language, form and generic text structure provide resources for presenting information and interacting with others. They learn to choose linguistic patterns, which are appropriate to the meanings they are trying to make. One of the goals of education, then, is to help students to recognize and use those linguistic patterns. As Christie (1989: 198) states:

> Knowledge is created in patterns of discourse, and successful mastery of a "body of knowledge" like the associated development of various mental skills of reasoning, speculation, and inquiry, is entirely dependent upon mastery of linguistic resources necessary for these to come into being. It is for this reason, contrary to prevailing custom, that good teaching practices should always have an overt and explicit interest in the nature of the language students must learn to use.

The making of meaning or the making of knowledge is linked to the production of discourse and of texts, and the one cannot do without the other. The extension of this perspective is that students in school and university also have to make meaning and learn through their use of discourse and their construction of texts. Such a view argues that writing and attention to form, as part of content exploration, are critical for learning. Martin (1989) posits an argument in favour of extensive instruction in expository writing (writing which explores how the world works). He contrasts this view directly with writing instruction, which focuses almost entirely on expressive and narrative writing (writing which describes how the world looks).

Swales (1990) also argues for the importance of genre as having functional purposes in advanced writing development. He similarly points to a knowledge of genre as an important way to give students power over their learning. Taking as a starting point the notion that genres serve meaningful purposes and provide frames for various academic schema-based sets of knowledge, he contends that the ability to use genre structure effectively will transform students' abilities to learn and function successfully in academic contexts. It should be noted here, that throughout this discussion, it is important to recognize the connections to all levels of writing development and teaching so that students are not caught in what Swales calls remediation. Swales (1990: 2) says:

> For if there is one factor that has debilitated academic English programmes more than any other around the world, it has been the concept of *remediation* – That we have nothing to teach but that which should have been learnt before*.*

To push this discussion further, discourse theorists also emphasize the notion that it is not isolated words that learners are assimilating through interaction, but genres and discourses. Genres have been defined by Warschauer (1997:2) as 'staged, goal oriented social processes' that include examples such as persuasive letters to the editor on a given topic, job applications, and laboratory reports. Martin, Christie and Rothery (1994: 233) add their own clarity to the issue by declaring:

> Genres are referred to as social processes because members of a culture interact with each other to achieve them: as goal oriented because they have evolved to get things done; and as staged because it usually takes more than one step for participants to achieve their goals.

It is from this perspective of genres that Gee (1990: 131) views discourse even more broadly as

> a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and "artefacts" of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or "social network", or to signal (that one is playing) a social role.

For Hyland (2002), discourse refers to language as use, which includes the purposes and functions that linguistic forms serve in writing or verbal modes. All linguistic patterns of completed texts point to contexts beyond the page. This implies a range of social constraints and choices which operate on a writer in any given situation. The implications of the discourse formulations, is that  learners entering a community of practice must

creatively internalize not merely the vocabulary and syntax of a language, but complex patterns of language use in a social process. In other words, the written product and the formal aspects of writing cannot be disregarded in learning/teaching to write. Consideration of how discourse is structured emphasizes the importance of discourse features of writing. Martin (1989), Martin, Christie and Rothery (1994);  Warschauer (1997) and Gee (2005) have all recognized the important role of genre structure in conveying the purpose and in assisting the reader's interpretation. This role is critical in effective writing.

Students gradually learn by appropriating the facilitator's goals and purposes for writing, as well as the appropriate language forms. Such appropriation occurs in Vygotsky's (1978)  'zone of proximal development' [ZPD] mentioned earlier in 3.2. This is the 'space or range where learning takes place', and the internalisation or interiorization describes 'the process of learning that takes place in that space'. The process in the ZPD starts with the two unequal partners who approach a problem; and the stages for the solution to the problem are organized or scaffolded by the more knowledgeable partner. In this situation, the student is put through the paces of solving the problem in such a way that the student becomes a knowledgeable person, because s/he was enabled to internalise what was required. This is what is referred to as the level of knowledge between

normal student performance and what a student is capable of attaining with expert assistance.

Chapelle *et al.* (1993) have developed a model of communicative language use that is intended for academic language performance in the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. But writing is the focal point in this thesis and so, the discussion deals specifically with writing performance. The model specifies communicative language use as comprising a *context* for language use and representation of the language user's *verbal working memory*. Included in the 'context' are components that integrate *situation* and language *performance* output. The 'situation' itself comprises *participants, setting, task, text,* and *topic*. The 'performance' accounts for the actual *textual output* produced as a result of the processing in 'verbal working memory'. The 'textual output' provides an additional influence on components in verbal working memory as it becomes available for inspection in a given 'context'.

The above context variables constitute the external social context of the writing situation. It is the language competence component that generates the language information needed to respond to the task on hand. The world knowledge component activates relevant information which, in turn, will generate more language resources. And from what has been said above, a descriptive model of text construction could at least entail basic

components that at some point coalesce as interacting threads of syntactic structures; semantic senses; cohesion signalling; genre and organizational structuring to support coherence interpretations; lexical forms and relations; and non-linguistic knowledge, including world knowledge (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 62).

The above-mentioned threads or strands form four interdependent components in the structure of a text that Grabe and Kaplan (1996) weave into the writing performance. These components may be viewed as operating at sentential and textual levels; and these two major levels break into four strands of surface structure (syntax and cohesion) and deep or underlying structure (semantics and coherence). That is, there are two at sentential and the other two at textual (or intersentential) levels. This is depicted in Table 3.2 below:

**Table 3. 2  Elements of text structure (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 63)**

|  | Surface | Deep |
|---|---|---|
| Sentential | Syntax | Semantics |
| Textual | Cohesion | Coherence |

There is another major division that exists at both levels between the surface structure and the underlying structure (deep) and this division generally constitutes a form-meaning distinction called the lexicon

component. This is a diffuse component, underlying the other four. The lexicon, which is an individual's mental word list, pervades all the other components both in surface form and underlying organization. The above components form the bedrock from which all texts are constructed.

The components of the sentential level are taken as given. The components on the textual level consist of cohesion, which represents the formal signals of a text beyond the limits of the sentence and coherence in text structure, which represents 'the underlying relations that hold between assertions or propositions and how these assertions contribute to the overall discourse theme or macrostructure' (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 70). It is the coherence in text structure which allows the reader, at least in part, to comprehend. According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 71), the most vital aspect for this textual component is the way relationships are established between logical assertions and information structure of the topic of discourse, more especially for discursive essay writing. From the note on elements of the text structure, the next section deals with writing and second language literacy.

## 3. 5 WRITING, SECOND LANGUAGE  AND LITERACY

One dimension that seems rich when discussing writing is literacy, change and access. This is because written language is a socio-historical construct which needs a synthesis of linguistic and cultural analysis. This fits well

with historical perspectives on literacy. Stubbs (1987: 16) notes that 'writing systems have been legitimated by institutions in the wider community…and the spread of the writing has often been due to religious and political colonisation'.

One significant point that the study of literacy has brought to the fore is that there are as many different sorts of literacy skills just as there are many different sorts of writing abilities. Written language is not a neutral skill which has to be transmitted by schools/universities. The history of literacy demonstrates that reading and writing skills have been developed and passed on to following generations only in response to cultural and social contexts. As knowledge increases, there is a need for it to find expression in discourse and this, in, turn impacts on institutions of learning to equip their learners with relevant skills.

There is agreement among Stubbs (1987) and Grabe and Kaplan (1996) that the increase in demand for professional uses of literacy concomitantly increased demands for and on reading and writing training. Professional literacy has now become the goal of educational systems throughout much of the literate world. The rise of professional literacy has also led to an increasing demand on the sort of writing ability that involves composing (Stedman & Kaestle, 1987; Purves, 1991). And since literacy is not a universally uniform set of skills, but rather a set of highly contextualised

skills, it is, therefore, determined by the society in which it functions (Street, 1993; Gee, 2005). Stubbs (1987: 24) notes that 'what is regarded as functional differs at different times and in different places, and is maintained by different social groups and institutions'. Further support for the socially embedded nature of literacy skills has appeared in a range of educational research (Boggs 1985; Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Heath, 1983, 1986, 1993). Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 14) state that, akin to the history of literacy, the study of writing, its history, uses, purposes and consequences have to be viewed in its sociocultural context.

More often than not, discussion on literacy or writing crystallizes deep cultural conflicts. This is because different institutions, such as home, school, work and the community as a whole may define and even influence different aspects of literacy or different literacy practices. In fact, in some instances different institutions may be supporting conflicting literacy practices. In this regard, the home is considered an ecological niche in which literacy survives, is sustained  and does flourish in one form or another. Heath (1983: 234) has given some insight on literacy traditions being 'interwoven in different ways with oral uses of language, ways of negotiating meaning, deciding on action, and achieving status'.

The assumption that is being threaded into this discussion is that the way literacy is used in everyday life in the home and the wider community

constitutes a coherent domain. It is a given that there are certain common social practices in writing activities in a community and these activities are the literacy practices and this is why Barton (1991: 8) says that these literacy practices 'need to be seen as part of social practices'. The underlying rationale for viewing writing in terms of social practices is that it shows how interlinked the written word is with other forms of communication. One comes to realize the asymmetry of literacy roles in society. People's roles in society have their own significance, because they highlight the fact that the way people act is not just a question of abilities but is influenced by socially constructed roles. Barton (1991: 8) rationalizes this by saying that 'people's literacy practices do not reflect abilities in any straightforward way but are related to what is or [is] not appropriate'.

The level of literacy a person achieves has an impact on that person's perceived role in society. But the socialization history of a society determines who should have access to certain levels of literacy. In this regard, people's or learners' actions should not be described just in terms of abilities when striving for an understanding of literacy as their roles exist within established networks. People make sense of literacy as a social phenomenon, and this is the reason for Barton (1991: 10) remarking that 'literacy is embedded in institutional contexts that shape the practices and social meanings attached to writing'.

There are a number of ways in which literacy is bound up with changes in individuals' lives. One change is in people's personal histories. Another aspect of change that could be incorporated into this discussion is the current social change. In this context, political changes and new technologies are changing the demands on individuals. This leads to new social practices which, in turn, lead to different possibilities that are linked to new literacy practices. These social changes may increase literacy demands on individuals depending on their circumstances, such as gaining admission to university where academic literacy is demanded. Leibowitz (1995 :34) gives a general definition of 'academic literacy' as 'being able to read and write within the academic context with independence, understanding, and a level of engagement in the work'. The level of engagement means, among other things, being able to write lucid essays in response to various prompts in different disciplines at the appropriate level.

Wells *et al.* (1981: 110) defines the epistemic level of literacy as 'acting upon and transforming knowledge and experience that are, in general, unavailable to those who have never learned to read and write'. Therefore, literacy instruction is viewed as apprenticing learners into the discourses and social practices of literate communities. This apprenticeship is best achieved through a focus on authentic meaning of importance to the lives

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of the learners, because of the fact that it is the "sense" in words rather than "meaning" that can be relevant to a the context of learning.

Another facet to consider is the role of the first language in the education of second language learners. Many studies have found that cognitive and academic development in the first language has an extremely important and positive effect on second language education (Bialystok, 1991; Collier & Thomas, 1992; Garcia, 1994 and Genesee, 1994;). These studies also show that academic skills, literacy development, concept formation, subject knowledge, and learning strategies developed in the first language all transfer to the second language. As students expand their vocabulary and their oral and written communication skills in the second language, they are increasingly able to demonstrate the knowledge base developed in the first language. For the key to understanding the role of first languages in the academic development of the second language is the key to understand the function of uninterrupted cognitive development. There is an underlying cognitive/academic proficiency that is common across languages which allows the transfer of literacy-related skills across languages, and a strong relationship is seen to exist between Mother Tongue [L1] and communication skills and the development of literacy in both L1 and second language [L2].

Thus the underlying cognitive proficiency allows for positive transfer of shared linguistic and cultural features from the first language to writing in English as a second language. In this connection, Liebman's (1992) survey considered the L1 literacy backgrounds of L2 students.  In this survey, Liebman poses questions that delve into the kind of writing instruction the students had received in their L1. In his conclusion, Liebman (1992: 157) urges the importance of continued studies into L1 literacy backgrounds of L2 students:

> …if ESL writing teachers want their students to succeed at a variety of academic writing tasks, they must become aware not only of the different forms but also of differences in institutional background. It is not enough to determine what will be expected of ESL students in the university and then give them models of what we want them to produce. We must also determine what these students' prior experiences are. Similarly when we teach argument, we may need to approach it differently.

In addition, the interest in cultural literacy has produced important insights about relationships among orality, literacy, schooling, tertiary instruction and cultural tendencies. Writing as a system has, historically, been legitimated by religious and political organizations. As such, written languages did not come into existence simultaneously in all cultures. Many languages acquired the written capacity relatively later, therefore, the achievement of standardized forms of the written version of Mother Tongues has created problems both at the developmental and social levels. That is, when development is considered to be a method for more efficient use of human and natural resources in order to create a better standard of living for a people, because development, invariably, involves

the exploitation of scientific information. The implicit need for access to scientific information raises the issue of access to a language in which scientific information tends to exist and this renders some Mother Tongues irrelevant at present until such time that such information is coded and catalogued in corresponding vocabulary and expression.

In order to ensure cognitive and academic success in a second language, a student's first language system, oral and written, must be developed to a high cognitive level at least through the elementary and the intermediate school years. It is also recognized that in learning their first language, children are also learning about the culture of which that language is a constitutive part (Hasan, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Buttjes & Byram, 1991). Thus the continued reinforcement of linguistic and academic skills from Mother Tongue to English ensures uninterrupted cognitive development.

As already pointed out in this study, second language learners do not come to the classrooms as blank slates, but rather with a wealth of experiences and skills that can be tapped by the language instructor and drawn on to assist in the acquisition of the second language. Brown (1994: 187) pertinently notes that

> As in every other human learning experience, the second language learner can make positive use of prior experiences to facilitate the process of learning, retaining that which is valid and valuable for second culture learning, and second language learning.

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When there is a validation of learners' life experiences as having relevance and meaning, the validation helps the second language learning to take on personal meaning as previously acquired knowledge and skills transfer to the second language as this validates cumulative experience development. Therefore, classroom-based literacy has to involve the development of literate skills of critical thinking, interpretation, abstraction, reflection, collaborative problem solving and analysis.

In addition, the role of input and interaction in language development also deserves mention here. Hall (in Hinkel, 1999) points out that classes that are highly interactive, emphasizing student problem-solving and discovery learning through thematic experiences across the curriculum, are likely to provide a kind of atmosphere for natural language acquisition to take place which is likely to be simultaneous with academic and cognitive development. Collaborative interaction in which meaning is negotiated with peers is central to the language acquisition process, both for oral and written language development (Ellis, 1985; Swain, 1985; Enright & McCloskey, 1988; Wong Fillmore, 1991; Freeman & Freeman, 1992; Goodman & Wilde, 1992). Since written language is the subject of this thesis, the discussion moves to the consideration of writing and value orientation in societies.

## 3. 6 WRITING, VALUE ORIENTATION AND SOCIETY

As the act of writing is a social process, significant contributions to knowledge about writing instruction and culture have emerged from the International Study of Written Composition as well as Hofstede's (1984, 1986) study on value orientation. The study carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement [IEA] examined the teaching and learning of written composition in schools in fourteen countries. The goals of the project were multifold (Purves & Purves, 1986:179) and among them is to

> …identify factors, which explain differences as well as typical patterns in the performance of written composition with particular attention to cultural background, curriculum, and teaching practices.

These researchers make reference to three basic forms of knowledge that is required and these knowledge forms have already been alluded to in the previous sections of this chapter. The first one refers to semantic knowledge (that is, knowledge of words, their meanings and their structures). The second is knowledge of text models (that is, discourse models of texts for different purposes). And the third is knowledge of social and cultural rules (that is, governing what is appropriate to write and when to write it) as well as knowledge of the appropriate procedures to use in the activity of writing.

Added to the knowledge of cross-cultural writing that has emerged from the IEA, there is more information from the Contrastive Rhetoric Hypothesis

(CRH) and the psychological and anthropological studies of literacy development that have reinforced the suggestion that writing is an activity that is acquired both in school and outside of school in a society. In this respect, writing development is seen as part of the synthesis of culturally preferred patterns of rhetorical texts and the related cognitive cultural models in a society. The major outcome of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis is that different speech communities have different ways of organizing ideas in writing (Kachru in Hinkel, 1999: 76).

The other dimensions to add to this section are Hofstede's (1984, 1986) 'mental programs'. Hofstede's theory is based on the assumption that human beings are imbued with 'mental programs'. These mental programmes, which are the major dimensions along which dominant patterns of culture are ordered, get developed during childhood and are reinforced through culture. The relevant ones to this research project (Hofstede, 1986: 307) are described as:

1   *either individualism* or *collectivistic* (as used in anthropological sense). A collectivist culture assumes that any person through birth and possible later events belongs to one or more tight "in-groups" from which s/he cannot detach her/himself. The "in-group" (whether extended family, clan, or organization) protects the interest of its members, but in turn expects their permanent loyalty. A collectivist society is also tightly integrated.

2    *Uncertainty avoidance* as characteristic of a culture defines the extent to which people within a culture are made nervous by situations which they perceive as unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable, situations which they therefore try to avoid by maintaining strict codes of behaviour and a belief in absolute truths. Cultures with a weak uncertainty avoidance are contemplative, less aggressive, unemotional, relaxed, accepting personal risks, and relatively tolerant.

With regard to the Collectivist cultural orientation, Hostede gives illustrations of the manifestations that could be applicable to the context of this research project, because some of the manifestations illuminate what has often been observed and experienced in the area. Hostede (1986: 312) tabulates them in terms of teacher/student and student/student interaction that is related to the collectivist societies. A collectivist society has: positive association in society with whatever is rooted in tradition; the young should learn; adults cannot accept a student role; students expect to learn how to do; individual students will only speak up in class when called upon personally by the teacher; individuals will only speak up in small groups; education is a way of gaining prestige in one's social environment and of joining a higher status group; acquiring certificates even through (not so acceptable) means is more important than acquiring competence.

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These value orientations have an impact on the atmosphere for effective learning/teaching in general. These manifestations confirm both personal observation and experience as well as colleagues' observations on these pertinent issues. The cultural parameters of collectivism put together with the consequences of power-distance; less inclination towards truth; superficial harmony and a weak uncertainty avoidance stance make discursive interactions unwarranted and uncalled for in the study area. The consequences of power distance are evident in family customs (power vested in the status quo, the relationships between the students and the facilitators, the young and the elderly, the language system and the organisational practices).

Hofstede (1984) further argues that as collectivist societies tend to attach value to cooperation with in-group members, they have a tendency to apply different value standards for members of their in-groups and out-groups. And as a consequence of the double standards, rationalized discursive presentations based on hard facts become a problem. And yet, as noted by Bakhtin (1986: 7), the learning interaction is most beneficial when it is most heterogeneous, that is, when it crosses cultural boundaries:

> In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of <u>another</u> culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly…. A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and one-sidedness of these particular

> meanings, these cultures. We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not raise itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths.

Bakhtin's pronouncements establish links to the hybrid communities (referred to in Chapter Two of this thesis) that facilitate communication links at the margins. Thus, cultural values and activities are at one and the same time components of the life of the learner in a social system. That is to say, the social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact which makes the learner's dimension of consciousness derivative and secondary (Mead, 1934; Vygotsky, 1978, 1979; Hall, 1999 and Gee, 2005). That is, the person who invents (when invention is defined in its broader terms) is socially influenced, and even socially constituted. People with limited group memberships have no reason to use the second language for it is conceived as a threat to their social identities. On the other hand, those who belong to different groupings are open to second language usage, both orally and in writing. Kenway and Modra (1992: 163) see reflective dialogue as the 'goal of pedagogy and not the condition for it'.  For not only is the reflexive dialogue geared towards enlarging, but also complicating and/or challenging learners' experiences and what they believe in, with a possibility for alternative perspectives, rival hypotheses and expanded visions of values and priorities. Thus, writing, society and value orientation lead the discussion to second language learning and group dynamics.

## 3. 7 LANGUAGE LEARNING AND GROUP DYNAMICS

The Intergroup Model [IGM] proposed by Giles and Byrne (1982) also seems to be of relevance to this research project. Giles and Byrne propose the IGM in order to incorporate the role of intergroup variables and processes in second language acquisition, variables such as ethnic identification and social differentiation.

When the sociocultural context in which the second language acquisition takes place is considered, one of the studies (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977) shows that vitality plays a crucial role in the understanding of language in society particularly with respect to second language acquisition and writing competence. The more vitality a group perceives itself to have, for instance, as a majority under threat, the greater the psychological investment they are likely to make in ethnic attachment, and the less they are likely to accommodate the linguistic habits of the relevant dominant language. There are also variables to be recognized and these include issues of enclosure; cohesiveness and size; and attitudes.

There are three propositions that are seen as inhibiting second language acquisition in subordinate groups where the language being acquired is posed as a possible threat to the majority group. According to Giles and Byrne (1982: 203), inhibition is posited as emerging when majority group members

(a) Identify strongly with their ethnic group and perceive the in-group language (First) as an important dimension of their cultural identity;

(b) Construe 'cognitive alternatives' to their subordinate intergroup status, such as feeling that their own relative position was *illegitimately* created historically by dominant group oppression (rather than its being part of the accepted order of nature), and that there is now some possibility of the status hierarchy being changed;

(c) Perceive their ethno linguistic vitality to be high and compare it favourably with that of the out-group.

In (c), the L2 group is both cohesive and large; hence intragroup contact is more frequent than intergroup contact and leads to reduced opportunities for the learning of English. Studies in ethno linguistic identity confirm that people have social representations of how their group stands in relation to the relevant others.

There is value in acknowledging both out-group and in-group boundaries for each group has its own perceived boundaries. These boundaries could impede or promote movement out of and into each other's group, thereby allowing, limiting, or preventing opportunities for second language acquisition. Similarly, there is justification for the need to recognize the importance of out-group vitality for the relative vitality in favour of the first language predictably reduces the incentive for investing energy in second

language acquisition and, therefore, is a more potent construct (Clement, 1980) than mere reliance on any absolute value of in-group vitality alone.

Thus, learning orientations and performance outcomes may be seen to be indirectly predictable from group perceptions. It is apparent that propositions (a) to (c), in combination, are a consequence of multiple negative orientations whereas, proposition (a) in combination with (b) renders the acquisition of the dominant out-group language ideologically unattractive. In addition, it is also difficult in the sense of (c), and could possibly be viewed as unnecessary. However, there could be members of the same group who identify weakly with the in-group and perceiving its vitality as low. Giles and Byrne (1982) regard these individuals as those most likely to achieve higher proficiency levels in the second language. But these individuals may not necessarily be socially distinguishable as discernible subcategories within the ethnic collective for they would only become distinguishable through performance in the second language.

What the above translates into, then, is that those with a low inclination to accommodate the dominant second language will see second language acquisition as 'subtractive' of their identity as highlighted by the exchange between two staff members (SM1 and SM2) in Chapter One. This kind of group will keep away from informal acquisition contexts (Gardner, 1985), particularly those involving personal encounters with members of the first language users' group. On the other hand, those with a high inclination

towards accommodating the second language will see second language acquisition as 'additive' to their identities and will have an 'integrative' orientation toward the language and its speakers, socialising with the out-group while seeking out informal learning contexts and opportunities.

The individuals with such a learning orientation work hard in order to counteract and transcend, as well as to make up for the absence of positive competition among their peers, including the limitations of pedagogic practice. What this means is that the 'good language learners', ( Garret, Howard & Coupland, 1989: 208), do actively involve themselves in the acquisition process of the second language and in so doing, they maximize their potential to succeed. The taking on of responsibilities for one's own learning has been found to be true from personal experience as it reduces knowledge gaps in interaction not only for language learning per se but for any other learning for that matter. Second language learners need to realize that they have to assume responsibility for their own learning. This is because from experience it makes sense as Hall (1999) states that competence increases not just through the volume of input, with learners focusing on meaning alone, but when learners, in addition, pay conscious attention to formal features, such as grammatical signals, phraseology and collocations of the input, and also adopt a 'mental set' to retain as much new input as possible for future production. Most of all,

learners should avail themselves of, and even seek out, opportunities for facilitative exposure and use (Rubin, 1975).

But availability of opportunities for facilitative exposure and use involve the issue of enclosure. Enclosure is the degree to which the L2 and the group that use English share the same facilities, such as recreational halls, churches, schools, clubs and professions. When the two groups share these amenities, interaction is high and thus enclosure is perceived to be low, because contact between the two groups is frequent and enhanced and, as a result, learning English by the L2 group is facilitated because the in-group and out-group boundaries are eliminated or become blurred.

Rubin (1975) rightly notes that facilitative exposure is important in both quantitative and qualitative terms as it caters for interaction frequency and variety. For in this way, L2 learners are able to match their output against input (Klein, 1986). According to Barton (1991: 11), 'the very act of writing or reading or speaking especially in English can be an act of defiance or an act of solidarity, or an act of conforming or even a symbol of change'. These issues, in turn, lead to a serious consideration of the larger sociocultural and social organizational issues as the symbolic tools; and the agents who use them are linked with specific social groups and social institutions.

Admittedly, pedagogic factors like type of teaching materials, methodologies and so on may also play a part in the teaching/learning situation, but these may not always have the intended outcome. For instance, some programmes may stress one or another component of 'communicative proficiency' (Bachman & Palmer, 1982), such as grammatical competence in the context of isolated sentences at the expense of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence. This could precipitates infelicities, or 'pragmatic failure' such as emphasizing narrative writing at the expense of discursive writing or exposing low proficient learners to certain literary works whose style of writing flouts normal standard sentence construction and yet deemed as excellent literary works. Now the thesis moves to the consideration of affective variables as part of the sociocultural phenomenon..

## 3. 8 SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND AFFECTIVE VARIABLES

This section addresses one set of factors that are related to success in the language classroom, namely, the attitudes and motivation of those who are participating in the teaching and learning. There are indications from theory and research that the relationships between a person's prior linguistic and academic experience, the social context of instruction, and the results of formal language instruction have complex and reciprocal connections with each other. Students are affected by the attitudes and examples of their
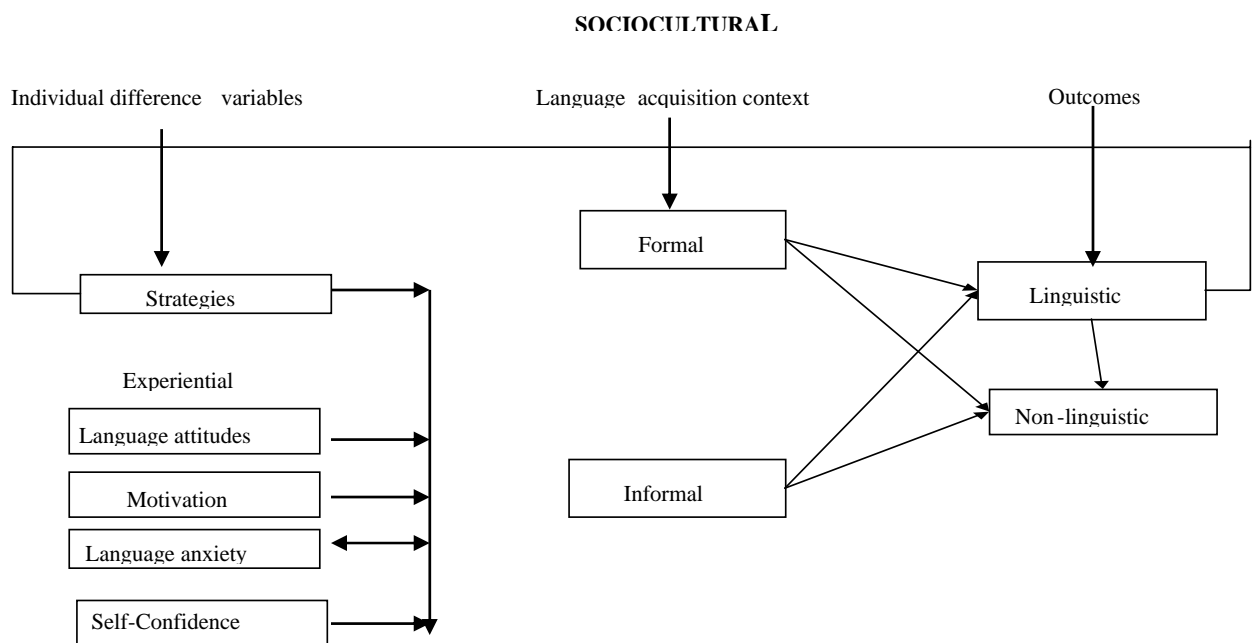
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peers, teachers, and parents with respect to language study and by social and institutional language policies.

Therefore, policy makers, facilitators, and researchers alike have to grasp the multiple and sometimes conflicting aspects of the influences of attitudes and motivation on second language learning as language is always the medium and also the object of formal study especially in second language situations. Attitude is linked to a person's values and beliefs and it may promote or discourage the choices that are to be made in all realms of activity in which English is involved whether academic or informal. In Gardner and MacIntyre's (1992, 1993) framework, motivation refers to the combination of desire and effort made to achieve a goal; it links the individual's rationale for any activity such as language learning with the range of behaviours and degree of effort employed in achieving goals.

In Gardner and MacIntyre's (1993: 8) model (Figure 3.1) below, the focus is on language motivation and language anxiety which fall under the affective variables category while intelligence, language aptitude and strategies constitute the major component of cognitive variables.

In the figure below, the sociocultural milieu is shown as overarching all facets of   the model. In the model, attitudes, motivation, self-confidence and language anxiety are significant, individual, different variables in the sociocultural milieu that influence language acquisition. This operates

through cultural beliefs that exist in the community concerning issues associated with learning the language. The nature of these beliefs in combination with those discussed earlier in 3.6; and 3.7 determines the extent to which cognitive and affective variables influence language learning. In Figure 3.1, the individual difference variables have an influence on the learner through their interaction with both formal and informal language acquisition contexts. Formal contexts (school and university) refer to the situations that involve direct instruction in the language.

**SOCIOCULTURAL**

Individual difference   variables      Language  acquisition context      Outcomes

| Strategies | | Formal | | Linguistic |

Experiential

| Language attitudes |

| Motivation |        | Informal |       | Non-linguistic |

| Language anxiety |

| Self-Confidence |

**Figure 3.1: Schematic representation of the sociocultural educational model of second language learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993: 8).**

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By linking affective factors to the formal language acquisition context, the assumption is that affective variables play a role by influencing the individual's reactions to the learning environment.

From the major class of cognitive variables, language-learning strategies are also incorporated into consideration together with the affective variables. This is because they are regarded as a direct result of previous experience (prior learning) and language training and, hence, form an embedded part of the socioculture. Language-learning strategies refer to an individual's attempt to structure his/her learning environment in ways that facilitate learning (Oxford, 1990). The fact that learning strategies can be defined as 'steps taken by the learner to facilitate the acquisition, storage, retrieval, or use of information' (Oxford & Crookall, 1989: 404) is also relevant to the issues of this research project. For a learner to be able to organize his/her learning, s/he must, at once, manage and accommodate the learning (strategies). In Oxford's (1990) terms, direct language learning strategies are those strategies that operate specifically on the second language material and specific activities, such as seeking opportunities to practise as well as accommodating error corrections, are all part of direct strategies.

However, while strategies act as aids in learning, they may simply reflect the level at which the learner is able to operate. The most effective

strategies are those that allow learners to fully process information in such a way that the information is worked into the texture of their existing understanding. Since learning is a social enterprise, one can point to teacher scaffold by helping learners make connections between old and new knowledge. This encourages learners to find core conceptual similarities between problems.

The affective variables that form the second category are the attributes that involve the reactions of individuals to a learning situation. They refer to attitudes and motivation, to language anxiety, to feelings of self-confidence in the language, and to learning styles. It appears that variables, such as attitudes, motivation and anxiety interact to produce a willingness to employ strategies. Of all the variables, motivation is the best correlate of strategy use. In fact, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) integrate the findings in the form of a causal spiral. This causal spiral postulates reciprocal causation between language performance and learner characteristics. The training of facilitators is also a major constituent of the sociocultural influence in the second language learning enterprise for with Vygotskian's (1978) ZPD and scaffolding (referred to earlier), it means the accomplishments or non-accomplishments of second language teachers are recycled in the educational system through the learners over and over again.

Informal contexts, on the other hand, refer to all those other situations where a learner is able to acquire some knowledge of or to practise using the language. The major characteristic of the informal context is that it is voluntary, that is, learners can either choose to participate in informal language acquisition contexts or not. Thus, because of the voluntary nature, it is likely that motivation alone plays a direct role in these types of contexts, as that is the underlying determinant for the learner to enter into the situation. This is shown in the figure (3.1) by the solid arrows linking affective factors to informal language acquisition contexts. Once a learner chooses to enter the informal context, however, other variables, such as cognitive individual difference variables come into play.

Both formal and informal language acquisition contexts could have both linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes, shown by the solid arrows linking both contexts to both outcomes. As a result of experiencing the language, learners develop some change in their competence, knowledge, and skill in some aspect of the language (linguistic outcomes), as well as in their reactions to the language, the situation, and/or factors associated with the language (non-linguistic outcomes). Successful, positive experiences result in improved levels of linguistic outcomes, and quite likely, improved levels of non-linguistic outcomes. Should the learners like both the facilitator and the lessons, this could lead to a positive attitude towards the group that the facilitator belongs to and hence enhance an integrative orientation towards

other groups that use English in general. On the other hand, a double-pronged negative attitude could occur for an unsuccessful negative experience results in a lack of linguistic development, and quite likely, in unfavourable non-linguistic outcomes. Many of the non-linguistic outcomes are the affective variables hypothesized as playing a role in language acquisition above.

Thus the model is considered to be dynamic in the sense that it has implications for both facilitators of a second language and researchers interested in second language acquisition. For facilitators, it shows that the experience provided in the learning context can influence not only students' levels of achievement, but also their feelings about and motivation for current and future language learning. It should be noted that although the above sociocultural educational model does not explicitly refer to instructional variables such as teaching approaches, teacher profiles and so on, it is an integral aspect of the formal language-learning context. This leads to the link to writing and communication.

## 3. 9 WRITING AND COMMUNICATION

For the purposes of this thesis, communication is regarded as the organized, culturally patterned system of behaviour that can sustain, regulate and make possible human relationships. Communication is a process and, as such, it is dynamic, changing and unending. That is to say,

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communication is participation, a sharing of meaning between two or more people. Another important aspect in the understanding and appreciation of communication that is relevant to this research project is that communication events do not happen in isolation. Each interaction that an individual or a whole society's experiences affects every one that follows even though the effect may be very subtle. The key to the importance of the role of sociocultural interface with language education lies in the interaction and the theory that deserves mention in the context of this research project is Mead's (1934) **symbolic interactionism theory** from which Blumer (1969) drew his influential perspectives on communication. Blumer constructed the concept of symbolic interactionism based on human groups, societies, social interaction, objects, human action and the human being as an actor, and the interconnection of their lines of action. Blumer puts emphasis on elements, such as culture, social system or social stratification as setting the conditions for action without determining it. In this regard, there is a paradox that is created by continuity and change in society which is resolved through communication.

To explain the above-mentioned, McQual (1975: 48) states, 'continuity is achieved by the intrusion of the generalised other in the formation of new "selves", while change comes from the relatively free dialogue within these new selves'. In other words, the structure of society influences, and can be influenced by, the particular modes of communication as the capacity or

range of application of a language system depends on what there is to communicate about, and this varies from society to society and from culture to culture. Thus the objects of the encountered material world and the events, concepts and abstractions which have to be given names and symbolic representations depend on what are considered important in the particular place and time, or what is singled out for attention. To belong to a society is to share objects of orientation with others and requires a person to share a way of denoting and responding to them with fellow members of that society.

But the use of language, in both its written and spoken forms, and the ability to respond 'correctly' to other forms of symbolic representation require some learning and a degree of skill. In other words, the opportunity to acquire the necessary language skills and the ability to use them is regulated by the social systems within the particular context (Gee: 20005). This explains why social institutions, such as religious organizations, diplomatic corps or educational bodies have both formally prescribed rules for communication and informal conventions known to participants which have to be learnt by initiates. Hence, second language learners have to be initiated into the art of discursive writing by peers, elders, and facilitators. Humans communicate in a cultural milieu that constrains the form and nature of communication. That is to say, when one talks about cultural influences on the acquisition of communication, one needs to acknowledge

the fact that culture constrains both what is acquired and how it is acquired. Conversely, communicative processes shape the culture that is transmitted from generation to generation and that sociocultural knowledge provides the basis for message interpretation. By the same token, communication can influence change in the shape of what is being transmitted. As culture provides the shared tacit knowledge that enables members to understand and communicate with one another, it means, according to LeVine (1984: 81) that

> every culture has an underlying rationale: collective value, arbitrary in itself, that is taken as an absolute requirement in a rational explanation of a customary practice. A culture's tacit or background knowledge provides the basis for interpretive practices followed by group members and it is this tacit knowledge that members use to communicate. The tacit knowledge surfaces in the form of pragmatic presuppositions, conversational implicatures, judgments of relevance and interpretive procedures and the like.

It is from all the elements stated above that sociocultural theory finds resonance with symbolic interactionism and this brings the discussion to the interaction of language, communication and culture.

## 3. 10 LANGUAGE, COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE

Language and communication are culture laden. Language is one of the elements of the social structure and it carries the ideas and meanings of a culture and hence, the mere act of writing (speaking) a particular language has personal, political, and ideological implications. As a result, language and the linguistic systems that are taught and learnt are essentially a part

of the communication process as language is a fundamental tool of communication and experience.

Since language has both form and strategy, it means language has stable elements that are the building blocks for messages and it also has psychological and sociological influences that shape the way language is used. The main focus of the strategic use of language is the way communication is used to achieve a purpose or goal. Every time an individual thinks about his/her language and its effect on another person, s/he chooses her/his language accordingly. This means s/he is thinking strategically about language. Politicians and lovers are very good at this as they excise this facility of language to the full and they think very carefully and strategically about the potential impact/effect of their messages. What should be noted is that the principles and patterns of strategic language use are more fluid and changing than the structural rules. Knowledge of the strategic patterns facilitates the availability of the tools and resources for communication. Ultimately, the communicative experience is created through the coalescing of issues in linguistics, cognition, pragmatics and discourse. Discourse can be said to be the intersection of language and communication (Ellis: 1999: 81) and it is realized in text. A text is a string of language that carries the purposes of the discourse and Discourse is organized in a way that make the elements tie together and language users interpret these ties. Hence a communicator has options in meanings and

makes choices about how to use and organize language to best serve his/her purposes.

Ballard and Clancy (1991: 23), in their discussion of the impact of cultural and intellectual traditions on literacy, contend that a culture's attitude towards knowledge can be rated accordingly from placing a value on conserving knowledge to placing a value on extending knowledge. They state that those cultures that emphasize conserving knowledge promote reproductive approaches to learning, and they emphasize strategies such as memorizing and imitation, and on the whole they deal with questions of *what* as can be seen from the Mother Tongue questions in Chapter Four. Whereas, cultures that hold the mid-level position tend to value analytical thinking. The cultures in this ranking focus on judging and reconciling ideas, putting emphasis on questions of *why* and *how*. And cultures at the other end of the spectrum focus on a deliberate search for new possibilities and explanations and seek answers to questions of *what if*. They conclude that these different approaches to learning find synergy in different basic attitudes to knowledge and instruction in society.

As language is viewed as the symbolic code that underlies communication (Haslett, 1989), it follows that communication is the use of language to create and maintain human relationships and the function of a variety of cultural practices is to permit and to facilitate language acquisition.

Therefore, innate, cognitive, and social factors play complex, interactive roles in language acquisition. For different cultures, the balance of innate, cognitive, and social factors may vary and the variability of communicative and social practices across different cultures is such that one can only generalize on very broad principles. Principles, such as communication, have four general purposes: that is, firstly, to express thoughts and desires; secondly, to establish communion with others; thirdly, to share knowledge; and fourthly, to mark status and social identity and to maintain face.

In her analysis of communicative development, Haslett (1984) stresses the importance of social knowledge. This social knowledge involves knowledge of self, knowledge of others, and knowledge of situations. The main underlying criterion for judgments about communicative practices depends upon standards for competent communication; that is, in any given situation, who has the specific types of information, to whom they convey it, and under what circumstances, may be quite different across cultures. The one feature of communicative competence that can be assumed across all cultures is the fact that the individuals are being cooperative in Grice's (1975) sense of cooperation. That is,  the cooperative communicator makes his/her contributions, as and when needed, according to the social purposes of the interaction (Haslett in Ting-Toomey & Korzenny, 1989: 30). One assumes that whatever the message content may be, it is expressed

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in culturally understood and recognized ways. Haslett's enunciations draw the discussion into the issue of communicative competence.

## 3. 11 COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Sociolinguistics has emerged as a discipline which can provide insights into the bases of human conduct (Gumperz & Hymes, 1986: v-vi). The theoretical goal of the type of sociolinguistic investigation represented is illustrated by the notion of communicative competence which is 'the ability to perform' effectively in culturally significant settings. In the consideration of communicative competence, it is both the social and cultural knowledge that writers (and speakers) are presumed to have that enables them to use and interpret linguistic forms. Hymes (1974) augmented Chomsky's (1965) notion of linguistic competence with knowledge of appropriateness, occurrence and feasibility. In other words, Communicative competence entails everything to do with the use of language including the communicative dimensions in particular social settings. That is why social scientists have come to realize that linguistic data can be a means of studying behaviour that is independent of overly expressed attitudes. They have seen that many important questions of education, language change, and policy cannot be solved without recourse to information on the sociocultural factors.

An attempt is being made to distinguish between what an individual's inherent capacities are and how he behaves in particular instances (Gumperz & Hymes, 1986: vii). Connected to this is the notion of linguistic competence that leads to cognition which has made significant contributions to the understanding of human learning. Bachman (1990: 107) says

> communicative language ability consists of language competence, strategic competence and psycho-physiological mechanisms. Language competence includes organizational competence, which consists of grammatical and textual competence, and pragmatic competence which consists of illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence. Strategic competence is seen as the capacity that relates language competence or knowledge of language, to the language user's knowledge structures and the features of the context in which communication takes place. Strategic competence performs assessment, planning and execution functions in determining the most effective means of achieving a communicative goal. Psycho-physiological mechanisms involved in language use characterize the channel (auditory, visual) and mode (receptive, productive) in which competence is implemented.

Bernstein (in Gumperz, 1986: 22) points out to the fact that, the key to the acquisition and maintenance of different patterns is the socialization process. While basic grammatical competence is innate, the network of social relationships in which the individual interacts and the communicative tasks that these relations entail ultimately shape the way in which an individual uses language. Another noteworthy point to add on strategic competence, which comes from Bachman (1990: 85) is that it serves the function of picking the final option from among many possibilities on the wording, phrasing, and other productive and receptive means for negotiating meaning. Strategic competence, therefore, is the way language

is manipulated in order to meet communicative goals just as an eloquent writer may present an argument in such a way that s/he sways readers to his/her way of seeing things. Strategic competence, therefore, as put by Bachman (1990) is perceived as a set of general abilities that utilize all of the elements of language competence, and of psychomotor skills in the process of determining an individual's language. Therefore, the issue of communicative competence defines the extent to which  second language learners have to be enabled to use the resources of the English language effectively.

## 3. 12  ACQUIRING SECOND LANGUAGE IN SCHOOL

There is general agreement (UNESCO [1953]; Troike [1981] and Hakuta [1986]) that in all academic work in the preliminary phase or primary school (first year to fourth year in school) and beyond, it is most ideal to develop academic efficiency through a learner's first language while teaching the second language during other periods of the school day and this should be carried out through meaningful academic content. And with each succeeding grade, academic work expands the vocabulary, sociolinguistic and discourse dimensions of language to higher cognitive levels. In this connection, academic knowledge and conceptual development transfer from the first language to the second language. And that is why not developing academic skills in the first language to adequate levels is regarded as interruption, and postponing or interrupting academic

development is likely to promote academic failure. Appel and Muysken (1990: 105) put it thus:

> …children can reach high levels of competence in their second language if their first language development, especially usage of certain functions of language relevant to schooling and the development of vocabulary and concepts, is strongly promoted by their environment. The high level of proficiency in the first language makes possible a similar level in the second language. On the other hand, when skills in the first language are not well developed and education in the early years is completely in the second language then the further development of the first language will be delayed. In turn this will have a limiting effect on second language acquisition.

As pointed out in 3.8 above, there are sociocultural processes that might be at work in the second language acquisition arena which may include individual student variables such as self-esteem or anxiety, motivation or other affective factors. In addition, the linguistic processes consist of the subconscious aspects of language development (an innate ability all humans possess for the acquisition of oral language), as well as the metalinguistic, conscious, formal learning of language in an academic context, and acquisition of the written system of language. This includes the acquisition of the oral and written systems of the student's first and second languages across all language domains, such as phonology, vocabulary, morphology and syntax (the grammar system), semantics (meaning), pragmatics (the context of language use), and discourse (formal thought patterns).

In learning their first language, individuals are also learning about the culture of which that language is a constitutive part (Gee, 2005). This basically implies that every member in a given community/language/cultural group assimilates individual social experiences characteristic of his/her own culture. This is because these experiences are inhered in statements that obtain their communicative significance through interpretation. It follows then, that second language learners have to relate the above-mentioned to their writing tasks because second language learning is also second culture learning.

Rodby (1990: 50) embraces a kaleidoscopic notion of self for second language learners. As kaleidoscopic 'involves notions of the definitions of the self, the definition of literacy and the relationship between the two', it is the ideal way of looking at oneself in a second culture learning situation. The learner has to continually reform "old material" and make "something new" and the something new must involve texts as well as the interactions themselves. In this perspective of English language writing (Rodby, 1990), the subject is a self that does not belong to a single fixed culture, a single language group, but is a self, that acts and reflects within a world language.

For Kgamphe (2003: 2) argues that

> In these modern times education is more than reading, writing and mathematics, it must accommodate universal values and informed decision making, the things that are learnt and how learning occurs are as important as access to education. The indicators of quality education include, a reasonable understanding of the past, relevance to the present and a view for the future. It provides the

tools to transform societies and allows each learner to build her/his own knowledge by combining indigenous and external knowledge to form new knowledge on a daily basis.

And to sum it all, Kenway and Modra (1992: 163), see reflective dialogue as the 'goal of pedagogy and not the condition for it'.  For not only is reflexive dialogue geared towards enlarging, but also complicating and/or challenging learners' experiences and what they believe in, with a possibility for alternative perspectives, rival hypotheses and expanded visions of values and priorities.

## 3. 13 OPEN AND CLOSED ROLE SYSTEMS

Edelsky (1995: 94) states that one of the uses of literacy is for 'learning how knowledge and interpretations are constructed' as one of the major functions of schools/universities for second language education, is to help learners to become familiar with the use of an elaborated code for both learning and self-expression by providing practice in this use. Bernstein (1982: 476) traces code preference to cultural and sub cultural patterns:

> A restricted code will arise where the form of social relation is based upon closely shared identifications, upon an extensive range of shared expectations, upon a range of common assumptions. Thus a restricted code emerges where the culture or subculture raises the "we" above "I". An elaborated code will arise wherever the culture or subculture emphasizes the "I" over the "we".

And societies have either open or closed role systems that have major influence on second language education. This is because there are crucial intrasocietal differences in social relationships and role systems, and these

give rise to different linguistic codes and differences in role perception. Bernstein (in Gumperz & Hymes, 1986: 465) has given some elaborations on the significance of 'closed or positional family role systems' and 'open role systems'. Closed systems emphasize communal values stressing status distinctions and propriety in speech and lead to 'restricted codes' which is a way of language usage which is highly formulaic. But open or person –oriented role systems emphasize individual creativity and the ability to 'take the role of the other'. Open or person-oriented systems lead to elaborated codes and these are more suited to the transmission of new information and they are more disposed to the creation of new situations.

Bernstein's (in Gumperz and Hymes, 1986: 467) distinction between elaborated code and restricted code, context is a major control upon syntactic and lexical selection. In this theory, the properties of social systems in the division of labour, belief, type of solidarity, family roles and modes of social control are linked and maintained (or changed). Each type of coding is supposed to be perceived as appropriate to the social matrix that gives rise to it. Restricted code use relies heavily on a limited range of alternates within a repertoire of speech forms that are determined by previous learning and they are shared by same cultural background, home, ethnic identity, intellectual interests and so on.

In elaborated code use, a much greater amount of attitudinal information is expressed explicitly through both written and verbal means and the devices that account for the explicitness are incorporated in the educational systems to facilitate accessibility by every learner regardless of home background. The elaborated code is more suitable for cross-cultural communication (Gumperz, 1986). Students, who are used to predominantly restricted coding (that is those who have not had much practice in elaborated code use), tend to experience difficulty in acquiring an elaborated code especially when exposed to it much later such as at the university level. A restricted code tends to have less articulatory clues which results in the meanings being discontinuous, condensed, and local and, because of this, they involve a low level of syntactic and vocabulary selection and the meaning of the person is implicit rather than being explicit whether in the written or oral mode. The restricted code use emanates from the fact that the form of social relationship is based upon closely shared identifications, upon an extensive range of expectations, and upon a range of common assumptions (Bernstein in Gumperz, 1986: 476). Essentially, the restricted code may actually block the acquisition of the elaborated code. On this note of restricted code and shared identifications and assumptions, the discussion now turns to writing, reading and content learning.

## 3. 14 WRITING, READING AND CONTENT LEARNING

Constructivist theory as well as research (Spivey, 1990) points to the fact that writing and reading are both meaning-making activities for while readers and writers are interacting with text, they are involved in a reciprocal making meaning. This is because writers and readers use similar kinds of knowledge in the act of making their meanings. For instance, writing and reading both require knowledge about language, knowledge about content, knowledge about genre conventions, knowledge about organization and structure, knowledge of pragmatics and, in this case, about the appropriate use of other kinds of knowledge in relation to the argument). The kind of knowledge may include knowledge, such as informational knowledge; structural knowledge; transactional knowledge; aesthetic knowledge; process knowledge; and knowledge of purpose (Flower, 1988). Moreover, the work on writing and reading processes indicates that writing and reading are deeply related activities of language and thought that take shape in learners through use. Over an extended period of practice, learners may begin to appropriate literary techniques and begin to look to their environments and situations for ideas that might influence them in their writing. And this is why the issue of literary study has to be carefully planned for low proficient students of English.

It has been noted from studies that examine how writers create new texts of their own from multiple sources, that they often include texts that they

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are reading at that particular time as well as their own prior knowledge. In this regard, writers and readers transform texts (Spivey, 1990) through the constructive tasks of selecting, connecting and organizing information from source texts and prior knowledge. This incorporation of prior knowledge, which Stein (1990: 146) refers to as elaboration, is the cognitive process that is 'the principle means by which information from memory is combined with source text material in the reading process'. In other words, the elaboration during reading creates a 'pool of ideas from which to draw during the writing process'.

Moreover, Langer and Flihan's (2000) research into the interrelationship between writing and reading have highlighted ways in which these relationships may affect learning and inform instruction, and because of the social dimensions of writing and reading, theory and research have began to move towards contextualised practice within real life situations, such as real situations within a school or university. Writing instruction should prepare students for "life" in the "real world," and "life" is defined as activity, and "real world" as context for that activity. Thus an individual learner should be perceived in his/her specific context where s/he is making use of writing and reading for purposes that have social and interpersonal meaning. From personal experience as a second language learner and as a facilitator of English language, certain relationships between writing and reading have become obvious. Generally, learners, who write well also

read well and those who do not read well, do not, generally, write well. And to reinforce the interrelationship even further, Stotsky (1983: 636) in her correlation studies points out that

> Better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material), that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers.

Therefore, whether the process is referred to as reading to write (Flower, 1990; Stein, 1990) or composing from sources (Spivey, 1990; McGinley, 1992), the readers/writers are involved in the simultaneous processes of writing and reading and reading and writing, and, the boundaries between writing and reading become blurred. Spivey (1990: 258) asserts that 'we often cannot say whether a writer performs a certain operation to make meaning *of* the text that is read or to make meaning *for* the text that is being written'. From the research information of Graves and Hansen (1983), Clay (1985), Shanahan and Lomax (1986), it is clear that successful instruction in reading and writing should begin as early as possible, as writing and reading are best learned when instruction in reading and writing are done together and not in isolation from each other. According to Hanson *et al. (*1991: 58), reading and writing 'intersect in natural ways when literate persons are actively using reading and writing to learn'. These researchers argue that the more frequent and extended opportunities students are given to read and write, the better their performance becomes especially when they are exposed to a body of texts

that represent a variety of genres, topics and styles. One such genre in this category is discursive writing.

## 3. 15 DISCURSIVE WRITING

The writer who is aiming at making his/her readers understand his/her point of view assumes that the reader has prior knowledge or understanding of the issue and his/her task is to convince the reader that the writer's view is the right one and is justified through leading them in a rationalised analysis of the particular issue. This is called "discursive" writing. Ideally, all the writing that is included in school and university should be discursive. Discursive writing trains the learner's mind to engage in systematic analysis and to form opinions, and finally to draw conclusions from reasoning and not from whims. This entails running back and forth over an issue until it is completely understood. The steps one follows in analysing an issue or topic and then giving expression in an orderly manner, the judgements one has arrived at finds expression through argument writing.

Discursive writing is obviously one of the standard genres that second language students are expected to demonstrate communicative competence in and in this type of writing, learners are expected to take a position on an issue. Thus, the rubrics developed for judging students' writing have to be based on the means or the sources of persuasion, the language, and the way the various parts are arranged for effective

treatment of the introduction, the argument and the conclusion. The rubric has been found to be powerful predictors of writing quality in any sample of discursive essays in such fields as law, science, the arts, business management and so on. This is so because the analysis of discursive writing shows how warrants (shared values or premises) determine the development of an argument. The qualifiers take the form of modal qualifiers, such as "necessarily", "certainly", "very likely", and "maybe".

Both university and high school learners can benefit from learning the structure and sequence of discursive writing development. At graduate-level and in advanced classes, learners may be enabled to master discursive writing in specific disciplines in order to build valid arguments and claims that are worth making and with data that are appropriate and accurate. In other words, thesis development in the writing of argument is an extremely crucial factor as it marks the central idea around which the argument revolves. The rest of the argument defines and elaborates the ideas that support the chosen thesis statement.

A text is composed of two parts: propositional content and metadiscourse features. Metadiscourse features are those facets of a text which make the organization of the text explicit, provide information about the writer's attitude toward the text content, and engage the reader in the interaction. The concept of audience is essential to the creation of text and the

generation of meaning. It is also crucial to point out that every writer writes meticulously for an audience/reader. and learners have to be acculturated to a particular discourse community.

Connor (1996: 64) states that for one to make an argument in Aristotle's day, there were three aspects for study. That is, the means or the sources of persuasion, the language, and the way the various parts are arranged for effective treatment. The various sources of persuasion or the means formed the fundamental background for the strategies on which the appeals were built. Connor underscores the fact that the language of argument has to be carefully chosen because word choice is crucial, just as crucial as the structural arrangement. She points out that what has to be done in the introduction is to state one's case so that the point to be judged is clear to one's readers (listeners). In the final part, the writer (speaker) summarizes the argument that has been presented, to prove his/her case. Thus, a well-organized argument consists of: an introduction, an argument and a synopsis or epilogue.

Writing is a provoked activity: it is located in ongoing social life. Therefore, student writing has to be directed at a tangible audience/reader. The imperative that students write argument essays stems from the fact that some information is available, and this information has alternative positions that can both be considered as plausible. In this situation, the argument is

dealt with merit easily in the context of content-based units. Argument can be looked at from two levels. At one level, it is a way of making knowledge for oneself and at another level a way of making knowledge available to others and not just to oneself only. For where there is much desire to learn, there will, of necessity, be much arguing, much writing, and a large number of opinions expressed. It is noteworthy here that so much of literature and art relies on non-discursive devices. This suggests that elaborated codes are not always the most effective means of communicating this kind of knowledge.

## 3. 16 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

As soon as second language writing is examined in its broader communicative context, linguistics needs to be synthesized with insights from other disciplines. This certainly applies to the linguistics of second culture communication. The sociocultural approach to literacy suggests that writing, whether in the first or second language, is a complex social practice learned through dialogic communication and apprenticeship into literate discourse communities. The summary of the review recognizes the pivotal role played by cultural values and beliefs in the development of the second language writer's self. It is essential to note the way in which cultural value systems influence discourse patterns and promote the different communicative styles. In this regard, the literature review has highlighted the significance of Hofstede's (1986) sociocultural parameters:

truth, harmony, uncertainty avoidance, consequences of power distance and collectivistic tendencies as being useful because they facilitate an understanding of the variation in

Another noteworthy point comes from Grabe and Kaplan (1996), who argue that facilitators of second language learning communicative behaviour. Second language learning strategies are also important, because they provide the means by which students can act on language materials in order to acquire skills. Language learning strategies would be expected to develop from prior experience, and clearly would have a motivational basis. generally and of writing in particular need not only offer the learner support and encouragement but must also serve as master craftsmen (and women) to whom the learner is apprenticed. Grabe and Kaplan's point has implications for teacher training in learning context. The learner may then, over time, become a functioning member of a community in which the literate discourse function serves a real and viable purpose.

The issue of master craftsmen (and women) is significant to this research project in three crucial aspects. First, it is crucial to Vygotsky's (1978: 78) notion of 'zone of proximal development' which is defined as the distance between a novice's (learner's) actual developmental level as determined by independent solving and the higher level of 'potential development as determined through problem solving in collaboration with more capable

peers'. Second, it is crucial at the level of scaffold learning or help. And the third is internalisation. And these significations can only be given expression through the qualitative research design (the next chapter) as this design facilitates the description of what is obtainable in the context and in the performance.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# THE ANALYSIS

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The foregoing chapters lead to the conclusion that a general theory of the interaction of language and social life must encompass the multiple relations between linguistic meaning and social meaning. The language relations within a particular community or personal repertoire of communicators are an empirical problem, calling for a mode of description that is partly ethnographic and partly linguistic, conceiving ways of writing [or speaking] as aspects among the community's set of symbolic forms (Hymes, 1977: 31). In this context, social and grammatical structures can be firmly established as objects of qualitative inquiry. Any consideration of qualitative analysis in the study of human life establishes a domain of study that carries a methodology that is at once rigorous and didactic in terms methodological lessons to be learnt. These lessons are those of validity, in the sense of structure, and validity, in the sense of function.

For an analyst to make a decision on a worthy communicative function, necessitates delving into the communicative repertoire of a community, for this is essential to any consideration of style. Considering style inevitably involves a consideration of styles. In this way, a student is considered not as having grammatical ability only, but also a writing repertoire. And in this study, the writing repertoire is considered to exist in both Mother Tongue and the second language (English). The principle of functional relevance raises questions of differences in the occasion of use by which the styles in

the students' repertoires can be described as contrasting or converging and the dimensions underlying the differences or similarities come into focus. The analyst thus inevitably becomes engaged in a study of second language that is inseparable from a study of social life in which quantitative differences are inseparable from qualitative effects. This is when the study becomes multi-disciplinary because it involves anthropological or psychology or even sociological components. This sort of study of language is important for it is concerned with language use not only in the community but also at secondary and tertiary levels of education.

Research into questions of application of knowledge is fundamental as practical needs and theoretical challenges coincide. Therefore, this chapter amplifies the mode of investigation for this research project. A description of qualitative research as well as the rationale for the case study design follows. The chapter also includes brief discussion on discourse analysis; the participants; the methods of data collection and data analysis; and the presentation of the results of the analysis.

## 4. 2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative research has grown out of different disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and psychology (Ertmer in Leedy, 1997: 156). Researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; McMillan & Schumacher, 1993; Mouton & Prozesky, 2001 and As de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport,

2002) agree that qualitative research is based on a premise that views reality as being multifaceted and interactive while the shared social experiences are continuously being interpreted by individuals. McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 373) underscore the fact that in qualitative research

> …most descriptions and interpretations are conveyed in words rather than numbers, although numerical data may be used to elaborate the findings identified in a qualitative analysis.

These theorists go on to amplify this statement by noting that qualitative research is concerned with understanding the phenomena in question. And this understanding is acquired by analyzing the many contexts of the participants, and by narrating the participants' meanings for the situations and events, including participants' meanings, feelings, beliefs and ideals. Mouton (2001: 270) summarizes the key features of qualitative research as:

1) Research conducted in the natural setting of social actors;

2) Research that focuses on process rather than outcome;

3) Research that puts emphasis on the actor's perspective (the "insider" or "emic" view);

4) Research, the primary aim of which is in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events;

5) Research, the main concern of which is to understand social action in terms of its specific context (idiographic motive) rather than attempting to generalize to some theoretical population;

6) Research that is often inductive in approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories.

Qualitative research acknowledges that there are multiple ways of interpreting the different phenomena of the world, and the qualitative research paradigm focuses on discovering the different types of meaning. It is therefore considered effective for studying attitudes and behaviours that are best understood within their natural settings, for instance, texts as written by the students who are the object of the research within their social setting (the learning environment), and data as collected through sustained contact with students where they normally spend their academic time. In this mode of research, the data collected has been analyzed inductively through the abstractions that have been built from the particulars that have been gathered.

One of the advantages of qualitative research is that data analysis can be carried out through document analysis. Therefore, qualitative research has been found to be appropriate as it facilitates firstly, the description of deductions made from the conceptual and theoretical framework (Chapter Two) and those from the literature reviewed (Chapter Three). Secondly, it allows for the description of students' linguistic behaviour in the context of their texts; thirdly, it enables deductions to be made from the first language questions; fourthly, it incorporates the presentation and description of the

results from the two questionnaires for the sociocultural learning context; and finally, it permits a presentation of an intervention strategy. Thus, the study has been discovery oriented (qualitative) and grounded in practice (empirical). And in this instance, the qualitative research method has been complemented by the case study design that is the subject of the next sub-section.

## 4. 3 CASE STUDY

The case study is one of the more common qualitative designs (Ertmer in Leedy, 1997: 156). As the design has been used in both L1 and L2 writing and reading processes, it was found to be appropriate for the examination of the written interactions of selected Univen students. Cresswell (1994: 12) states that case studies are a type of qualitative research in which the researcher

> …explores a single entity or phenomenon ("the case") bounded by time, an activity (a programme, event, process, institution or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection methods during a sustained period of time.

Johnson (1992: 83) argues for the flexibility of the case study methodology as it can be formulated to suit the purpose of a given study; and she adds that case studies are most often primarily qualitative, although they could involve the quantification of some information. One of the key points that Johnson makes, that is relevant to the present research project, is the fact that 'they [case studies] are usually primarily naturalistic, relying on the

collection of naturally occurring data'. In addition, various procedures can be used to elicit data and she adds that 'case studies are usually descriptive in that they describe phenomena, or they may go beyond description to contextual or cultural interpretation'(ibid.). A crucial approach that has served for rigor in this particular case study is the use of multiple sources of data for triangulation purposes.

Thus, from Johnson's (1992), McMillan and Schumacher's (1993), Cresswell (1994), and Mouton's (2001) pronouncements, deductions can be made that human actions are strongly influenced by the settings in which they occur, and the interaction of the unit of study with its context is a significant part of the investigation. Mouton (2001: 281) states that 'case studies take multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects' perspectives and behaviours'. The unit of analysis in case study research is always likely to be affected by factors in the environment in which the person is embedded, and this is why the researcher has to describe the sociocultural context in detail. This description helps in the understanding of the links to the abstractions drawn from the students' responses. The role of conceptualization in a case study research like this one was crucial as the building of the framework is anchored in a combination of the conceptual and theoretical framework to literature reviewed and the researcher's experience. Almost any phenomenon can be examined by means of a case

study method.  The cases in a case study can be defined in terms of people. Others have defined "cases" in terms of entire communities. What is important, is the study of the phenomenon of each "case" in the natural context.

Therefore, a case study was deemed suitable for the present research project and was conducted in order to shed light on the phenomenon of the sociocultural influences in selected second language writing efforts of Univen students. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996: 549) state that researchers generally do case studies to produce detailed descriptions of a phenomenon and to evaluate it so as to facilitate the development of possible explanations for it. In this connection, the researcher has typically spent an extended period of time on site with the research participants, watching students (learners) in their own territory and interacting with them on their own terms (Gall *et al.*, 1996: 547). In this way, the researcher has become personally involved with the people and the phenomenon being studied, which involvement has been integral to the methodology. The next sub-section expands on methodology, adopted for the study.

## 4. 4 METHODOLOGY

Any method of research is a way to investigate some particular domain. In this case, the domain is language-in-use at Univen in the sociocultural context of the Vhembe District. The theory is about the nature of language-

in-use and it is also about "method" of research. A method is, basically, sets of "thinking devices". As such, method and theory cannot be separated. Gee (1999: 40) has identified tools of inquiry with which to study discourse in Discourses (that is, written texts in a sociocultural context and this means the investigation is about language, culture, and institutions). The tool for this study is discourse analysis which is based in language studies.

## 4.4.1 Discourse Analysis

There is an inbuilt connection between "meaning" and communication, for before any words that are put together can be recognized as language or communication, they have to embody meaning. Thus meaning becomes or seems to be the most central feature of language. The concept of "to mean" may be understood in a variety of ways that are, nevertheless, related, but how they are related becomes complex and controversial. Since this thesis is on the realization of meaning during writing interaction, the narrative examines the notion of linguistic meaning as it relates to discourse analysis. In this regard, Gee (2005: 52) starts with the "word" level as the point of entry for the discussion of meaning. The assertion that words have meaning sounds simple and straightforward enough. However, words are not objects that can have properties of their own.

The most important point to note is that, according to Gee (2005: 53) meanings of words in actual usage, are not general, but that they have

different meanings in different contexts and that they are integrally linked to and vary across varied social and cultural groupings. Therefore meaningful communication between participants occurs because there is some agreement at some level as to what a particular word means in a particular context. Thus a discourse analyst can engage meaning at a general level of correlations between form (structural) and function (meaning) in language. Linguists use "form" to designate structural aspects of language: such as nouns and verbs, types of phrases, such as noun phrases and so on; types of clauses, such as independent and dependent clauses. And they use the word "function" for the sorts of meanings a given form can perform (communicate), or the sorts of interactional work (purposes) it can accomplish (Gee, 2005: 54). Specific structures or forms in a language are used as tools to carry out certain functions, that is, to express certain meanings or to accomplish certain purposes. This is referred to as the form-function analysis.

Discourse analysis (henceforth referred to as DA) usually focuses on the language (semiotic) aspect but all the aspects in the situation network are integrally intertwined. Gumperz (1986) has stated that any piece of written language is composed of a set of grammatical cues or clues that help writers/readers (in negotiating and collaborating with others in an interaction) to build the six things that are mentioned below as these things are interlinked "representations", that is "re-presents". Utterances are made

up of cues or clues so as to move back and forth between language and context (situations), not signals of fixed or decontextualized meanings. These cues or clues are part and parcel of "grammar one" and "grammar two"(Gee, 1999: 85; 2005: 98) and people are either interpreters on the scene or are analysts in the six building tasks listed below that are also the components of any given situation:

1. Significance: how and what  different things mean, because language is used build significance in certain ways

2. World building, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what is here and now (taken as) present and absent, or concrete and abstract, "real" and "unreal," probable, possible, and impossible.

3. Activity building, that is, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what activity or activities are going on, composed of what specific actions.

4. Socioculturally-situated identity and relationship building, using cues or clues to assemble situated meanings about what identities and relationships are relevant to the interaction, with their concomitant attitudes, values, ways of feeling, ways of knowing and behaving, as well as ways of acting and interacting.

5. Political building, that is, using cues or clues to construct the nature and relevance of various "social goods," such as status and power, and anything else taken as a "social good" here and now (for

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example, beauty, humour, verbalness, specialist knowledge, a fancy car and so on).

6. Connection building, that is, using cues or clues to make assumptions about how the past and future of an interaction, verbally and non-verbally, are connected to the present moment and to each other – after all, interactions always have some degree of continuous coherence (Gee, 1999: 86).

Different grammatical devices contribute differently to the above six tasks and many devices contribute to more than one at the same time. The six tasks are the work that is done with language so as to construct or construe a situation in certain ways and not in other ways. Cues or clues in language use help in assembling specific situated meanings through which the six building tasks are accomplished. As a consequence, these situated meanings activate certain cultural models, and not others. The social languages, situated meanings, and cultural models allow individuals to enact and recognize different Discourses at work and every human being has control of an array of social languages (Discourses) and is able to switch among them when the situations demand it. Very often social languages demand a mixing (or hybridization) of uses in complex ways for specific purposes and this mixing is due to the fact that social languages are not "pure" as different social languages use grammar in different ways as a resource for the six building tasks above.

Gee (2005: 38) gives the example of a young woman who talks to her parents and then to her boyfriend on the same subject in two different social languages. In doing this, Gee is giving an illustration of how social languages can be varied depending on the context, participants and the relationship(s) shared. To parents, one might say "well when I thought about it, I don't know, it seemed to me that Gregory should be the most offensive", and when talking to a boyfriend one might say "what an ass that guy was, you know, her boyfriend".

As illustrated by the cues and clues to the two sets of listeners, what the speaker says is in two different social languages. When talking to one's parents, the patterning of speech could be that of a preliminary clause that shows that the speaker has been reflective about the whole subject ("when I thought about it"); the patterning is also coupled with mitigators ("I don't know," …"seemed to me"); complex subordinating syntax (when-clause, it seems that construction). In addition, the repeated reference to self (I, me) act as a careful claimer/knower. According to Gee (1999), the social language here is shrouded in cues for deference, respect, school-based learning, reflection, attention to knowledge and claims. When it comes to talking to the boyfriend, the same person starts with an exclamation ("what an ass") which is a mark of informal vocabulary (ass, guy); in fact, this could be taken as vulgar language in certain circles. The speaker also establishes attention to the hearer ("you know"). Moreover, in the social

language to a boyfriend, there is a move towards solidarity, informality, participatory communicative attention to same values and a focus on the social world and not the self. And all this is conveyed through the cues and clues of grammar two.

The fact is, DA is based on the details of writing that are deemed relevant in the situation and that are relevant to the arguments the analyst is attempting to make. Judgment of relevance (what is included and what is not) are ultimately theoretical judgments, that are based on the analyst's theories of how language, situations, and interactions work in general and in the specific situation being analyzed (Gee, 2005: 56). The basic fact is that language is a tool that is used for a number of different purposes (and not just one), as such specific structures or forms in language are used to carry out certain functions (that is, to express certain meanings or accomplish certain purposes). A distinction can be made between form and function for language just as much as it can be made for any implement that one uses in particular situations. All approaches to DA, in their consideration of form, extend beyond grammatical structures to consider structures or patterns across sentences (Gee 2005: 55). For example, subject position (a form) in **a declarative sentence** is a **grammatical** structure that expresses the **topic** (a function) of the sentence, which names the entity about which a claim is being made and in terms of which the claim should be disputed. A **conjunction** or **conjunctive phrase,** such

as "but" or "on the other hand", which can begin a second sentence is a form that can set up a **contrast** (a function) in meaning between two topics. There are also conjunctive adverbs, such as then, "thus", "therefore", "nevertheless", "hence", "although", "furthermore", "moreover", " however" and so on.

In addition, the meanings with which forms are correlated are rather general (meanings, such as "assertion", "taken for granted information," contrast, and so on). In reality, they represent only the *meaning potential* or *meaning range* of a form or structure. In this analysis, grammatical and cross-sentence patterns are taken into consideration. Furthermore, discourse analysis can also be referred to as the analysis of language as it is used to enact activities, perspectives and identities. DA seeks to balance talk about the mind, talk about interaction and activities, and talk about society and institutions. In effect, the minds, bodies, interactions, social groups, and institutions all have to be in a cauldron together.

In DA, situated meanings do not simply reside in individual minds; they are often negotiated between and among people in and through communicative social interaction (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Cultural models embody explanations that are always relative to the standards of the group and it is this fact that makes a lot of sense for the sociocultural influence as these cultural models are not, in absolute terms, stored in any

one person's head. They are distributed across the different sorts of "expertise" and viewpoints found in the group (Hutchins, 1995; Shore, 1996). To drive the concept of cultural models home, Gee (1999) pertinently likens them to a plot of a story or pieces of a puzzle that different people have different bits to and the different bits can potentially be shared in order to mutually develop the "big picture". The cultural models are also linked to one another in complex ways for the creation of greater and even greater storylines. Such linked networks of cultural models help organize the thinking and social practices of sociocultural groups.

It follows, therefore, that there is mutual reciprocity between language and "reality". Language simultaneously reflects reality (that is, the way things are) and constructs (construes) it to be a certain way. This is the reason for the human mind's inclination towards working well with relevant situations, practices and experiences. Although "reciprocity" can as well be used for this property of language, the more accurate term is "reflexivity" (in the sense of language and context being likened to two mirrors facing each other as they constantly and endlessly reflect their own images back and forth between each other). Language, then, always simultaneously reflects and constructs the situation or context in which it is used and discourse analysis recognizes the significance of social and physical context as well as, most significantly, the role of prior texts in constituting meaning. The

socio-historical forces shape written texts and these forces manifest themselves consistently in the writing of second language learners. This is why Slembrouck (in Mouton, 2001: 495) describes discourse analysis as being: (1) concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence or utterance; (2) concerned with the interrelationships between language and society; and (3) as concerned with the interactive or dialogue properties of everyday communication. The above outlined elements, render DA relevant to the evaluation of students' writing in a sociocultural context.

## 4. 4. 2 Participants

The participants were students registered in the undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes of Univen, namely: 2003 First Year students **(English S1-S5)**; 2003 Second Year students (**English S6-S10**); 2003 Third Year students (**English S11- S15**); 2005 Foundation students **(English S16-S30)**; 2005 Honours (**English S31-S35**); and 2005 Honours (**Geography G1-G10**). Altogether forty-five students participated in the study covering all the levels from foundation to the honours programme. The rationale for this inclusiveness is that: the foundation year responses represented the overall proficiency of final phase high school students at the point of entering university. The 2003 first year to honours year responses illustrate the progression trend in English as a subject. The honours prompt is different when considered through its surface structure

but the underlying rationale is discursive writing which is the same as the prompt for the other three levels. The Geography honours responses act as a control sample since these are in another discipline, but also serve to monitor and evaluate discursive writing ability in English. As far as this study is concerned, Geography is representative of the other content disciplines, the responses of which serve to illustrate competence and performance in a discipline other than English.

The texts from the English Department were all administered as assignments to be handed in after two weeks as part of  continuous assessment. The researcher administered the prompts to the English foundation year, first year and honours students. The second and third year prompts were given to colleagues who were normally involved with those students. This was to facilitate the normal run of activities and not cause undue anxiety among the students. The Geography honours responses were obtained directly from the examinations section. There was no sampling involved with either the English department honours sample or the Geography department honours sample, because the five and ten cases, respectively, constituted whole classes of students in this category; and so they all inevitably became participants.

For the 2003 participants as has already been pointed out, the number of students in the second and third year levels was very low as each level had

only five students. The numbers were low because this was the group that formed the sample English major. As a result, the figure became a determining factor in the number of participants to be included in the sample from the first year level. There were fifty students in the first year level and every tenth response was included from this group of students to match with the number from the second and third year groups. Thus, five from each level made a total of fifteen responses for close analysis.

## 4. 4. 3 Sample collection

Data gathered from the African Languages Department was in the form of Mother Tongue examination questions whereas from the geography and English departments, the data was in the form of sample essays (texts). Mother Tongue essays have not been included because it would have entailed translation into English which could distort the information. Therefore, the examination questions have been considered sufficient for the purposes of this research project. The main goal of including the Mother Tongue questions was to establish the transfer of skills from Mother Tongue to English in terms of the kind of questions featuring.

The total sample texts were the written products of the Univen students from the Departments of English and Geography, as already noted. The thirty-five (S1-S35) texts from the Department of English were written as part of continuous assessment, as already pointed out above. The forty-five

responses in all were considered to be sufficient for the purpose of the study as both the qualitative research and case study design can cover a case, a phenomenon or an event (as noted earlier in this chapter). In addition, the researcher has been involved with Univen students for more than seven years prompted her not to over-extend the sample. Given the idiosyncratic nature of the writing of the students, a larger sample would not have made any significant difference to the results.

The ten texts from the Department of Geography (written in an Honours examination of 2005) were from the students who were in second year in 2003 and therefore have a link to the other sample texts in terms of the relevance of the period covered. The examination setting at this level is perceived as an instance where students demonstrate their overall accumulated competence and performance, because of the level at which they are operating and the fact that it is an examination setting, it is regarded as crucial to their lives and this sample group were, therefore, considered to be performing at their best. The student text samples featured as case study samples on writing for a hands-on document analysis and afforded a window to the sociocultural influence on writing. This type of communication in English should be seen in its real terms of facilitating interaction across a wide range of disciplines at Univen and facilitating communication in a variety of other situations too.

Since the study was both empirical and exploratory, the other device and procedure for collecting data entailed a close discernment of the conceptual and theoretical framework; literature reviewed; and document analysis. Univen Mother Tongue (L1) examination questions were included to establish crucial links to the sociocultural learning context in terms of the kind of questions posed and the proportion of discursive questions featuring in the examinations in order to facilitate deductions on the relevant skills transfer to second language writing.

## 4. 4. 4 Data Analysis

In the analysis, an attempt was made to establish the connection between form and function of Gee (1999, 2005) in discourse in conjunction with Hinkel's (1999: 94) objectivity and credibility markers to establish the students' levels of engagement in response to the prompts. Among the approaches for analysing case study data, given by Gall *et al.*, (as cited by Ertmer, 1997: 158), interpretational analysis was found to be relevant to this research project because it is about examining the data for constructs and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon studied. Interpretation has been complemented by reflective analysis, because of its relevance to the current study as reflection refers to using intuition and judgment in portraying and evaluating the object of the study. Therefore, the study is foregrounded in knowledge production in research. The review phase gives credence to abstractions that are drawn from

personal experience as well as from the document analysis of student essays and Mother Tongue questions.

## 4. 4. 4. 1 Evaluation and criteria

To facilitate the analysis of students' outputs, criteria consistent with the linguistic model underlying the writing package prompts were applied. At this level, the essence of successful writing lies in identifying the topic for the introduction for the English Department texts and for those from the Geography Department as well as the development of the texts and cohesion. These conditions require considerations of the use of objectivity and credibility conventions. A student writer's linguistic and rhetorical skills manifest through the way s/he organizes his/her text through the use of metadiscourse features. These features are the interpersonal resources that a writer uses to organize a discourse or his/her stance towards his/her content. Thus logical connectives, such as "however", "therefore" and the like; sequencing items, such as "first", "then", "next" and so on; and hedges like "might", "possibly" and "perhaps" are all part of the array of devices that are considered useful in processing written pieces. Since academic writing is interactive and rhetorical in nature, the writing can be seen to function in a way that offers a representation of the writer him/herself. In this way, the writing is a window to the sociocultural nature of influence, as already mentioned. The metadiscourse parameters to assist with the drawing of conclusions for the essays are shown in Table 4.1 below.

Hinkel's (1999) objectivity and credibility markers contribute to the conceptual and theoretical framework for data analysis in this research project.

**Table 4. 1:  Metadiscourse features and their purpose**

| CATEGORY                FUNCTION |
|---|
| **Textual Features** |
| *Connectives***: show the organization of text** ("however", "In the first place", "as mentioned", "speaking of", "although", "as a result") |
| *Elaboration/ explanation***: rephrase to ensure clarity of expression** ("for example", "for instance', "such as", "e.g.", "i.e.".) |
| *Illocutionary markers***: identify the purpose of the sentence or paragraph to follow** |
| *Validity markers***: encode writer's certainty about the truth of the content** ("in fact", "definitely", "it is clear that".) |
| **Interpersonal Features** |
| *Narrators***: provide the source of ideas and facts** ("according to", …"says") |
| *Attitude markers***: convey writer's feelings about content** ("unfortunately", "to agree", "surprisingly"). |
| *Commentaries***: address and engage reader more directly** ("consider", "note that", "you can see that"). |

Therefore, in order to establish the students' level of engagement in the activity of writing, their use of rhetorical objectivity devices and syntactic and referential markers was investigated. In this study, the devices and markers of objectivity and credibility that were employed were based on the presentation of discursive information for both Geography and English texts. The one group of rhetorical devices and constructs were identified

as: contradictions (and juxtapositions); and general rules (and generalizations). The other group were the syntactic and referential markers: that is, concessives (clauses and phrases); and amplifiers/emphatics. In other words, the rhetorical devices and constructs of Hinkel (1999) together with Intaraprawat and Steffenson's (1995) and Vande Kopple's (1997) features background the analysis.

The presentation of the results is carried out in two phases. The first phase is the tabular presentations of the results, while the second is the narrative discussion phase. The tabular presentation entailed the counting of the number of words each essay carried and a total was established. This was followed by the counting of occurrences of each of the rhetorical markers and syntactic and referential markers that appeared in the essays; and the total number of the markers per group was also established. To ascertain the percentage of usage of these markers, the computation was done which translated into, for example, for conjunctive relations 71/4177 =1.699% and then the same was done for the other occurrences. These were translated as medians. The computations were repeated separately for each of the rhetorical objectivity devices and syntactic markers for the sample essays.

## 4. 5 PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The presentation of the results is done in parts consisting of **4.5.1** (Mother Tongue examination questions QS1-23 – Appendix C); **4.5.2** (foundation, first, second, third, and Honours sample essays S1-S35  – Appendix D); **4.5.3** (Geography essays G1-10 – Appendix E); The intervention strategy that has come out as a result of all the activities in this research project is presented in appendix F. The presentation of results of 4. 5.1; 4. 5. 2 and 4. 5. 3 is given both in tabular and narrative discussion format. It was felt that these types of data are well disposed to both modes of presentation. A large number of the essays did not contain all the types. The results are presented in the tables below. In cases where the reported median is 0.00, this means that at least 99% of the essays on the topic did not have a particular objectivity marker. The L1 questions (QS1-23) have been condensed into a summarized table that illustrates the type of questions and this is complemented by narrative discussion. The analysis informs the sociocultural interpretation of Chapter Five that acts as a preface to the conclusion, strategy and recommendations of Chapter Six.

### 4. 5. 1 Mother Tongue questions

This section is organized around Univen Mother Tongue examination questions. The examination questions (QS1-QS23). In Table 4.5.1 above, are from Northern Sotho, Tshivenda and Xitsonga which are the Mother Tongues that form the Mathivha Institute for African Languages at the

University of Venda. Although there are three Mother Tongues represented here, in reality Tshivenda is the dominant language in communication in and around the university as well as in the Vhembe District as a whole. The questions have been included to facilitate the drawing of sociocultural explanations, that is, to establish the link for academic skills transfer to second language learning in general as the response papers are written by L1 candidates. However, the Mother Tongue responses to these questions have not been included in the study as this would have entailed translations and interpretations of responses from the three Mother Tongues into English which are beyond the scope of this research. Besides, translations would have resulted in some distortions of information of one kind or another. As such examination questions were considered sufficient for the purposes of this research.

**Table 4. 2: Mother Tongue questions**

| Type of questions | Question numbers |
|---|---|
| What (recall) | 1,20,21 |
| What (give & list) | 2,3,4,7,8,12,14,16 |
| What (recall & apply) | 6,9,10 |
| Discuss (recall & reproduce) | 11,13,15,17 |
| Agree or Disagree (recall & give one-sided support | 22,23 |
| What (recall & write notes) | 5 |
| What (recall & explain) | 18,19 |

**4. 5. 2 Sample essays (English Department)**

The second sample consisted of students' essays presented as Appendix D (S1-35). The essays were from first year (S1-S5), second year (S6-S10), third year (S11-S15), Foundation (S16-S30), and Honours (S31-35). The prompts for the English Department essays were adopted from Berrill (1990), because these were considered especially topical issues that were deemed culturally and socially appropriate to the Vhembe District and relevant for individual introspection. Every individual has a certain perspective about the issues contained in the prompts and therefore one expected to elicit personal opinions that are not necessarily derived from books. It was anticipated, however, that if the ideas came from sources other than the students' own, then the ideas would have been incorporated to reinforce what the students felt about the issues.

These prompts were given as part of continuous assessment work in line with the normal standard practices of Univen. Therefore, the students were given ample time in which to prepare and write their responses to the best of their abilities. The implication was that the students had time to discuss and consult with whomever they pleased in order to come up with the best responses they could offer. The sample essays were responses to the prompts: **1)** *In your opinion, should parents be able to control the lives of their children (13-21 years old?):* S1-S30; **2)** *In your opinion, is it better to complete one's higher education in South Africa or overseas?* S31-S35.

**Tables: 4. 3(a), 1-10; 4. 3(b) B 11-20; 4. 3(c) C 21-30;** and **4. 3(d), 31-35**

that follow, show the performance of the students in the use of the features

mentioned.

# Table 4. 3(a): Sample essays A 1-10 (1st and 2nd year

# English)

| SCRIPTS | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | TOTAL | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. of words** | **528** | **502** | **533** | **466** | **377** | **439** | **297** | **377** | **400** | **258** | **4177** | |
| **Devices** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Conjunctive relations | 15 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 71 | 1.699 |
| Elaborations | 2 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 9 | 0.023 |
| Narrators | 1 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 0.071 |
| Attitude markers | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.023 |
| Hedges | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.023 |
| Commentaries | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 | 0.047 |
| Validity markers | - | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 0.095 |
| Amplifiers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | |
| Proverbs | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | 0.095 |
| General rules | 6 | 2 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 13 | 0.311 |
| You/your/yours | - | 2 | - | 6 | | 15 | - | - | - | 1 | 24 | 0.574 |
| Should, can, would, will, shall, may, might, can | 17 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 13 | 5 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 7 | 91 | 2.178 |
| They, them, themselves, theirs | 18 | 26 | 54 | 45 | 19 | 17 | 17 | 20 | 38 | 10 | 263 | 6.296 |
| We, our, us, ourselves | 6 | 11 | - | - | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 33 | 0.790 |
| I, me, mine, my, myself | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | - | - | 16 | 0.383 |
| He/she, him/herself, his/hers | 2 | - | - | - | - | 6 | 12 | - | - | 7 | 29 | 0.694 |
| It, there | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Analogues | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |

**Table 4. 3(b): Sample essays B 11-20 (3$^{rd}$ and Foundation year English)**

| SCRIPTS | S 11 | S 12 | S 13 | S 14 | S 15 | S 16 | S 17 | S 18 | S 19 | S 20 | TOTAL | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. of words** | **271** | **331** | **433** | **638** | **503** | **382** | **424** | **356** | **440** | **392** | **4176** | |
| **Devices** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Conjunctive relations | 3 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 48 | 1.149 |
| Elaborations | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | 3 | 0.071 |
| Narrators | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 0.047 |
| Attitude markers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0.023 |
| Hedges | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 7 | - | 10 | 0.039 |
| Commentaries | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0.047 |
| Validity markers | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 6 | 0.0143 |
| Amplifiers | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 0.047 |
| Proverbs | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 3 | 5 | 0.119 |
| General rules | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 22 | 0.526 |
| You/your/yours | 14 | - | - | 10 | - | 2 | - | - | - | 6 | 32 | 0.766 |
| Should, can, would, will, shall, may, might, can | 12 | 9 | 7 | 17 | 11 | 19 | 22 | 9 | 25 | 9 | 140 | 3.352 |
| They, them, themselves, theirs | 26 | 29 | 24 | 56 | 40 | 44 | 35 | 22 | 29 | 19 | 324 | 7.758 |
| We, our, us, ourselves | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 4 | 3 | 27 | 39 | 0.933 |
| I, me, mine, my, myself | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 8 | - | 15 | 0.3859 |
| He/she, him/herself, his/hers | - | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 8 | 0.191 |
| It, there | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Analogues | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |

**Table 4. 3©: Sample essays C S21-S30 (Foundation year English contd.)**

| SCRIPTS | S21 | S22 | S23 | S24 | S25 | S26 | S27 | S28 | S29 | S30 | Total | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. of words** | **418** | **344** | **236** | **525** | **364** | **519** | **204** | **562** | **323** | **503** | **3998** | |
| **Devices** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Conjunctive relations | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 40 | 1.00 |
| Elaborations | - | 2 | - | 3 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 7 | 0.175 |
| Narrators | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 0.o5 |
| Attitude markers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |
| Hedges | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | 0,05 |
| Commentaries | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |
| Validity markers | - | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 0.05 |
| Amplifiers | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.02 |
| Proverbs | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | 0.05 |
| General rules | 2 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 4 | - | 14 | 0.35 |
| You/your/yours | 9 | - | 3 | - | 11 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 41 | 1.025 |
| Should, can, would, will, shall, may, might, can | 15 | 10 | 8 | 19 | 8 | 14 | 5 | 15 | 12 | 24 | 130 | 3.251 |
| They, them, themselves, theirs | 28 | 37 | 19 | 24 | 20 | 42 | 12 | 58 | 12 | 43 | 295 | 7.378 |
| We, our, us, ourselves | - | - | 10 | 3 | - | - | 9 | 1 | 30 | 3 | 56 | 1.405 |
| I, me, mine, my, myself | - | - | - | 4 | - | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 13 | 0.325 |
| He/she, him/herself, his/hers | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 4 | - | 11 | 0.325 |
| It, there | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |
| Analogues | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |

**Table 4. 3(d): Sample essays D S31-S35 (Honours level English)**

| SCRIPTS | S31 | S32 | S33 | S34 | S35 | TOTALS 21-35 | MEDIAN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of words | 463 | 404 | 337 | 240 | 460 | 5902 | |
| Devices | | | | | | | |
| Conjunctive relations | 13 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 53 | 0.898 |
| Elaborations | 3 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 12 | 0.203 |
| Narrators | 2 | - | - | - | - | 4 | 0.067 |
| Attitude markers | - | - | 2 | - | 2 | 4 | 0.067 |
| Hedges | 3 | - | 1 | - | - | 6 | 0.101 |
| Commentaries | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |
| Validity markers | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 0.050 |
| Amplifiers | 1 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 0.033 |
| Proverbs | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.016 |
| General rules | - | - | - | - | - | 16 | 0.271 |
| You/your/yours | - | 5 | 6 | 16 | - | 58 | 0.982 |
| Should, can, would, will, shall, may, might, can | 5 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 149 | 2.524 |
| They, them, themselves, theirs | - | - | 4 | 8 | 3 | 310 | 5.252 |
| We, our, us, ourselves | - | - | 1 | - | - | 56 | 0.948 |
| I, me, mine, my, myself | 2 | 1 | 3 | - | - | 17 | 0.288 |
| He/she, him/herself, his/hers | - | - | - | - | - | 11 | 0.18 |
| It, there | 3 | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | 0.06 |
| Analogues | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | 0.0 |

## 4. 5. 3 Sample essays (Geography Department)

The third data were sample examination essays from the Geography Department and they were  responses to the prompt: *Discuss the role Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) may play in our understanding of Environmental Conservation. (*Geography Honours G1-G10). To respond to the topic mentioned above, the essence of successful writing lies essentially in the overall *structure* of the students' sequences (texts), their

*development* and *cohesion*, and whether or not the texts were written in *appropriate* tense for the intended purpose. Therefore, from the prompt question, in addition to considering the use of discourse devices, texts progression criteria was also formulated to facilitate the evaluation of individual scripts (G1-10). **Tables 4. 4(a)** and **4. 4(b)** which follow, illustrate the performance of the students according to the overall text progression criteria and their use of rhetorical devices, respectively.

**Table 4. 4(a): essay progression according to criteria G1-G10 (Honours level Geography))**

| Estab. criteria | G1 | G2 | G3 | G4 | G5 | G6 | G7 | G8 | G9 | G10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic Intro.** | Yes definition of key term | Yes definition of key term | Yes definition of key term | Yes, definition of key term | Yes, though not so focused | Yes, not so focused | No Topic Intro. | No topic Intro. | Yes | Not approp. |
| **Text develop & correct verb forms** | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| **Text Cohesion** | No | Yes | Pam | Pam | No | No | No | Pam | No | No |
| **Text concluded** | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | Yes |

**KEY:**

**G1 = Students' responses 1-10**

**No = Did not meet criteria**

**Yes = Met criteria**

**Pam = Partially met criteria**

**Table 4. 4(b): Sample essays (use of devices) G1-G10 (honours level geography)**

| SCRIPTS | G1 | G2 | G3 | G4 | G5 | G6 | G7 | G8 | G9 | G10 | TOTAL | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of words | 508 | 735 | 510 | 390 | 445 | 499 | 569 | 531 | 560 | 602 | 5349 | |
| DEVICES | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Conjunctive relations | 9 | 14 | 14 | 7 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 15 | 10 | 13 | 101 | 1.888 |
| Elaborations | - | 5 | - | 4 | 3 | 6 | - | 4 | 4 | 4 | 42 | 0.785 |
| Narrators | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 6 | 0.112 |
| Attitude markers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Hedges | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | 0.018 |
| Commentaries | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Validity markers | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Amplifiers | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 5 | 10 | 0.186 |
| Proverbs | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| General rules | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| You | - | 11 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | - | 4 | - | 18 | 0.336 |
| Should, can, would, will, shall, may, might, can | 5 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 24 | 18 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 98 | 1.832 |
| They, them, themselves, theirs | 13 | 33 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 14 | 11 | 12 | 21 | 105 | 1.962 |
| We, our, us, ourselves | - | 14 | - | 5 | 5 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 42 | 0.785 |
| I, me, mine, my, myself | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.018 |
| He/she, him/herself, his/hers | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | - | 8 | 0.149 |
| It, there | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Analogues | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |

## 4. 6 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The narrative discussion is intended to complement and enrich the tabular

presentation in 4. 5 above by citing examples from the sample essays to

illustrate abstractions and deductions made. The narrative discussion follows the sequencing above.

### 4.6.1 Mother Tongue questions

**Table 4. 2** above on Mother Tongue examination questions show that argument does not feature sufficiently in the first languages to facilitate the transfer of the skill to English, the second or third language. Out of a total of twenty-three questions, only two questions are argument based and both are one-sided arguments from the Xitsonga examination paper. They are repeated here for ease of reference: QS22. Xirungulwana xa 'vusiwana i vuloyi' xi fambelana swinene ni xivuriso lexi nge "A yi hleteri xa munghana" Pfumela kumbe u kaneta [The short story 'Poetry is witchcraft' is so much related to the proverb 'A chicken does not take care of a friend's']. Kanela [Critically support or disagree with this ideology]; and QS23. Xirungulwana xa 'noyi u hava muhlovo' xi kombisa hilaha swi nonohaka hakona ku va munhu a enela hi leswi a nga na swona. Pfumela kumbe u kaneta [The short story 'A witch has no colour' creates an ideology that a human being is not satisfied with what he has]. Kanela [In a discussion, critically agree or disagree]. Both questions are literature based, which required the candidates to remember the plot and storyline of the said books which encourages knowledge-telling instead of knowledge-transforming (Bereiter & Scardamalia, (1987).

The majority of the questions in the Mother Tongue papers (QS1-QS21) demand responses that hinge on knowledge-telling (that is remembering, memorizing, recognizing, identifying and recalling information). For instance, 'Show with suitable examples, which language groups have influenced Tshivenda dialects', or 'Giving Tshivenda examples, briefly discuss Theta Theory as employed in Tshivenda'. Other examples include 'Hlamusela hi vuenti them ra vuhundzuluxo. Seketela nhlamulo ya wena hi ku tshaha vatsari van wana' [Give a detailed explanation of the concept of translation] or 'Xana mpimanyiso wa tindzimi i yini?' [What is historical comparative linguistics?] and 'What was the aim of the missionaries in Africa?' Or 'Give four publications by John Bennie' or 'Give three methods of language classification based on linguistic facts'. All this entails knowledge-retelling as opposed to knowledge transforming.

Another aspect is the historical appeal of some questions, such as 'what was the aim of the missionaries in Africa?' This mode of questioning reinforces narrative writing that is consistently evident throughout the educational system. Moreover, even the two argument questions in the Mother Tongue papers are an illustration of the sociocultural influences of the learning environment.  Questions (22 and 23) are steeped in the sociocultural influence of leaning towards works of Literature study and it has been recognized that literary works do not employ discursive devices to convey information. It means the learners have to remember the poem

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as well as the storyline plot in addition to the meanings of the proverbs. The proverbs just like any other proverb are so steeped in old wisdom and analogies that they can only reinforce narrative mode of writing. The background to all this is the encouragement of rote learning.

As pointed out earlier, discursive (analysis and evaluation) question types that entail understanding and transforming knowledge rather than merely reproducing it involve the transformation of knowledge as opposed to reproducing information. Argument questions encourage students to reason academically and to make decisions about issues. In fact, argument interactions can resolve controversies or differences of opinion and in this way contribute to knowledge in general. They also involve a more considered use of the target language. Writing essays, (especially as part of university education) is more beneficial than responding to questions that entail remembering discrete details that are not woven into exploratory knowledge links. This is because the deductive mode of questioning facilitates opportunities for exploring and elaborating on possible interpretations whereas the reproductive mode of questioning seems to concentrate on the ability to identify, remember and regurgitate information. For instance, 'Give four publications of John Bennie' and 'Give three methods of language classification based on linguistic facts',  Thus the sociocultural leaning towards writing that describes how the world is has such a hold on the writing of the learners that it will take a lot of effort and

planning to establish some semblance of balance in the teaching and learning of different genres in general. When the questions' central aims are highlighted in terms of individual gist for each question, there are more "give" and "what" type questions than those demanding discussion or formation of opinions.

## 4. 6. 2 Sample essays

**Tables 4. 3(a); 4. 3(b); 4. 3(c); 4. 3(d); 4. 4(a)** and **4. 4(b),** give an illustration of the extent to which the students were able to use the resources of the English Language. Overall, the results point to the fact that the use of metadiscourse and/or objectivity and credibility devices in the sample texts is negligible. This could mean that students are not fully aware of them, because they are not taught how to make use of this resource in their writing or it could even be that they do not exist in their culture or both.

The discussion starts with the features employed in the essays, it is significant that even proverbs and sayings do not feature prominently in the essays as the medians for the groupings are: **0.095 against 4177 words; 0.119 against 4176 words; 0.016 against 5902 words; and 0.00 for 5349 words**. This is surprising considering that sayings and proverbs are quite pervasive in traditional societies, such as the one represented in this study. Although the credibility of sayings/proverbs in general might depend on the

topics and how the students incorporate them into their texts, Smoke (1992: 198) argues that the citing of external sources such as proverbs to enhance one's stand on an issue is considered a valid enough strategy for second language students because it is another way of buttressing one's position in the common and old wisdom.

The direct personal appeals of "you" and imperatives were not that conspicuous on average, although there were some individual texts that had used quite a sizable number. In terms of taking them at the sociocultural contextual level, this is how they fared: **0.574 against 4177 words; 0.766 against 4176 words; 0.982 against 5902 words; and 0.0 against 5349 words.** Swales and Feak (1994) point out that imperatives and addressing the reader directly should be discouraged in general for they argue that students should engage their readers through the presentation of objective facts that will in turn render the facts credible.

According to pedagogic requirement, a writer's argument should be presented as balanced by setting up opposing positions through making a statement and then confuting it. In other words, the writer should give both the pros and cons of an issue in order for his/her stand to be credible and concessive clauses (Jacobs, 1995) or conjunctive relations, can be employed to accomplish the balancing of the argument or discussion. As depicted on the tables, the medians for conjunctive relations are: **1.699**

**against 4177 words; 1.149 against 4176 words; 0.898 against 5902 words; and 1.888 against 5349 words.** Thus students use of these elements to cater for connections between ideas and for contradictions and juxtapositions is noticeable enough though not as good as one would have expected. The sample texts are mostly sentence-level contradictions and did not elaborate on the reasons, for example S2: 'First of all the word 'control' itself takes us back to the dark-old-days of apartheid and torture and just because of those days, I don't think that anybody in South Africa deserves that punishment again'. Leki (1995): 262) urges students to:  'set aside one section of your paper to honestly discuss arguments against your position.' This may be difficult for people whose culture is steeped in secrecy of "not revealing oneself" on issues, as such, it may be that students perceive elaboration of the counter-argument to their own as self-defeating, especially so when the writer has to elaborate the counter-side. S/he could expose her/his stand in the process of balancing the argument which would not augur well for him/her.

The strategy in striving for objectivity and credibility is the application of general rules. This did not happen as can be seen from the medians: **0.311 against 4177 words; 0.526 against 4176 words; 0.271 against 5902; and 0.0 against 5349 words.** This is anomalous for students who are generalisation-prone. Large scope generalization could enhance the cultural system of not "revealing" oneself and, hence, could find expression

in the projection of generalized claims (that apply to everybody). This in a way could act as a personal absolution for the individual while claiming communal responsibility. As the use of general rules did not feature that much, it could mean they are not aware of their use for the generalisation of claims is present, but is not necessarily marked by the use of general rules.

Another English language resource that was not employed at all in the sample texts is analogy. Analogies act as explication devices and these students are not particularly good at clarifying issues. The assumption is that everything has to be taken for granted, because they are back grounding their information in "the everybody knows" sort of understanding. But this type of explication can only be handled by second language students who have reached a threshold of literacy sophistication both in English and Mother Tongue. Leki (1995) notes that the issues that are being brought out for comparison have to be similar in 'important' ways. The median for analogies is **0.00 against a total of 14,255 words**. In addition, the occurrence of non-referential "it" was quite insignificant and the same applies to the existential "there". Amplifiers, elaborations, narrators and validity markers all show a negligible presence. This is not surprising as these have to show certainty and a degree of conviction as well as a way of getting away from the collectivist tendencies of generalisations which would lead to individualised uptakes on the issues.

However, the use of some of the personal pronouns as well as that of some modal verbs make interesting reading for the median gauge. For example, the third person plural "they**"** and its related forms netted **6.296 against 4177 words; 7.758 against 4176 words; 5.252 against 5902 words; and 1.962 against 5349 words.** This could have been attributable to the topics set for discussion. The  first person plural "we**"** and its related forms seem to follow right behind "they**"** as illustrated by the medians: **0.790 against 4177 words; 0.933 against 4176 words; 0.948 against 5902 words; and 0.785 against 5349 words.** "We**"** and "us**"** can be used to stress solidarity with the reader. Atkinson (1991) states that "we**"** and "us" carry a mark of formality in contrast to "I" and "me". In fact, Johnson (1995) states that "we" in contrast to "they" may serve to construct group identification in formal discourse and may be used to create group boundaries. This could be relevant to this sample group as charting out boundaries for group membership is an attractive attribute. Students seem to be aware of the fact that the first person singular pronoun "I" diminishes the objective tone in writing, hence it did not feature that much; on those occasions where it features, it is as a point of entry to establish viewpoints; it could also be that the collective stance does not leave room for first person usage.

When attention is turned to the modals, however, the median rating is noticeable as these have featured quite significantly. This could be

because of the functions that they perform. Their medians were: **2.178 against 4177 words; 3.352 against 4176 words; 2.524 against 5902 words; and 1.832 against 5349 words.** Biber (1988) divides modals into three functional classes: (1) permission, possibility and ability (2) obligation and necessity, and (3) volition and/or prediction. Smoke (1992) and Raimes (1992) state that, in composition writing, the line between the meanings of the modals of possibility, necessity, and prediction is often unclear as the use of these modals is attributable to culture. It is possible that the students are not aware of the different functions of the various categories of modals as the following sample shows: S33:

> Overseas countries are well developed and there are lots of facilities that can be used to encourage higher education. Students who are doing higher education Overseas in well developed countries are better because they will also accumulate higher developed education through highly skilled teacher but are obviously not compared because they are vary, found in different place, developing and developed.

> When you are doing higher education in Overseas you will be meeting many different people from different countries who have different cultures, values and beliefs and they will also be using different languages. Here you have the …

The analysis of the data under review suggests that learning strategies have contributed towards students generating the classes of sentences. It is recognized that the development of an essay has to do with the order in which ideas are linked together and the way that they get expressed in different paragraphs. It is also important to note that adequate detail is needed in all the paragraphs as part of organizational development. If one fails to expand the main idea of the individual paragraphs, then one fails to

convince the readers that the discussion (argument) is coherent, understandable and sound. And the students who are represented by their essays have failed in this respect. A good paragraph has unity of purpose, which is achieved by the clear expression of the paragraph's main idea (topic sentence). In any essay writing including argument (subjective writing), all the individual paragraphs together with their sentences should strive to achieve a unity of purpose, that of supporting the topic sentence or thesis statement, which expresses the writer's attitude to the main idea.

The students' structure of the texts is not satisfactory and appropriate for the various levels. The Honours sample texts that have sign-posted their essays through sub-headings in order to guide the reader through the argument are not accomplishing that purpose. They have managed to render the reading disjointed. For example G8:

> …Indigenous knowledge systems looked at five key concepts as a way of conserving the environment.
> 1. Through Agriculture
> for agriculture to be sustainable, the indigenous people used different techniques. The indigenous people used waste products from the animals as fertilizer, these fertilizers does not contain any chemicals that can harm the soil. They also practiced shifting cultivation. In this case, the indigenous people used to cultivate a particular place for a certain period of time. After that specific period they leave the place to rest and gain its original state. They will then come back to that place a long period of time.
> Indigenous people also practiced pastoralisation, in this case, the farmers used to move from one grazingland to another with their herds. They spent a particular period at a certain place and move to the other place. They leave the place to rest and gain its original state. Shifting cultivation and pastoralisation was done in order to prevent environmental threats such as soil erosion that leads to land degradation.

2. Health Purpose
The indigenous people used to conserve some of the plant species for health purposes. Some of those plant species were a cure for certain diseases. For example, Aloe was conserved because it was known as the cure for various diseases. Mutavhasindi also conserved for health reasons.
3. Food Production
Some of the wild trees were conserved because they produced wild fruits that could serve as the source of food when hunger strikes. People were not allowed to cut those trees because they are of great importance…

The rest of the essay continues in this manner. There are others written in the same way (G1, G3, G5) in appendix E. Students at this level were expected to have reached the fourth stage in the development of interlanguage systems. This is the stage that Brown (1993: 212) calls 'the stabilization stage'. In this stage, 'the learner has relatively  few errors and has mastered the system to the point that fluency and intended meanings are not problematic'. The students were expected to manifest more consistency in the responses they gave. Contrary to this, the students proficiency levels in English seem to be a problem in general for the construction of both individual sentences and the connections between them is quite idiosyncratic as they are marked by grammatical blemishes. They seem to have internalized certain rules that govern the use of the language, but are only vaguely aware of how to apply them in their written tasks.

It is noteworthy that one of the longest argument essays in the first batch consisting of 528 words (S1)  is among the most successful ones:

Yes, in my opinion parents should be able to control the lives of their children aged between 13 and 20 years of age. Parents are custodians of children. They are the people who brought these children to this world in the first place. Therefore, for parents, this custodianship is a God-given right. For this reason, they have the right to control the lives of their children because they know right from wrong. Also they have the best interests of their children at heart. Thus, the choices that these parents make for their children will almost always be the right ones.

Controlling children's lives requires experience and love. In these two respects, parents are the best equipped to do this. Through years of experience and watching other people raise their children, parents are the best people that children can trust their lives with. The other option is for children to put their trust in their friends. Needless to say, friends are often friends when things are going right. One quote rightly put is: 'when days are dark, friends are few'. Parents are therefore dependable at all times.

Most psychologists believe how a child is raised will determine the kind of adult that the child will become. Controlling a child is part of raising a child. This is so because we live…

Whereas the shortest one consisting of 204 words (S27) features among

the not so successful arguments:

Some of our parents can build us a better future if children give them their responsibility. Parent also want the best for their children. According to the word of God the bible tells us that children must obey their parent rules so that they can live a long and happy life.

I remember the story of those two brothers from the bible one brother asked his father to give him his belonging because he had no one to look after him he misused all the property that his parent gave him. He suffered until he went back to his parent and asked them to forgive him, it shows us that children cannot control their lives.

Children has the right to make decision in some issue for an example to choose their career and so many other things but our parent has more power to our lives as long as we live under their roof they have to control us. The word of God says respect your father and your mother and you will live a long time in the land I am giving you.

Let our parent control their children's live for a brighter future and they have more experience in life than children.

Among the Geography texts (G2 – 735 words) is the most successful essay:

> Indigenous knowledge is the knowledge used by our ancestors in order to serve society. Indigenous means the origin. It is the origin of plant and animal species. Biodiversity knowledge system means epistemology and ontology. This is the idea about knowledge. How knowledge is invented or created, how it is used or misused.
> Every society has a way of conserving nature. And also a way of passing knowledge from one generation to the next. This passing of knowledge from generation to generation can be done through language.
> According to Herbert Vilakazi in his journal (2000), the knowledge that we have as Africans is as important as that knowledge for the Western. The only idea is that when those people…

Whereas (G4 - 390 words) is the shortest and one of the most unsuccessful in this group:

> The indigenous knowledge system and the conservation of the environment are having the relationship. The indigenous knowledge can be defined as the knowledge that is used by the particular group of people and this knowledge is found in a particular area. The indigenous knowledge system is the knowledge that is originally found in the particular area and this knowledge are used by the people that live in that particular area. Different culture have different knowledge and these knowledge is normally passed from one generation to the other generation by mouth…

This tallies with Intaraprawat and Steffensen's (1995) findings that good essays are longer and are better structured than the shorter poor ones. However, this does not mean that long essays are always substantive and successful. There are other facets that contribute to the essays being considered successful because the essays are reader-friendly in terms of topic development, establishing a viewpoint, using the resources of the English language, such as rhetorical devices, proper tense use and unity of purpose of the various paragraphs.

When it comes to stating the topic (**Tables 4. 3(a) (b) and (c)** show that (40%) of the sample essays have a thesis statement of the expected type, that is, an explicit viewpoint stating the position that the writers are taking. And 46% have explicitly drawn conclusions from their discussions. All the Geography texts have a defining introduction and 80% of the texts have a conclusion. The Geography students seem to have recognized that the crux of the matter for their discussion depended on the introduction so as to establish an understanding with their reader.

The sample essays are at an elementary and intermediate expository level as there are claims throughout the essays, such as 'controlling a child is part of raising a child' (S1) and 'when days are dark, friends are few' (S1) but data to support the claims is lacking. Thus the student has not attempted to weave in an argument through supporting examples (data) from either his/her or friends' life experiences so as to give the text credibility. With first hand experiences missing, the warrants are also conspicuously absent. It is significant that all the essays remain dominantly at the level of generalizations and that the learners do not cite particular instances of either disagreement or agreement between themselves and their parents. Even in the response of S11, who is a parent and has teenage children of his own does not cite actual examples of personal

conflict with his children. The closest he comes to writing about the situation is:

> Having two kids who are now in their teens, I can see that this is the most frustrating period of all the stages to both parents and children. As a parent, you need to be vigilant to make them follow what you think is right for them. If you slacken in your control and guidance, they can quickly see it and continue with their wayward dealings. Constant control and guidance could make them walk in the right direction, thus, giving them more confidence.

Once more, the above is at the generalized expository level. The only personal tone is the first line and after that the argument reverts to the impersonal generalized view. Another example is S2

> What I would like parents to do though is to show their teenage children the right path because yes, it is very essential for parents to monitor the lives of their teenagers but not control them'.

The writer could have given examples of the areas in which parents could show the right path as well as how the parents could monitor without overt control.

Sample essays from the English Department Honours group are equally unsuccessful in argument presentation. There are no examples to support their viewpoints. Some essays have even gone off tangent. For example S35:

> A comparison of standards of education between Overseas countries and South Africa has become a hotly debated topic in recent years. This is partly necessitated by South Africa's transition to democracy and the ever-increasing question of South Africa's skills levels and its preparedness to address its new challenges. Education is a universally important phenomenon both locally and abroad. It plays a crucial role in equipping countries to adequately address unique challenges faced by them. The impact of such

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> education is largely determined by the levels of development of the various countries. Regardless of this act, education remains important in helping countries sustain and in some instances improve their respective lot.
>
> Any comparison of education between Overseas and South Africa education is not complete without taking into account the various stages at which those countries are in development.
>
> The education of third world countries is largely development oriented whereas that of first world countries is mainly focused on industry and technology. South Africa is situated between the two extremes and can best be described as a second world countries since it displays elements of both first and third world countries.

The above examples serve as expository writing with neither data nor warrants. The fact that the reader-friendly essays lack the vital ingredients for argument writing is telling; the less proficient essays all reflect the same flaws.

Essays (S1 - S5) are among the essays that have a logic which makes easy reading. In essays S1-S5, there is an attempt to guide the reader through the discussions by including signposts such as, "therefore", "for this reason", "thus", "first", "in my opinion", "it is", "the more", "I think" and so on. In contrast, there is a noticeable reduction in density of metadiscourse features in essays S11 – S20 and S21 - S35. It is also noteworthy that the Geography students represented by their essays (see appendix E) have only used lexical words as cohesive markers. This leads to the assumption that the ability to use the resources of the English language, such as connective relations, is attributable to some students in the sample and not all. The absence of overt cohesive elements is

indicative of a problem area just as much as the absence of covert cohesion is.

The conclusion is that the students represented by their responses in the sample essays, did not make full use of metadiscourse features; and some of those who made an attempt to use them, either limited the number and scope or used these features incorrectly. For example S6: first and paramount.

Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) found that connectives were the most prominent metadiscourse expressions used by second language university students and this is consistent with the present study. Generally speaking, learners hardly used elaboration and/or explanation of ideas in these essays and this accounts for the essays' lack of data and warrants. This can be seen for instance in S10:

> The behaviour of a teenager is most complicated. It needs a closer look and parent's guidance. The teenager stage is one of the stages in which youths these days are failing to behave themselves. Parents are also failing to control the person in this stage of maturity. His behaviour needs parents' intervention. Therefore, parents should control the life of a teenager.

Validity markers which comprise emphatics and hedges did not feature in the essays. In the majority of these essays, the students were partially able to acknowledge the existence of opposing arguments, although not as

obviously stated as one would have liked to see. However, S1 does come close to doing this:

> The other option is for children to put their trust in their friends. Needless to say, friends are often friends when things are going right. One quote rightly put is: "when days are dark, friends are few". Parents are therefore dependable at all times.

S/he does not amplify what s/he means in order to strengthen the argument for parents being more dependable and in control of their children's lives. The line of argument would have made interesting reading if the learner had given pertinent examples to validate the connection to the saying quoted.

While the majority of essays somehow anticipated opposing positions, the students failed to deal with opposing views directly. An example of a learner's ability to recognize an alternative viewpoint is illustrated in S5 'as much as parents should control their children, this should not in any way mean oppression of the children'. The student acknowledges parental control but s/he does not validate the link to oppression and devotes no time to explaining why the argument should not be balanced. S12 says: …'most parents tend to confuse control and guidance. They use control and think that they are guiding their children.' S/he does not explain what she means but moves on to another point, again not supported. Another student writes 'parents should control their children's lives but to a certain extent'. S/he also does not amplify what 'to a certain extent' means.

A small number of students demonstrated the ability to recognize the validity of opposing arguments and an even smaller minority were able to sustain this recognition throughout the essay. One student began with the statement, 'Yes, in my opinion parents should be able to control the lives of their children aged between 13 and 20 year' (S1). He/she proceeded to pinpoint the outline of the merits of the one side of the debate, concluding with this opinion that 'Control forms an important part of parenting. Children must be controlled, even if this means using the cane'. The learner presented one viewpoint which can be interpreted in terms of the collectivist culture in the sense that issues are perceived as given; and, everyone should take it that way as there cannot be a contrary viewpoint. This tendency derives from the high levels of subjectivity as students attempt to reconcile their own identity and viewpoint with that of readers who hold an alternative opinion or range of views.

Some sample essays from the Geography Honours show the same flaws and tendencies, for example G4 'The indigenous knowledge system and the conservation of the environment are having the relationship' and G6: 'he can just get in and endanger himself because the place would not be supposed to be visit first timer should look at Funduzi Lake under his/her waist, not all people are subject to enter Funduzi'; G10: 'passing it to another generation through mouth . .. the soil cannot easily being eroded by water'.

Features, such as attitude markers and commentaries, allow the writer to express personal opinion regarding the content of the text while at the same time addressing one's reader directly. Of course, these forms of reader awareness did not feature at all. Some students did elicit reader attention through the use of 'in my opinion'. The learners' failure to employ commentaries effectively may reflect an assumption that readers already share their views, thus obviating the necessity to draw attention to the collective nature of the socioculture. Since attitude markers and commentaries 'convey the writer's intention and function to increase the acceptability of the text' (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995: 259).

The above description of student performance leads to certain conclusions. First, evidence across the essays suggests that performance in essay writing needs a lot of attention. Secondly, it is important to state that the characteristics of proficient writing are always constant. That is, narrative writing is always narrative writing, descriptive writing is always descriptive and argument writing is always an argument, with the same generic features, irrespective of the level or sophistication with which the writer handles the genre, just as a report is always a report and so on. In other words, one expects a level of engagement that is beginning to show the build up of skills and abilities from intermediate to Honours levels of academic development.

There is a noticeable difference in the quality of the sample essays between the first year (S1-S5) and the other sample essays (S6-S35) second year, third year, foundation and Honours. This difference in performance runs contrary to expectations and well established norms that state that notable improvement in writing ability is often associated with upper levels (more mature in age and further advanced in the second language developmental stage) rather than lower levels. In this sample, first year essays (S1-S5) are better structured; the content is more judiciously chosen; and the responses are longer in terms of word density and they are generally more reader-friendly. In contrast, all the hallmarks of poor writing seem to be characteristic of the second, third and even Honours levels. These are poorly organized and fraught with idiosyncratic blemishes in language use, such as S6: 'a child will be a responsible parent at his own parenthood for he has grown up being taught morality his parents when controlling him from doing bad', and S15: 'many parents are good to can control their children's lives but they are also erroneous as all people are'.

There are examples of other extremely idiosyncratic essays, such as S32, S34, G4, G6 and G10 to mention just a few. One hastens to point out that, ideally speaking, one expected the sample essays from the foundation group (S16-S30) to be the worst but their performance is at par with the unsuccessful ones. University is not the place for the establishment of

basic general writing skills. University education is for constructing and producing knowledge as well as sharpening abilities and skills for a meaningful contribution to the world of knowledge.

The low performance in discursive writing generally could be attributable to the lack of a developed schema for this genre; and social interaction should be considered as the primary means of heightening discursive reasoning in context. Discussions can and do expose students to other perspectives, which can result in motivating students in formulating and making their own ideas public. The institutional and personal challenge, therefore, is learning how to change and learning how to organize and act. Part of the change must be vested in the teachers/facilitators who should be required to create situations in the class/lecture halls in which ideas are challenged in peer group interactions. This interaction may lead to the enhancement of cognitive and social competencies that can be applied elsewhere by students.

Furthermore, the general ideas in the majority of the essays are added randomly, as they form in the learners' minds, without proper links either to the preceding paragraph or sentence. What could pass as topic sentences are scattered throughout the essays instead of being used to mark the argument of succeeding paragraphs. The students do not select their evidence very well while at the same time the evidence that they do include

is not interpreted. Learners' performance in discursive discourse is at the exposition level. This is because the exposition substitutes for the argument.

## 4. 7 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study illustrate that the employment of elaborations, hedges, amplifiers, narrators, attitude markers and so on was negligible. It is imperative that these learners be provided with guided practice on how to render their writing acceptable to their readers through the use of rhetorical devices. This is to make them aware of the importance of the role these elements play in convincing the reader. It is hoped that as the community and educational institutions become hybridized, communication patterns will slowly begin to be hybrid too.

It is worth noting that the Vhembe District in general is slowly being affected by the state of flux that the rest of the country is experiencing as there is a lot of movement of different language groups (including those from outside the borders of this country) that prompts a more accommodative stance towards English language use than before. This in itself is a positive sign for facilitators of English, for it means scaffolding can take place among learners since the knowledge pool (in terms of linguistic dexterity) generally is anticipated to become heterogeneous. This augurs well for second language abilities and skills. It is of vital importance that

students learn how to stake out a position and then prove that it is the right position for a person to hold, for through differences of opinion, human knowledge develops. In this sense, the more students improve their skills at crafting a discursive essay, the better they become at making choices, reasoning, thinking critically and weighing evidence.

The general lack of elicitation of reader awareness revealed that the majority of essays reflected a collectivist orientation, because the low level reader awareness could emanate from the belief that everyone else shares the same opinion. It has been found that identifying the level of reader awareness apparent in students' essays at a micro level is useful for the purposes of both teaching and assessing argument writing in English. Learners should be made aware of what constitutes reader awareness and how to demonstrate it in their writing. The observed strategy of direct instruction of metalinguistic features to students could partly serve the purpose for learning their use if learners are enabled to understand the rationale for using such markers. The learners can only understand or appreciate the rationale if the markers are continuously presented in context instead of being provided with lists of cohesive elements to memorize and use. This process must be accompanied by the provision of linguistic strategies through contextualized use of modelling, through class exercises, which allow students to identify a range of these features in

samples of writing, and through written feedback that directly addresses this linguistic aspect of students' discursive writing.

The final analysis of the data from Mother Tongue, sample essays, the questionnaire responses and the discoveries of the exploration of theory and practice form the basis for the interpretations that are presented in Chapter Five of this research project, which in turn informs the intervention strategy (appendix F) envisaged in the conclusion and recommendations. The discussion now moves to interpretation.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# INTERPRETATION

# 5 SOCIOCULTURAL INFLUENCES ON WRITING

Chapter Four outlined the procedure followed in conducting the research, as well as the presentation and analysis of the data. This chapter discusses the findings, using socioculture as a reference point. Rosaldo (1984), Hall (1999), Gee (1992, 1999, 2005) and Hinkel (1999) astutely consider learners' immediate and broader social contexts as being valuable in appreciating and understanding both the level and type of engagement that a learner brings to bear on writing tasks in general. This chapter incorporates nuances from all the data collected to inform the interpretation.

## 5.1 SOCIOLIZATION

What the researchers in the sociocultural arena have emphasized is the fact that learners have perceptions, abilities and dispositions that have been developed through previous interactions with previous contexts, and that these interactions could be internal in the learner or external (such as in the socialization in the home, the community and in the academic settings). In addition, learners' individual factors interact with the broad social context as well as the more circumscribed academic context and both these contexts may promote, encourage or inhibit learners' writing efforts, in general, and argument writing, in particular. It is noteworthy that the academic context becomes a consistent validating instrument for learners in whatever sociocultural direction the learning process takes

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them. Since sociocultural theory is premised on the human condition being interpreted at the social, cultural and historical levels, rhetorical invention is not viewed as a completely private act of an individual, thus, the necessity of placing the sample texts in terms of the identity of the writers and the context of the written samples. Only by treating data as situated in these two respects could the patterning be discerned.

The students who are represented in the sample essays for this study expressed themselves in a way that reflects their total communicative competence in terms of knowledge of the world structures and strategic structures within the writing mode. This in a way confirms Atwell's (1998) perception that writing is as much a social process as an isolated intellectual activity since rhetorical invention is often a collaborative process. Rhetorical invention is said to build on a foundation of knowledge accumulated from previous generations and in argument writing. Therefore, the one who is arguing reflects what s/he is; and what s/he writes and what s/he is are judged according to the virtues valued by a particular group of people. The way a society views language determines the way rhetorical invention gets defined and used in writing.

Through examining Mother Tongue questions, responses to three writing prompts and the sociocultural questionnaire responses from a sociolinguistic perspective, there is ample evidence for the ways in which

learners are influenced by the sociocultural context in which they live and learn. The interrelationship between the learners' stage of cognitive and socio-emotional development and their capacity to write lucid texts and/or construct arguments create a conflict that contributes to the engagements that manifest through the type of writing. For within this set of interrelationships, one can discern the power of interconnecting pathways as the students' sense of self, as writers, is influenced by the values of collectivism, weak uncertainty avoidance, combined with a restricted code orientation, which contribute to a communication style that does not elaborate on meaning.

## 5. 2  RESTRICTED CODE

Bernstein's (1986) concepts of "elaborated code" and "restricted code" are an attempt to explain how a particular people's distribution of power and their principles of control exert themselves and find expression through different modes of communication. The different modes of communicating carry the cultures of different social classes and that of the educational institutions and as a result reproduce unequal educational advantages. The theory behind the concepts of elaborated and restricted codes sanctions that the networks of social relationships in which individuals are embedded act selectively on the production of meaning and, as a result, upon choices within the common linguistic resources. As the origins of these codes are found in different community structures, they get channelled through crucial

socializing contexts, instructional and regulative, which are responsible for orienting children (learners) differently to the roles, meanings and values of the instructional institution (school and university). In other words, in a South African context, the apartheid system set up a different education system for the non -white learners so as to reinforce the restricted mode of communicating which was suited to the ideas and ideals of the rulers for the oppressed majority whose position was that of receiving and acting on instructions without meaningful interaction between them.

Furthermore, when the culture raises the "we" above the "I", as seen in Chapter One, then the restricted code emerges as it is the controller and transmitter of culture. The type of social solidarity realized through the people's restricted code orientation points toward mechanical solidarity, because the use of the restricted code creates social solidarity at the expense of both written and verbal elaboration of the individual experience. It follows from this, therefore, that as the form of communication reinforces the form of social relation, there is no need for the creation of texts that uniquely fit the intentions of the students as their restricted code orientation does not give rise to a differentiated "I" as has been realised from the sample texts. What the restricted code has done is to remove the need to elaborate meanings and logical continuity in the organization of the writing. Hence students who are represented by their sample texts in the study have difficulty in switching from the restricted code background form of

communicating to the elaborated form of communicating. The restricted code arises, because the meanings that the students need to convey are particular to and unnecessarily embedded in the Vhembe District; and there is no need to make these meanings specific and explicit. This is because the need has been reduced by the foregrounding of shared understandings, values and identifications.

In contrast, an elaborated code is best facilitated by the culture or subculture that emphasizes "I" over the "we"; and this is what gives rise to the fact that the intention of the individual writer cannot be taken for granted by either him/herself, or the other writers. This is the reason behind individuals with an elaborated code orientation being pushed towards elaboration of meaning while ensuring both explicitness and specificity. But the restricted code background presupposes a generalized "other" which dictates no elaboration, as has been illustrated by the sample texts. The type of solidarity realized through elaborated codes points toward organic solidarity (as cited by Bernstein ,1986: 465).

In addition, the range of alternatives that a role system makes available to individuals for the written or oral realization of meanings may be considered open or closed. A closed system has a reduced range of alternatives for the realization of meaning and when the range of alternatives is substantively low, this results in meanings that are more

communal or collective with the syntactic and vocabulary selections that are limited; and this facilitates a restricted code. This has also been the experience with the sample essays quoted from Chapter Four. The flip side of this closed role system is the code that allows different ways of interacting with both written or oral meanings. It manifests a tendency towards more individualized meaning. The facilitation of individualized meaning results in the syntactic and vocabulary selection being flexible and, in this open role system, new meanings are encouraged. However, in the closed type role system of the Vhembe area, written or verbal meanings tend to be assigned and as a result, individuals, such as students, get into the meaning system that they have found already in existence and end up leaving it relatively undisturbed as there is no motivation for adventure with explanations.

The end result of the nuances of the role systems is that an open role system induces motivation for adventure in the patterning of discourse, which results in the extension of meanings from individual efforts. The closed role system such as that of the Vhembe District, does not necessarily induce the impetus towards exploration in discourse in order to create novel meanings. This explains the reason for the people of the area saying, "it has always been like that," in response to the question "why is it like this?". This explains why there is no effort to explain the reasons for codified behaviour. When the role system is closed, individuals do not learn

to cope with ambiguity and isolation in the creation of both written and oral meaning, as they have been denied such learning and, as a result, they learn to create written or oral meanings in unambiguous and communalized social contexts which, in turn, contribute to their weak uncertainty avoidance stance. This is one of the reasons behind Univen students experiencing considerable tension and role conflict when they have to attempt to change their role systems and individualize the basis of their syntactic and vocabulary selections in order to be more accommodative of an open role system (Bernstein, 1986: 479). The point to underscore here is that what becomes a source of strain for the students, is precisely what the students have to learn to do when they are socialized into an open role system, for example at the university. All this illustrates the causal connection between role systems, communication codes, and the realization of varied networks of meaning and relevance.

## 5. 3   DIVISION OF LABOUR AND THE CENTRAL VALUE SYSTEM

The format of the division of labour and the character of the central value system in a society have an impact on communication codes. This impact is brought about through the way those factors affect the culture and role systems of the major socializing agencies, such as the family and the educational institutions. As the dimensions and complexity of the division of labour change, they, in turn, influence the nature of the occupational roles

of individuals and their linguistic bases, because the modes of the elaborated code are affected by the movement of economics from goods to service types. This is slowly happening in the Vhembe District just as it is happening in the rest of the country, although to varying degrees. The shift from goods to a service economy within the Vhembe District will promote the development of person mode of communication in an elaborated code. This captures the dimensions that were raised in Chapters Two and Three by Gibbons *et al.*, (1994), and Gee, (2005) that the change in the economic, social and political landscape of a country may begin to dictate the terms of interaction. The dominant character of the move towards a pluralistic society in South Africa is likely to produce strong orientations toward the person mode of an elaborated code even in the Vhembe area. Whereas the monolithic society has tended to strengthen the orientation toward the object mode of communication as persons have been treated as objects both during the apartheid days and simultaneously during the Homeland rule.

What underlies the difficulty to change from restricted code to the elaborated code, has been the fact that once a restricted linguistic code has been learnt, it constrains the individual's perception of her/his social role and that of her/his interlocutor's, just as lexical structures constrain the individual's perception of features in the physical environment. Pronouncements on the nature of the division of labour and the character

of the central value system connects this section to the nuances of Chapter Two on the theoretical underpinnings of literacy.

## 5. 4  ROLE SYSTEM AND COMMUNICATION

Bernstein (1986: 484) underscores the fact that when the examination of the relationship between role systems and communication codes is carried out, it is important to look at the nature of the role system of the community and the procedures for social control as this is premised on the interrelationships between role systems, forms of social control, and linguistic orientations. There are two types of role systems that have been postulated. These are position- oriented and person-oriented systems. In positional families/communities, decision-making is invested in the members' formal status (that is, father, mother, grandfather/mother, age of child, or sex of child), and in such families/ communities, the separation of roles is clear cut. The positional families/communities give rise to weak or closed communication systems. But in the person-oriented communities/families, the range of decisions, modifications, and judgments is a function of the psychological qualities of the person rather than a function of the formal status. As a result, person-oriented families give rise to a strong or "open" communication system.

In position-oriented communities, such as the context of this research, decision making and judgments are accepted as a function of the status of

the member rather than a quality of the person. This is part of the strong power distance phenomenon of the society under discussion. In other words, the socialization in this positional-oriented community is less likely to facilitate the verbal elaboration of individual differences just as much as it is less likely to lead to the verbal elaboration of individual differences or to the elaboration of judgments and their bases and consequences for the socialization tends to be unilateral as it does not encourage the verbal exploration of individual intentions and motives. This results in the individual learner joining the system and learning to respond to the status quo that s/he has found, as this is quite evident in the Vhembe District and at Univen. The student assimilates a communalized role of person-oriented communities and the range of choices that is inherent in the roles is relatively restrictive. The result is that, the communication system reduces the degree of individual selection from possible alternatives (Bernstein, 1986: 484). The individuals are less likely to learn to cope with problems of role ambiguity and ambivalence as there are no subjects to be raised as objects of special perceptual activity and control.

## 5. 5 SOCIAL CONTROL AND CLOSED SYSTEMS

It is clear, from the preceding sections, that the two role system types have important socializing and linguistic consequences in the forms of social control they exert on individuals in a given context. When a role system is person- oriented, it is a relatively unstable system for it is consistently in the

process of internalizing and accommodating the verbally realized but different interactions, qualifications, and motives of its members. The tension that arises out of the situation is a function of the characteristics of the role system which engender special forms of arbitration, reconciliation, and explanation. The tensions are managed in terms of relative power which inheres in the respective statuses only as a last resort, as social control is based upon linguistically elaborated meanings rather than upon power.

In the Vhembe area, the status quo has a bearing on the lack of potential instability that is always present in the person-oriented communities. This is because social control is effected either through power or through the referring of unbecoming behaviour to the universal or particular norms which regulate the status. The other aspect in this positional community is that the modes of social control depend less upon individually created and elaborated verbal meanings (as already pointed out above), and as a result, there is less need to sensitize the child (student) toward, and promote the early development of, elaborated forms of oral or writing modes. In the position-oriented Vhembe District, social control is realized through less elaborated verbal means, which are less oriented to the person, but more oriented toward the formal status of the regulated (person). That is, the individual is not sensitized towards actively promoting his/her language development so that s/he can apply the preferred modes

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of control. The underlying significance of sections 5.2.1 to 5.2.6 above is that they form the core of the inevitable challenges in education  of moving from traditional society to preparation for a role in a more cosmopolitan sociocultural environment.


## 5. 6 LTERACY AND CULTURE

Another pertinent dimension that is relevant to the interpretation of the prevailing mode of progression and expression in the sample texts of the students comes from Ballard and Clancy.  Ballard and Clancy (1991: 23), in their discussion of the impact of cultural and intellectual traditions on literacy, contend that a culture's attitude towards knowledge can be rated accordingly from placing a value on conserving knowledge to placing a value on extending knowledge. They state that cultures that emphasize conserving knowledge promote reproductive approaches to learning, and they emphasize strategies, such as memorizing and imitation; and on the whole they deal with questions of *what,* as can be seen from the Mother Tongue questions in Chapter Four. In addition, the pervasive rote learning coupled with the rigid expository teaching style that prevails in the Vhembe District, as already pointed out in Chapter One of this thesis, places the area in the knowledge conservation category. Ballard and Clancy (1991) contend that the different approaches to learning find synergy in different basic attitudes to knowledge and instruction in society. It is the cultural attitude  to knowledge that has an impact on the assumptions about the

development of a written text, in general, and argument, in particular. The social practices that surround argument writing in a culture, such as the Vhembe District, reflect a value of conserving rather than extending knowledge, as the sample texts testify.

## 5. 7 THE USE OF ENGLISH FOR MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION

Another sociocultural influence stems from the approach of using another language (English) for a Mother Tongue (Tshivenda or Northern Sotho) examination paper. The fact that these low proficient learners in English, who are still in the early stages of academic development, are bombarded with questions in English for Mother Tongue academic development, defeats the idea of progressive educational development. This aggravates the learners' inability to learn academic writing skills and it also makes a mockery of referring to these examination papers as Northern Sotho or Tshivenda examinations. What this means is that, these learners effectively have no language in which they are strong enough to bolster their academic efforts and achievements, because they are neither anchored by the English language nor their Mother Tongue. The questions should have been completely in the Mother Tongue as was the case in the Xitsonga examination paper. The only exception could be for an odd translation question from English to Mother Tongue and not the other way round (from Mother Tongue to English). The purpose of this type of question would be

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to boost the interpretation and translation skills of those who would like to embark on a career in the translation or in the fields of the media. In this way, Mother Tongue would boost general academic development in addition to achieving Mother Tongue education.

The anomaly of having questions in English for Northern Sotho and Tshivenda examination papers is a reflection of the socioculture of the learning context and how specialization in the Mother Tongues has been implemented. Most Mother Tongue academic staff confirmed the fact that they completed their own studies through the medium of English except for a few Mother Tongue examples included here and there. Moreover, they were supervised by non-speakers and non-writers of these languages, who could therefore only supervise them through the medium of English. The question that comes to mind here is how these facilitators of Mother Tongue can effectively impart academic knowledge proficiency in the Mother Tongue when they themselves are not privy to that knowledge or those skills. This study argues that facilitators, who have not had an all embracing formal training in these languages, cannot effectively facilitate academic proficiency in them (although this is not central to the argument).

The problems that emerge through the Mother Tongue questions are thus a symptom of the socioculture of the learning environment. At least at the university level of education, Mother Tongue should have been used to

anchor students academically in the skills, discourses and abilities that are vital for academic success, in general, and in English as a second language, in particular. This could be accomplished through a sizeable number of discursive questions for instance. In this way, there would be academic skills transfer from Mother Tongue to English. And, because of the ambiguity of educating learners in English for Mother Tongue education, the graduates may be labelled "half-baked" for they have mastered neither language academically. This results in their being linguistically and academically deficient. This is borne out by the following response to a colleague's concern (*quoted with permission*) with students' writing errors in English at Univen:

> If learners at school level are not educated properly in respect of their FIRST language, that is where the problem starts regarding second, or third languages.

In fact, the whole issue of using English for Mother Tongue education is absurd.

It can be deduced from personal experiences of other faculty staff that learners' difficulties are not limited to writing in English only; they also have problems in Mother Tongue writing and information processing as well. This is because these learners have been involved in preparing for and responding to recall questions already commented on (such as 'Give four publications by John Bennie' or 'Give three methods of language classification based on linguistic facts'). This kind of questioning leads to

learners being more inclined to remembering and regurgitating information and not applying knowledge in relevant contexts.

The literacy practices that are embodied in L1 questions of this project focus on transfer of information, correct repetitions and full retention rather than critical engagement with the content. And, based on the fact that learners have to be academically proficient enough in the Mother Tongue to benefit from the transfer of academic skills, this eliminates them as facilitators in the Mother Tongues Departments have often remarked on the dismal academic performance of the students.

In this connection, researchers, such as Mohan and Lo (1985) and Edelsky (1991, 1995) have pointed out that writers transfer writing abilities and strategies from the Mother Tongue to the second language. That is, learners who lack Mother Tongue strategies tend to display a similar lack of strategies and knowledge for writing in English. This is the interruption of cognitive development in the First Language, which could have a negative impact on academic achievement in both the First and Second Languages. When an academic skill is tackled systematically in two or more departments in an institution, this results in scaffolding of students' learning, which is an advantage for all concerned. There is irony in the situation where Mother Tongue subject questions are put in English in addition to being totally immersed in English as a second language in the

other disciplines,   they encounter English again even in their Mother Tongue when they are supposed to be developing academic proficiency in the Mother Tongue.

Most of the essays contain ideas at the level of generalized description. The reticence for a personalized view on issues is culturally determined and it is socially enforced in the educational systems. Everything is explained in general terms with no effort to exemplify things or situations from either own experience or that of others. And, yet, the sample texts could have been made more objective and credible by personalized examples and experiences (data and warrants). The non-engagement on an interpersonal level is an indication of collectivist tendencies in writing. The explanation for this phenomenon is captured by Fowler's (1979: 24) statement that, 'People (at least in the same culture) organize their experience of the world in common ways, and the patterns they rely upon are the same and there is enough evidence of this from the sample texts'.

## 5. 8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The traditionally collectivist culture of the area has implications for the development of self and identity. The Univen student faces the difficulty of creating and defining a 'new' identity appropriate for use in second language writing in which the skill of individualized thinking is highly valued (Rodby, 1990). The identity struggle of the students is heightened by

feelings of insecurity brought about by the challenges of the transformation process in the country as a whole and the fast changing academic landscape where the frontiers of learning have to be pushed even further. Paradoxically, a point that should be noted is that, at a time of social fragmentation and economic change, the desire for stable values is most intensely felt by a whole society and more so by learners with a collectivist orientation, who are grappling for anchor and validation. For the Vhembe District learners, writing in English generally becomes essentially a social act with new conventions to be learnt and new literacy skills to be acquired. But the learner (Rubin, 1998: 57) 'lacks adequately differentiated audience constructs, lacks inference rules for selecting constructs, and lacks a rich body of cues from which to draw social inferences'. This is exacerbated by the fact that the learner often has a limited vocabulary and is unfamiliar with the rhetorical structures of the English language.

From the sample responses in this project and from various personal encounters and experiences with the writing efforts of these learners, there is disconcerting evidence in some cases that students can and have moved from one level to the next, for example, first year to second, second to third year, and then Honours levels despite being unsuccessful in composition work, in general, and in argument writing specifically. The evidence speaks for itself from the second, third and even honours' essays that have been presented in this study.

There is a tacit understanding among university staff that the learners will forge new channels of communication with their reader, yet the challenges of keeping these channels open seem to be problematic. This results in a mismatch between learners' performance and staff expectations. The teachers in the intermediate levels not fully aware of the resources of the English language, since it is likely that they were not made aware of them either in school or in teacher training. For instance, many teachers still assume that (narrative) writing, which describes how the world is, continues to be the main goal of writing practice, instead of giving practice in writing that explores how the world works. Writing that explores how the world works is most useful as it has the largest implications for the students' present and later lives.

In conclusion, this study incorporates significant claims of present theory and research in language development. That is, language is learned in context through dealing with problems in which one is immersed in society, because language forms are acquired through the service of various functions which language performs. These functions are incorporated by users of any language into genres (Martin, 1997). And following Mohan's (1986) theoretical work on the relationships between language use and thinking processes, it can be argued that useful academic habits of thinking should be exercised in the class/lecture hall in order for learners to be

successful in the selected language genre of argument writing. In this connection, the learner's environment should form part of the schema to be utilized, because apart from it making academic sense, the learner remains rooted in, and not alienated from, his/her own culture. One could also add that discursive writing is easiest when handled in the context of content-based units of English language learning. Vygotsky, (1987) states, efficacious pedagogy has to be a judicious marriage between immersion in a community of practice and an illustrative focusing and scaffolding from 'more advanced peers' A judicious marriage of a sort is the subject of the closing chapter of this study.

# CHAPTER SIX

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6. 1 INTRODUCTION

In South Africa in general and specifically in the Vhembe District, the sphere of commitment to change is to redress those communicative resources that have been used to maintain subordination. Changing these situations requires facilitators to engage with the flexibility and boundary crossing required of academics working in applied areas of literacy and communication where, writing is regarded as a way of preparing for economic, civic or social roles. And in these roles, writing goes beyond the limits of rudimentary writing training. This is the reason for Widdowson's (1984) stance that writing is not an end in itself. A student, both in school and at university, has to go through a series of social experiences to successfully imbue in him/her to openly question opinions, ideas, issues and texts. It is through taking on ideas and trying them out, debating them, patterning them, analyzing and synthesizing them, supporting them with evidence from the environment and working them into the texture of one's understanding that students effectively learn how to construct their own texts for whatever purposes, including arguments, and they also acquire knowledge in the process.

Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) sociohistorical concept of voice, interaction and understanding provides a basis for perceiving how personal learning and identity formation occur in the connection between local, in-the-moment interactions of students and historical, over time, crucial discourse activities

of the collective. Identity construction, which is seen as the positioning of the student writer in current social and cultural relationships by means of discourse moves, can occur by way of learners' writings as it is those writings that students feel comfortable to use in the class/lecture room that will influence the voices they will employ during the writing tasks in that particular class and in others too.

As already argued, Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) notions of voice and dialogue tie identity building to knowledge building, for he conceives of knowledge as being historically constructed and ideological. The writing becomes the textual or linguistic manifestation of students' voices, and the writing takes on meaning when students, as writers, engage in dialogue with one another. Within these dialogues, in the exercise of voice through writing, the student writers bring new understanding or knowledge into existence. The importance of the quality of the experience of learning the skill of expressing one's opinion and backing it up with reasoned logic for academic development cannot be overemphasized, especially when this experience is linked to the Vygotskian perspective of ZPD [zone of proximal development] and also to scaffolding in the languages in contact. One has to give voice to the opinion one has, otherwise it remains confused and unformed. Students cannot effectively master subject area content without using argument to negotiate and construct meaning. As evidenced through the samples of the Foundation, first, second, third and

Honour's levels, the weak uncertainty avoidance stance ties in with restricted code orientation, influence the communicative style of the students.

It makes academic sense, therefore, that thinking skills developed through the English language lesson should contribute to furthering the students learning in other disciplines even though disciplinary conventions may be somewhat distinct from one another. For instance, the ability to organize a detailed argument to persuade readers that contextualised learning material for low English proficient students is the right thing to do; or that environmental degradation is the result of Africans embracing western values, because conservation was quite effective through the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). In other words, activities and tasks that are set should become the everyday conduits through which social and cultural institutions affect students' experiences and enhance development.

At the most basic level, according to Wells (1986: 20), sentences take on meaning for a learner in relation to the situations in which they are used. And the effectiveness of these sentences (as a resource) depends on the range of purposes to which the student discovers they may be put from his/her experience of interaction with the environment. This discovery could come through texts in his/her writing tasks and as a reader of texts in a class setting. This is reiterated by Whiting (1980), Rogoff (1982), Weisner

(1984), and Tharp & Galimore (1988), who add that everyday activities incorporate opportunities for learning and development through joint production, apprenticeship, and other forms of mediated social learning that are embedded in goal-directed interactions. And of vital importance is the quality of these interactions.

To capacitate learners to be effective in their writing, facilitators at all levels have to take advantage of opportunities for learners' writing to effect social change and to serve and save their society. In this way, the uses to which learners put their literacy become an important asset for solving problems or addressing concerns. The ability and inclination to have more than one perception on an issue comes from interacting with others who hold/have different perceptions on the particular issue. Moreover, writing essays promotes active learning; it gives students opportunities to make connections, to hypothesize, to compile an inventory of their current knowledge and ultimately to make useful mistakes. Useful mistakes are those embraced errors that are recognized, as these can lead to learning and better understanding and performance, because effective action requires the understanding of the physical and the social world or the schema for argument on which one seeks to act. Since an argument schema in particular is abstract, it is transferable to a variety of situations and this is what facilitates dexterity in language use. When students

possess the argument schema, they are able to use these skills in different

communicative modes and, as a result, the skills become "portable".

Facilitators have to be made aware of the role First Language reading and

writing abilities play in developing second language literacy skills, and also

to the role that reading ability in second language plays in the development

of second language writing skills. That is, the handling of reading and

writing is crucial to academic development. Thus, Gee's (2000: 8)

arguments have powerful implications for the conclusion, strategy and

recommendations that are envisaged for this research project. He states

that:

> The sociocultural view of literacy demands that we see  [writing] as
> not one thing, but many: many different socioculturally situated
> [writing] practices. It demands that we see meaning in the world and
> in texts as situated in learners' experiences, experiences which, if
> they are to be useful, must give rise to midlevel meanings through
> which learners can recognize and act on the world in specific ways.
> At the same time, these experiences must be normed and
> scaffolded by masters and more advanced peers within a discourse,
> and such norming and scaffolding must lead to apprentices to build
> the "right" sorts of situated meanings based on shared experiences
> and shared cultural models. Minus the presence of masters of the
> Discourse, such norming and scaffolding is impossible. Such
> "sharing" is always, of course, ripe with ideological and power
> effects, and it leads us always to ask of any school-based
> Discourse, "In what sense is this Discourse 'authentic' that is, how
> and where does it relate to Discourses outside school (e.g., science,
> work, communities)?" In the end, "to read" ["to write"] is to be able to
> actively assemble situated meanings in one or more specific
> "literate" Discourses. There is no reading [writing] in general, at least
> none that leads to thought and action in the world.

And this is why this study makes the major claim of present day theory and

research in language development that language is learned in context

through dealing with problems of the world, in general, as well as those of one's own society, in particular.


## 6. 2 CONCLUSION

The sociocultural influences of the Vhembe District may well pertain to other rural areas. If this is the case, then, Vhembe District may be seen as exemplary rather than definitive. The communal ethos; the significance of shared identifications; shared values and expectations and restricted code orientation underpin the sociocultural learning context of the Vhembe District. The pedagogical stance of the discussion about situated meanings and cultural models is that any efficacious pedagogy must be a judicious mixture of immersion in a community of practice and overt focusing and scaffolding from 'masters' or 'more advanced peers' (Vygotsky, 1987).

The integration of language and content provides a substantive basis for language learning because, in the absence of content and authentic communication, language learning serves as an abstraction, which is devoid of conceptual or communicative substance. This, in turn, can result in the learning being empty (shallow). The integration creates a learning environment that is discourse-rich, because of all the texts that are brought into the learning situation through meaningful tasks of writing and reading. When language interacts with context in the learning situation, there is a systematic planning of language instruction along with content instruction

that in turn entrenches the relationship between language and other aspects of life, in general, and human development, in particular.

Moreover, the content subject matter represents declarative knowledge (propositional knowledge), while the language component is geared towards teaching procedural knowledge which students need to master in order to use language as a tool for learning. English is experienced as a means to some other non-linguistic end, and not in the commonly accepted perspective, simply as an end in itself'. Moreover, contextualized language teaching and learning are self-justified by being peopled by lived experiences and familiar life schemas, especially for low proficient English language Vhembe District students. This means that the topics should be familiar to the students to begin with through collaboration with content facilitators on issues of civic, political, environmental or educational interest. To sum up, **Table 6.1** is the culmination of the considerations in all the chapters.

**Table 6.1 Scaffolding and collaborative-apprenticeship learning & teaching based on content schemas and reading & writing (adapted from Snow, M. & Brinton, D. [eds], 1997).**

| COMMUNICATIVE | CONTENT/LIFE EXPERIENCE-BASED | GENRE-FOCUSED TASKS |
|---|---|---|
| Language resource immersed in life experience contexts | Immersion in a transdisciplinary problem environment | Writing and reading: argumentation/persuasion, exposition |
| Purposeful collaboration for language and content in context | Facilitated exploration | Academic thinking processes entwined with writing |

The learning environment should be made vibrant so that it strives to make the languages accessible, relevant and applicable to the real life situation and to the needs of the learner. Freire (1985: 10) states that literacy is intrinsically linked to political and cultural factors and that literacy is supposed to develop students' critical presence in the real world. The operational definition of literacy that this research project embraces comes from Well's e*t al.*, (1981: 261) fourth level literacy that allows learners 'to employ symbolically-mediated skills of abstraction and reasoning in structuring and solving the various problems they confront in their everyday lives'. It is argued that the degree to which learners acquire the highest levels of literacy is related to 'the extent to which the continued use of these skills is encouraged outside the school context'. And these skills can find expression outside the school/university environment if they are

relevant to the needs of the learners and the community. From the above, it can be seen that discourse and context mutually constitute each other. This augments the view that runs throughout this research project that, when writing is seen as being social, it has significant practical implications for the teaching of writing generally.

Writing is located in ongoing social life. For this research project, "ongoing social life" invokes a double-pronged meaning. That is, English needs to be learnt and made use of as a tool for development. This stems from Stiglitz's (2000: 10) argument on knowledge for development. He rightly asserts that it is through the local selection, assimilation, and adaptation of knowledge that the local experts make knowledge their own. It is also a matter of the "local actors" being open to outside knowledge in a way that reaffirms their autonomy. It is only by remaining on one's feet from an intellectual point of view that "local actors" may contribute to knowledge while remaining within their own context. This means that the local actors should continuously scan globally, while reinventing locally. At this point the discussion leads into the envisaged intervention strategy (appendix F) .

## 6. 3 INTERVENTION STRATEGY

For the intervention strategy that is envisaged, at least at the initial and intermediate levels of second language writing, part of the answer stems

from Halliday's key question (1978: 215), which is quite pertinent at this stage:

> To the extent that the school is a new culture into which the child [the learner] has been socialized …is the actual pattern of language use in the daily life of the school [university] adequate to the socializing task? If it is not  - what can be done to remedy this situation?

Pragmatic interaction is developed through two specific processes (Tulviste, 1991; Wertch, 1991; Hall, 1999; and Gee, 2005). That is, through 'guided discovery' with more experienced participants and through the conscious, systematic study in which students mindfully abstract, reflect upon, and speculate upon the patterns of use. Engaging in social action with people who are more expert is an important 'cultural amplifier' necessary for the development of cognitive processes (Rogoff, 1990). On the relationship between consciousness and the learning of another language, Hall (1999: 141) states that simple exposure to English is not enough, because the focus is mainly on the acquisition of linguistic forms. For students to acquire the pragmatic knowledge, which includes the learning of patterns of language organization, such as that involved in interaction of discursive writing is 'a pedagogy that focuses the learners' attention in ways that help them take notice of co-occurring features of context and the relevant linguistic resources', and this at the heart of the rationale for the strategy (appendix F) of integrating reading and writing with content.

In this approach, students are accorded opportunities in an array of semi-structured and recurring activities about issues which include noting repeated themes and patterns, making claims and providing warrants for them, resolving inconsistencies, and providing possible interpretations. Hall (1999: 142) suggests that the following skills will enhance the development of interactional competence: (1) "notice" a particular linguistic resource and its function, (2) reflect on its interactional meaning (its use by a particular interactant, its particular placement in a sequence of discourse in an interaction, the consequences emerging from its varied use, and so on), (3) formulate and test hypotheses about its conventional uses, interpretations, and consequences of use, (4) develop knowledge that is both domains (that is, practice-specific and domain-general), and (5) develop alternative uses of the resources that may lead to the realization of the learners' individual goal within the larger practice.

Intervention strategies must take cognizance of the influence of Mother Tongue life and cultural experience in order to enhance the construction of knowledge even further. From the perspective of immersion in authentic communication, one has to bring in the relationship of writing and reading processes from a constructivist perspective (as spelt out in Chapter Three of this study). The integration of reading and writing is taken as the interaction of the mind and text. Conscious language learning and natural comprehensible input (content-based) provide different types of knowledge through reading instruction and this can be made use of through transfer to

writing instruction. The approach is concerned with providing information about texts for particular purposes, and making it available at the point of need within the context of real goal directed language use. The Examination of imbedded models in reading is useful in the sense that it clarifies the structure while, at the same time, that explicit structure is providing a framework for guided practice in the genre before free writing is embarked on. After that, the topics learners write about must be designed and sequenced in such a way that the facilitator knows exactly what the learning goals are. Students should be given a choice of topics so that they can write about something they know from experience. After all, even excellent writers do not write about something about which they either have no specific knowledge or have not researched.

By using actual content materials in language classes to demonstrate discursive moves, the language interaction offered in the content areas fosters academic English development in the learner, which, in turn, promotes understanding of the content areas. As students reinforce and further their world knowledge or knowledge of other disciplines through the English language, community support is ensured in the form of collaboration between content area and language facilitators as students need to be given support of various sorts within the limited circumstances of the learning/teaching environment.

The combination of content, local knowledge, reading and writing plus collaboration from facilitators of Mother Tongues embodies an experiential multiplicity that acts as a resource for the enlargement of the students' world. Collaboration has an inbuilt rationalization for communicating and constructing knowledge across individuals, which takes account of the bridge between individual and social action. In other words, collaboration allows for the merging of horizons that may result in an enrichment of individual learner perspectives.

Collaborative effort can serve as a catalyst for individual transformation and this is in line with the various elements that have been discussed in this research project. The accumulated knowledge point to the ability of the socioculture to support individual learning, although it is recognized that individuals do the thinking, desiring and purposing. In the collaborative milieu, pedagogy facilitates dialogue among staff; between staff and students; and between students and students. Collaborative learning is given a boost by the fact that it tends to favour those groups that are already united by virtue of sociocultural backgrounds (Young, 1986: 13) or within a homogeneous group that is defined by similar attributes which are revamped by the fact that cooperative group activity is 'influenced by the cultural repertoires of students more strongly than any other setting' (Tharp & Galimore, 1989: 184). In this context, sense can be arrived at collaboratively. Hall (in Hinkel, 1999: 142) endorses this view and astutely

points out that 'availability of multiple sources of information enhances knowledge construction as understanding finds coherence among pieces of information'. In such a context, a university of diverse disciplines can become a catalyst for knowledge building, and a community of knowledge users for sociocultural knowledge provides the basis for message interpretation

It should be noted at this stage that the real challenge for education is to embrace and not necessarily just to tolerate conflict because conversion is not the goal of a liberal education. It is understanding with reasoning coupled with self-transformation that are the goals. In Mode 2 knowledge production, there is attention allotted to the problem area, and preference is given to collaborative performance rather than an individual's performance. Gibbons *et al.* (1994: 43) state that the greater the ability to master a language the more attention has to be paid to the context in which communication is occurring. It is also important to note that students' writing is shaped through the sociolinguistic discourse practices of the class of the speech communities in which they live. It is, therefore, socially constructed and maintained. It follows, then, that the writing can be socially reconstructed and transformed. The underlying principle is that class discourse practices are responsible for remaking as well as making learners into literate performers.

The identity that the English language facilitators of learning should strive to model for the learners should be one that embraces a kaleidoscopic notion of the self. In the kaleidoscopic notion, students are encouraged to exploit English for their own purposes, that is, as a vehicle for their socioculture in total, as Rodby (1990) notes and is stated in Chapter Three of this study. The accessibility of various discourse communities contributes to the enrichment of one's worldview. This is enhanced by Bakhtin's (1986: 7) perspective on interaction being most beneficial when it is most heterogeneous, that is, when it crosses cultural boundaries. It is the dialectical encounter with an "other" (which could be a person or an idea) and a reflexive engagement with self that makes it beneficial for the student. It is seen as the social construction of meaning, which goes beyond a set of skills to include the potential for uncovering new views of the world and the ability to change.

## 6. 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The premise that this study has taken is that to optimize learning, language learning should accrue from interactions between the learners and their environment. Environment, in this instance, represents academic content areas, and everything else that constitutes the learners' lived experiences, including topical issues that take centre stage in the media, provided these are within their level of understanding and appreciation. The environment facilitates the task of mastering the techniques of discursive writing by

providing the evidence that the learner requires, because teacher scaffolding is partly based on the visual context afforded by existing schemas of the natural environment in which the learners are. The significance of teaching language using available schema is that the student  has two types of resources available to him/her. The first is the textual sphere, which consists of the authoritative texts and genres of the classroom. The second is the contextual sphere, which is the knowledge about life in the community, the school/university, the class/lecture hall and in ongoing social interactions; and academic achievement needs to push through the two resources..

Crowhurst (1990: 357) notes that facilitator intervention should consist of providing opportunities to practise contextually relevant writing topics of interest and relevance to the learners and giving instruction to students when they are ready to profit from it. Therefore, the following ideas form the skeleton of the recommendations;

- Teacher training needs to continue at in-service as well as initial levels. Teachers need to be technically competent, that is able to teach in the second language with ease. They also need to keep abreast with the latest research into the language concerning techniques and the like and society.

- Only students who show remarkable interest in and aptitude for the English language generally should be allowed and encouraged to

specialize in the language in order to become future specialists/facilitators of English. And specialization here means taking language courses right through their university training, with specialization commencing from second year right through to an Honours degree and so on.

- It is recommended that further research on the sociocultural context of discursive writing be carried out by other researchers in both content subjects and the languages, as well as in other sociocultural contexts to facilitate comparative studies.

- Language learning requires collaboration among all staff. In this connection, facilitators should work as teams to enable students to make academic progress while learning English. Links to content areas encourage learners to make connections to language and content in the two contexts, that is, to foster collaborative-apprenticeship learning. In this way, the learner is able to draw from two types of knowledge reservoirs: the textual sphere, which consists of texts and class genres; and the contextual sphere, which is the knowledge about life in the community, the university and ongoing social interactions. What should be underscored, is the fact that planning must take into account the fact that teachers in the Vhembe high schools are often not so proficient in English.

- A consultation committee should be instituted with surrounding schools to map out strategies for language development. In this

respect, the focus is beyond the language-learning domain to education in general. This is one aspect that is not covered in the present study, but which could well provide an area for further research.

- Facilitators of content subjects should be encouraged to lay down explicit recommendations on English language matters to be incorporated into their assessment schemes as a way of moving towards transdisciplinarity and fostering all round academic proficiency in the learners.

- Topics should be chosen in consultation with the students. In other words, facilitators of English language should select issues/topics that students feel very strongly about. These should emanate from their contexts.

- Students should be encouraged to direct their discursive writing to their teachers, classmates, parents, principals and others in their community such as government representatives.

- Students should not only be required to write, but also to read persuasive/argumentative writing. This will facilitate the acquisition of appropriate linguistic forms and structures of argument.

- When integrating such readings into the general curriculum of the learning process, discussion of such readings should cover content, structure and the rhetorical features employed. The mutual inclusiveness of seeing language as both a system and resource is

enforced. However, the effectiveness of seeing language as a resource can only be realized through the range of purposes to which the learner puts its use from his/her experience of interaction.

In closing, this study embraces the view that education involves change, and this change process ties education to knowledge. Stiglitz (2000: 10) notes that the transformative power of knowledge in education and, in the light of knowledge being public and also transformative, it is incumbent upon the knowledge institutions to enhance the abilities of the students to tap into the reservoir of global knowledge. This is because the uniqueness of every society requires the localization of global knowledge and this is applicable to Vhembe District. The fact that local knowledge takes account of the specifics of place, people and time,  means local actors have to take an active role through its knowledge institutions in the local learning process.

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A
# Academic Staff Sociocultural Questionnaire

1 Do you believe students in the Vhembe district have experienced serious deficiencies in their Language education?

Explain what the deficiencies are?

_____

_____

_____

2 If there are deficiencies, are these attributable to:

2. 1 Limited academic skills in the Mother Tongue

2. 2 Second language acquisition

2. 3 Resistance to interaction in the English Language

2. 4 All of the above

2. 5 Any other, please specify Explain:

_____

_____

_____

3 Do you think the society in the Vhembe district discourages transparency?

3.1 How does this affect the expression of opinion?

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

3. 2 Do you think the above has an effect on the students' ability to express personal opinion?

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

3. 3 Would the above have a bearing on students' ability to argue on issues in writing? If so Explain:

_____

_____

_____

3. 4 Do you think the above impacts on the students' ability to express themselves without fear of censure?

Explain:

_____

_____

4 Do you think students believe that the printed word enshrines/ represents absolute truth which cannot be contested?

Explain:

_____

_____

_____

5 Are there gender differences in the way male and female students express their opinions? Explain

_____

_____

_____

6 Please add any information that you think will add value to the knowledge of the sociocultural learning context of our students.

_____

_____

_____

# APPENDIX B
# Student Sociocultural Questionnaire

1. Where is your home (where you live)?_____

2. What languages do you speak?_____


When? _____ 2 With whom?_____

3. Which high school do you come from?_____ in _____District.

4. Were you taught in English all the time? No/Yes_____

5. If not, which other language was used?_____.

**B. Answer Yes or No against the statements that follow:**

6. When using English, I feel:

6.1 Not so sure in conversation Yes/No ___

6.2 Confident in writing Yes/No____

7. Learning the basics of the English sentence structure at university is

a) necessary. Yes/No_____
b) not necessary. Yes/No_____
c) it is important. Yes/No ____

**C   Mark with an in the appropriate column below according to
whether you agree with the statements or not using the following key:
   [(AL= always, S= sometimes, R=rarely]**

8. When I meet people that I do not know I:

|  | AL | SM | R |
|---|---|---|---|
| a) avoid conversation | ___ | ____ | ___ |
| b) tend to use my MT | ___ | ____ | ____ |

9. When I meet people who need help and they speak English I:

|  | AL | SM | R |
|---|---|---|---|

a) avoid them          ___      ____      ___

b) tend to speak to them in my MT    ___      ____      _____

c)  cooperate and use
English          ____      ____      ____

                       AL    S    R

10. Do you ever talk on the telephone in English?    ____ ____ ____

11. Do you wish you used English quite often?    YES      NO

                                             ____      _____

a) If Yes,
Why?_____

b) If No, why
not?_____

# APPENDIX C

# Mother Tongue Questions

**Northern Sotho Language Questions**

**Q1**. *What was the aim of the missionaries in Africa?*

**Q2**. *Give four publications by John Bennie.*

**Q3**. *Give three methods of language classification based on linguistic facts.*

**Q4**. *Give and explain different stages in the evolution of a language.*

**Q5**. *Write short notes on the thematic meaning of sentences in Northern Sotho.*

**Q6**. *The applied verbal extension could bring into a word various nuances of meaning. With four suitable Northern Sotho examples, illustrate these.*

**Q7.** *Give a brief discussion of Carl Meinhof's contribution to the development of Bantu Linguistics under the following: His short background history; The contents of Das Tshi – Venda; The contents of Die Bedeutung des Sotho fur die; The contents of Grundriss einer Lautlehre der Bantusprachen: The contents of Der Koranadialekt der Hottentitischen.*

**Tshivenda Language Questions**.

*Q8. Historically, the way of writing words differs from the way we speak. Discuss this statement giving appropriate examples in Tshivenda.*

**9**. *With suitable examples show how gender ( males and females) could be referred to in Tshivenda.*

**Q10**. *Show with suitable examples, which language groups have influenced Tshivenda dialects.*

**Q11**. *Lombard et al. (1985) put it vividly that extensions occur between the verbal root and the ending. Discuss how these extensions (only five) may affect meaning in Tshivenda lexical items.*

**Q12**. *Leech (1981) distinguishes four major types of oppositions. Name and discuss each one of them giving Tshivenda examples.*

**Q13**. *Discuss the content, scope and delimitation of the field of study in syntax.*

**Q14**. *Giving Tshivenda examples briefly discuss Theta Theory as employed in Tshivenda.*

**Q15**. *Discuss how you could classify verbs in Tshivenda.*

**Xitsonga Language Questions**

Most of the Xitsonga questions were in Xitsonga and translations had to be sought from the department for each individual question. For the sake of uniformity with the other two first languages, it was considered convenient to put the English versions first for ease of reference.

**Q16**. *[Give a detailed explanation of the concept translation. To support your answer, quote from relevant authors].Hlamusela hi vuenti theme ra vuhundzuluxo. Seketela nhlamulo ya wena hi ku tshaha vatsari van wana*

**Q17**. *[Discuss your understanding of "languages of use in parliament". With extracts from some authors support your discussion].Kanela (discuss) leswi*

*u twisisaka swona hi "language(s) of use in parliament". Nkanelo wa wena wu fanele wu seketeriwa hi mintshaho ya vatsari van wana.*

**Q18***. [Explain the concept "code switching" under the following headings: Metalinguistic function; Directive function; Referential function]. Hlamusela theme ra "code switching" ehansi ka tinhlokomhaka leti landzelaka: Metalinguistic function; Directive function; Referential function.*

**Q19***. [Explain three types of language planning].*

*Hlamusela tinxaka tinharhu ta "language planning"*

**Q20***. [What is historical comparative linguistics]?*

*Xana mpimanyiso wa tindzimi i yini*

**Q21***. [What is genetic classification, Discuss.]? Xana maavelo ya jenetiki hi wahi  Kanela*

**Q22***. [The short story "Poetry is witchcraft" is so much related to the proverb "chicken does not take care of a friend's"]. [Critically support or disagree with this ideology].Xirungulwana xa "vusiwana i vuloyi" xi fambelana swinene ni xivuriso lexi nge "A yi hleteri xa munghana" Pfumela kumbe u kaneta  Kanela*

**Q23***. [The short story "A witch has no colour" creates an ideology that a human being is not satisfied with what he has]. [In a discussion critically agree or agree].*

*Xirungulwana xa "noyi u hava muhlovo" xi kombisa hilaha swi nonohaka hakona ku va munhu a enela hi leswi a nga na swona. Pfumela kumbe u kaneta  Kanela*

## APPENDIX D
## Sample argument essays (English Department)

## PROMPT
***Should parents be able to control the lives of their children (13-21years old)***

## S1
*Yes, in my opinion parents should be able to control the lives of their children aged between 13 and 20 years of age. Parents are custodians of children. They are the people who brought these children to this world in the first place. Therefore, for parents, this custodianship is a God-given right. For this reason, they have the right to control the lives of their children because they know right from wrong. Also they have the best interests of their children at heart. Thus, the choices that these parents make for their children will almost always be the right ones.*

*Controlling children's lives requires experience and love. In these two respects, parents are the best equipped to do this. Through years of experience and watching other people raise their children, parents are the best people that children can trust their lives with. The other option is for children to put their trust in their friends. Needless to say, friends are often friends when things are going right. One quote rightly put is: 'when days are dark, friends are few'. Parents are therefore dependable at all times.*

*Most psychologists believe how a child is raised will determine the kind of adult that the child will become. Controlling a child is part of raising a child. This is so because we live in a world where there are several forms of control. We are controlled how fast we can drive a car; we are controlled where we can build a house; where we can fish and do other things. In other words, our lives are controlled. Therefore, the sooner a child learns this, the better.*

*Children often like to assign blame when things go wrong; they often blame one person or another. Society also attributes the way an adult behaves to the way in which s/he was raised. Therefore, responsible parenting is a must. Secondly in the long run, both the parent and child will benefit because the parent is a citizen in this world, they can differentiate right from wrong. Children must be told, for example, when to come home and which friends to play with. They can also be advised which sport to play, which career would be good for them and so on. Through proper control, the child soon realizes these truths because s/he is not born with this knowledge.*

*Some people associate control with abuse. Control can sometimes be abuse. However, many parents are caring individuals who would kill to protect their children. Therefore, the argument that control equals abuse does not hold water. Control is what teaches the child to be a disciplined, responsible member of society. Even when control means using the cane*

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*once in a while, this is not bad, as long as it is not excessive. The English have a saying, "spare the rod and spoil the child." Children who are not controlled think the world out there is uncontrolled, that one can do as one pleases. When children grow up with this attitude, often they learn the truth when it is too late. Control forms an important part of parenting. Children must be controlled, even if this means using the cane.*
528

## S2

*First of all the word 'control' itself takes us back to the dark-old-days of apartheid and torture and just because of those days, I don't think that anybody in South Africa deserves that punishment again. Controlling a human being is like punishing a human being and that is bad enough. What I would like parents to do though is to show their teenage children the right path because yes, it is very essential for parents to monitor the lives of their teenagers but not control them.*

*In my opinion good and caring parents are the ones who not only love but also respect their teenage children enough to guide them on everything from academics down to sex. It is best for parents to counsel their children before they even put their foot wrong so that those children know whom to blame when things are not going their way. And children on the other hand, have to help their parents help them because obviously for progress sake, parents and children have to meet halfway.*

*The more parents guide their teenage children in the right way and not control their lives, the more civilized and independent these children will become and that is exactly what our continent (Africa) needs right now. Children who are not free make a lot of idiotic errors because they live a one sided life, life of being afraid of making mistakes, perfect life and they can't progress in life because they don't do something but not to do something (sic) and time is very limited for people like that. Controlling parents are taking two steps backwards as they cannot be with their children every minute, for instance when they pass their O'levels and go to universities or colleges, the pathetic job of controlling will be wasted. It is better for parents to stop the old and boring controlling job and start talking sense to their teenagers before it is too late.*

*The relationship between parents and their children must not be like that of a policeman and a dangerous criminal where there is always that tension and hatred. It must be healthy and interesting and neither of the two should be afraid to approach the other because good and fruitful communication is the only way out.*

*Our country needs responsible and reliable leaders in future and as children, we learn leadership qualities from the people close to us and more especially our parents and I don't think we must learn the control qualities from them because they are too smart for that. And also it is quite useless to control what you will not control for life and it is best to advise because advice is there for good.*

*We know as teenagers that our parents love us, yes, you care about us very much but controlling is just not an alternative but good communication and understanding between us is the way. Good parents will always advise their children and not control them because controlling is bad and wrong.*
502

## S3

*I think that parents should be able to control their children's lives especially those of 13-20 years. A teenager's life is the most complicated one especially nowadays. They face challenges that lead them sometimes into making wrong decisions. They are not aware of what is happening out there and they are afraid to face the world alone. They may think that they know a lot but the truth is they do not know anything and there is still a lot ahead of them. They cannot tackle every problem they meet alone without the help of their parents.*

*Children of 13-20 years are irresponsible and do not use their minds properly. They just think that life is all about having fun and being happy all the time. Whenever they come across a little problem they just wish they were dead or even think that everybody hates them. If their parents are around them and able to share with them their experiences everything can be easier and manageable.*

*Moreover, children believe that if our parents do not allow us to go to the bash, parties, and other enjoyable places is because they do not love us. I think it is because they know how stupid we can be sometimes. They know that we are influenced by anything. We do not understand the difference between good and evil. When something looks good we don't look at where it originates from and the outcome of it. We just go with the flow.*

*Children think that parents control us too much but I think parents are just protecting us from the evil things the world can lead us into. We have the problem of teenage pregnancy. I think for a child to fall pregnant when she is still very young is determined by her parents. They should teach their children about this stage of life and tell them everything they will come across, from erection to masturbation, sex and every single detail because they have been there. They should also know their children's whereabouts, who they are dating and their real friends.*

*We also have the case of alcohol and drug abuse. This situation is getting worse everyday. Young people throw themselves into danger by doing drugs and alcohol abuse, which result in crime. This is because parents are not involved in their children's lives. They neglect them. According to Keith and Sylvia, neglected and brutalized children grow up unbalanced and need only minor frustration. I think this happens because of lack of communication between children and their parents. Parents do not realize their children are living in a cruel world outside their home. They do not even care what they do. I think teenage pregnancy and drug abuse are the major problems that occur due to parents' ignorance.*

*Parents should be there for their children at this stage physically and emotionally. They should have time to communicate with them. They*

*should give them their own space and let them express their thoughts. They should not always scold their children because it makes them become even more intoxicated (sic). Crosson-Tower (1999) concludes that parental interest in the child means that parents and children give each other positive reinforcement.*
533

## S4

*In my opinion parents have a responsibility towards the lives of their children irrespective of their age. Parents should control their children's lives as long as they are staying with them. I believe that children between the ages (13-20 years) need support in everything they do from their parents. It is the duty of each and every parent who care and love the future and life of his/her children to control their lives.*

*Turning thirteen to twenty years does not mean you are old enough to be able to make your own decisions without the assistance from your parents. Children between these ages cannot take good decisions alone. They need to be taught and advised about the reality of life by their parents. They should control the lives of their children so that they cannot suffer the consequences in their future life. In most cases children delude themselves and their parents on what they don't know and what they do know.*

*It is a very good time or stage that parents must be realistic with their children about the facts and reality of life in general. Children between these ages are going through various changes in their bodies and life. This is the appropriate time for parents to control the lives their children because at this stage children can get wrong information about these changes in their bodies from their friends. All these make children to get confused and frustrated. As a caring and loving parent, they should sit down and discuss sexual related issues with their children before they get lost.*

*As we all know charity begins at home. Parents have an obligation to control and teach their children how to behave well so that they have good manners and respect other people and their lives. Failure to do or play this role, the children will get out of hand. It is quite sad when one notices children who are behaving badly especially at school or church. Once people notice that, they conclude that parents failed to take control of their children's lives.*

*Finally to control your children's lives does not mean you don't love them. It shows that you really love and care about their lives and their future. Parents have the responsibility to control their children's lives as long as they are staying with them so that they cannot get frustrated. Children at this stage are still young. They do not think ahead, they need full support from their parents all the time. They need help from parents when they need to take decisions of their future life and everything they might decide or do. Parents must cherish their children all the time.*
446

## S5

*We are living in an era of profound changes. Where there is no clear distinction between parents and children. Children want to rule over their parents. Certainly this is wrong. Parents need to control their children. This is the norm and culture of our society.*

*As much as parents should control their children, this should not in any way mean oppression of the children. Parents need to establish a good relationship between them and their children. It is crucial for parents to control their children because they have a certain experience of life. This does not mean parents should dictate every term in the family but rather the views of children should also be afforded a hearing.*

*This means there should be a clear understanding between parents and children. There should be mutual respect. For instance, parents should not decide for children which career to pursue in life because the future belongs to the children with lots of opportunities but the final decision lies with the children.*

*In the same vein children should respect the rules and regulations of their parents. They should not disrespect the rules and regulations of their parents in the name of freedom. These days children misuse their rights to the point of literally dancing on top of their parents' heads. For instance, they do girlfriend and boyfriend stuff when it only suits them, not considering what their parents are saying. This is the reason most of the teenagers are vulnerable to the pandemic and communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).*

*This does not only damage the lives of the children but also kills the morals of our society. To avoid this social degradation, parents need to take control of their children, after all that is the reason human beings are parenting animals. At some stage in life children would reach adulthood stage and this is the duty of parents through good parenting to lead them to that stage.*

*In conclusion, I should say that a good society is made of mutual respect and understanding between children and their parents. So, parents should control their children taking into consideration the views of the children. This establishes a good relationship and a sense of respect between parents and children*

377

## S6

*First and paramount one has to understand the role of a parent and child respectively. A parent is a mother/father who gave birth to a baby and is bringing up and caring about that baby. Being a child means you are still young and not fully developed or grown up. Hence, you need your parental guidance and control, for you to grow up and be a respected person in a society.*

*Parental guidance and control helps the child to have good personality, behaviour and respect in a society. Children who are raised by the firm*

*hand of their parents are usually identified the first time you speak to that child. Moreover, the street kids, thieves, drug addicts and most criminals are suffering the consequences of lacking control of their parents.*

*A parent gives life to his\her child. By so saying, I mean he\she teaches a good way of living to his\her child so that it will be useful in the entire life of that child. By the time the child is grown up and mature enough, he\she starts applying what he\she is taught by his/her parents. Being mature and grown up, I mean when one is at least above 21 and no longer depends on parents for most things, one can now stand on ones own. S/he can even initiate a family and be a parent.*

*However, parents give direction to their children, for they cannot be there to lead them in their parent hood. Then, this is the time a child takes that direction when he is still under the control of his parents.*

*It is not that when parents control their children they do not give them freedom. They do but the freedom must be accompanied by responsibility. Parents are accountable and responsible for their children's freedom at the time the children are between 13 and 20.*

*When you are at this age, this is the time you get more advise from your parents. They teach you what is right from wrong. This is the time you realize how much they love you. This is the time they tell you about lofty goals so that you make correct choices and good decisions to achieve your goals. This is the time they teach you about being kind and gracious. They teach about being moral in life you can have a better future.*

*In the light of all the above, a child will be a responsible parent at his own parenthood for he has grown up being taught morality his parents when controlling him from doing bad. Then yes, parents must control their children's life between 13 and 20.*

*439*

## S7

*Parents do not have the right to control their children's life. Everybody on earth is an individual and no one should expect someone to live exactly like him/her. Yes, it is true parents should be responsible for their children's lives, but there is no way they can control them.*

*The role of the parents is to give guidance and not to control their children's lives. For example a child after matric decides to follow a career in Media Studies at university level, and parents force him/ her to study Bcom., because the parents are controlling this child, s/he ends up with no choice. The child takes Bcom and ends up failing miserably because s/he is not good in Maths and Accounting but because parents are controlling him/her, the child ends up with no choice but to follow the stream that they want because after all, they are the ones who are going to pay the fees. That child takes Bcom. Degree and fails miserably. Parents will not stand it. They will say many bad things and accuse him/her of not studying but forget that he did not want Bcom because s/he knows that s/he is poor in Maths.*

*What I am trying to show is that if parents control their children's lives, they must be careful of the consequences and usually they are not good at all. If parents are controlling their children's lives they must be careful and they must be aware of the pressure and hard time they are giving their children. Not everything in the child's life should be controlled by parents unless the child is misbehaving like for example if a is changing men, parents should give her advice and show her the right way because controlling her will just make matters worse.*
*297*


## S8

Children are also human beings and they also have the right to decide what they think is best for them. Children are also entitled to the right to self-determination, and parents should at least try to provide the best guidance they can afford, but not to control. Children must not be denied the right to decide for themselves.
*Controlling your child's life has a negative impact on the child. Children who are told what to do tend to develop dependency syndrome, low self-confidence and low self esteem. They may not be able to make important personal decisions, for example, choosing a partner. It is, however, very important that parents respect the child's right to self-determination and not violet that right. It is, however, true that parents should at least try to give their child the best they can but they must know where and when to interfere with the child's life.*
*If one can look at the high rate of suicide amongst children it is often caused by the parents 'interference' into their child's life. Gone are those when parents has to decide for their children. It's time that parents allow their children to exercise their constitutional rights to self-determination. Previously parents where turned with the responsibility of controlling their children's lives this was common particularly from the African perspective. One may argue that it has really helped those children to be respectful and yes it is true but the question becomes, were they respectful or just doing what they were told to do? We are now living in a democratic world where there are lots of challenges to be faced and children have not acquired basic skills of decision-making, particularly from their childhood to be able to face the challenges.*
*This world requires someone who is independent in term of decision making, someone who believes in himself  and someone who is determined to face whatever challenges in life. There are a number of student in almost all institutions of higher learning who are studying for degrees, which they never dreamed of but just doing what they were told and most of them are never successful. Parents should do their children a favour by not interfering into the children's lives but provide adequate guidance instead of controlling.*
*377*

## S9

Children are born and they learn to be under the control of their parents. They learn that their parents are what made them. When the children grow they expect their parents to respect them and stop controlling them but when it comes to parents it does not matter how old a child is but they still consider them to be children.

*Looking at today's lifestyle, if parents stop controlling their children between 13 and 20 years, these children will grow up not knowing what is right or wrong. They grow up knowing that whatever they do if they are not affected it is right thing to do.*

*Parents are the ones that made us what we are and the way they do their things can determine us to become good parents in the future. It is not easy to control children at this kind of age because they go through stages of growing but parents try their best to do a perfect job.*

*Children between the age of 13 and 20 years go through many obstacles in their lives due to the stage of growth. And they tend to listen to their friends (peer group pressure) more than their parents which in the end, most of them their lives become unbearable in a way that some turn to become parents at an early age. Some decide to run away from home because they are ashamed of themselves. Some commit suicide due to life becoming too much to bear. And some become infected with HIV/AIDS or other diseases but in the end they think back to what their parents were trying to do for them and for some it is too late to go back to the their parents.*

*Children who are under the control of their parents gain more knowledge of what is right or wrong and yet it does not mean that they follow those rules, they become aware of what life holds. The duty of the parents is to control children who fall under the mentioned age group because they are still legally under their parents' control.*

*Most children that are under their parents' control turn out to be more responsible and can handle most of the experiences in life. It is the parents' duty to control their children at this age and in the end the control from parents turn these children to become good human beings.*

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## S10

*The behaviour of a teenager is most complicated. It needs a closer look and parent's guidance. The teenager stage is one of the stages in which youths these days are failing to behave themselves. Parents are also failing to control the person in this stage of maturity. His behaviour needs parents' intervention. Therefore, parents should control the life of a teenager.*

*Children at the age of between 13 and 20 need to be treated in a manner that they will be responsible for all actions they take. Only parents can control how they act and how they react towards serious situations. The high parental guidance they get, the more motivated they become. A child is taught to be responsible at home. Because charity begins at home.*

*A teenager needs to be controlled, he/she does not need to be independent. As long as  he/she is still under parental care, that is what they deserve. Teenagers need parental back up as to how to decide, react and solve problems. Teenagers always cry over their careless decisions. No independence for teenagers if parents do not want to end up regretting. As long as he/she is a child under the parents' house, he/she deserves to be controlled.*

*The deeds of today determine the behaviour of tomorrow. The tomorrow man/woman is being built now, and tomorrow he/she will be a parent. The parents' race is to build today's youth to be tomorrow's parents. What he/she is today determines what he/she will be tomorrow. So, parents take care of your children and control them.*

*258*

## S11

*I think parents have the right to show the way and lead their children to what they think is right and for their moral good. Children who are between the ages of thirteen and twenty are in a turbulent and overlapping stage. They are shading away their childhood, on the other hand, and entering adulthood on the other. This stage brings with it confusion if parents do not vigilantly give guidance and control to their children. It is the time for teenagers to have friends mostly of the opposite sex. Without controlling them, children would become vulnerable in accepting bad behaviours from their peers, thinking that it is the appropriate way of doing things.*

*Having two kids who are now in their teens, I can see that this is the most frustrating period of all the stages to both parents and children. As a parent, you need to be vigilant to make them follow what you think is right for them. If you slacken in your control and guidance, they can quickly see it and continue with their wayward dealings. Constant control and guidance could make them walk in the right direction, thus, giving them more confidence.*

*However, the control and guidance should not be very strict as these would make them rebellious. They must see that their parents are doing all what they can to make their world for the best. They must see that there are giving all what they think is right in preparation for their forthcoming adult world.*

*The control that parents should impose on their children should be for the benefit of their children not for the satisfaction of their (parents') whims.*

*277*

## S12

*Parents play a vital role in their children's lives because they teach them everything about life, responsibility, decision-making but this doesn't mean that they always have to take decisions or control them.*

*Most parents tend to confuse control and guidance. They use control and think that they are guiding their children. What they do not understand is*

*that things are changing and children want to explore and sometimes discover things on their own.*

*There are advantages and disadvantages of control when it comes to children. If children are given freedom they tend to use it in a wrong way especially when parents do not show any interest in their affairs more especially teenagers because if there's no control from parents they may come back home late, associate themselves with people who are not good examples in their lives. People who always give them good advice if parents do not have control in their children's lives they might even think that they are not loved and they may even feel rejected because I believe that a concerned mother is a good mother. Children who grow up in families where they are given freedom and parents do not interfere in their matters often result in being drug abuse victims from peer pressure, crime and also teenage pregnancy.*

*Control is good when used in the right way. Parents must guide and sometimes control their children but also let them make their own decisions and discover what and how life is like. Parents and children who talk to one another when having problems often have a good relationship and parents sometimes trust and believe them to make their own decisions and control is used in the right and correct or proper way.*

*In conclusion, I can say that control is needed between parents and children but has to be exercised in the right way. Parents have to understand that children will not remain children forever. They sometimes in life have to make their own decisions.*

*331*

## S13

*Parents are children before they become parents themselves. For them to play good parental roles in their children's lives, they have to go through different developmental stages where responsibility plays a huge role. Eventually, as our parents go through these developing stages of maturity, independence as well comes into the picture along with other important key factors.*

*As much as parents were children before, children themselves will eventually become parents with good parental duties to deliver and with good intentions only, but control is not a key factor in achieving that. The fact of the matter is that no human life on earth would want their lives controlled by anybody, including parents.*

*Parents have the right to overreact and worry where the lives of their children are concerned without being controlling. Over-protection is normal in all kinds of relationships, but control causes a drift in a relationship. Controlling parents don't achieve the goal of building their children properly, but instead destroy them totally and causes eternal emotional, mental and psychological scars.*

*Parents only wish and want the best for their children and that can be achieved through guidance and teaching children responsibility and*

*independence. At a later stage in life, children will get to understand the reason their parents brought them up in that manner and thereby put all the teaching into practice.*

*A child needs to know where s/he is going and what s/he wants in life on their own without parents attempting to drive them into what they would want them to do or be. Children need to know that life is not a bed of roses and that it is the survivor of the fittest and the only way to know that for sure, is for them to experience hardships on their own. Children need to be cautioned and guided, but not controlled because an independent child is capable of looking at oneself through tough times and learn with time that though times never last, but tough people do.*

*It is like sending a child off to university and wanting to control them financially by dictating how children spend their money. Those children never learn how to handle their own finances even at a late stage in life. Controlling parents are doing great job of turning their own children into low self-esteemed, discouraged, sad, incompetent and irresponsible people. Parents have all the right to love care, educate, guide, protect and give them rules and regulations, but certainly not to control and run their lives. Everyone is free to express how he or she want to live his or her lives.*

*433*


## S14

*I do not think that parents should control the lives of their children because those children are also human beings. If a parent takes full control of the life of his/her child he denies the child the time to practice responsibility. What parents must do is to give their children advice on how to be a responsible person in life. A person of between 13 to 20 years is no longer regarded as a child as he/she is about to reach adulthood. So parents must not control their lives.*

*If parents want their children to follow their footsteps, They must teach them to behave well, not to control their lives. Parents must be the first people to guide their children  so that they may not go out and get bad ideas from their schoolmates. If one is between 13 and 20, that person is able to differentiate between good and bad and so if parents can show their children the way in an acceptable manner, their children will be law abiding people but if they control the lives of their children, those children will go out seeking happiness and pleasure in an incorrect way.*

*A child who grows up in a family where parents control the lives of their children starts to think that the parents do not trust them, so they have to do naughty things so that they may not trust them for real. Children are able to differentiate between love and harshness.*

*I don't think that controlling the life of your child is a way of showing love or care, but you need your child to fear you and not respect you. Parents who love their children do not control their lives but when the child reaches some stages of growth such as puberty and adolescence, they start equipping them for life. Parents have to tell their children that because you*

*are 13 now you are becoming a young man so you don't have to behave like a child any more, you have to move from childish things and start behaving like person who is about to reach adulthood. The parents must also tell the child that they are not giving him a license to street behavior, but he must go according to their wish.*

*Most children whose parents control their lives end up being useless people in life because it is hard to stay with people who control your life. Parents who control the lives of their children think they are teaching them to live according to their wish but those children feel like they are in a prison of some kind as they do not have control on themselves.*

*Children who grew up in families where parents control their lives seem to have problems at school because they don't stop thinking of their situation at home. Some parents even tell their children not to have friends or select friends for them. These kinds of parents usually select children of their family friends to be their children's friends instead of telling them to choose good friends so that they may not encounter problems in their friendship.*

*Some children whose parents control their lives end up as teenage mothers and fathers because they think that doing that is one way of making the parents aware that controlling their lives hurt them. Some children become drug users because they think that drugs keep their minds away from their parents.*

*If children from this kind of families get a chance to be alone, where the parents are not around they do something, which a person who is fresh minded can never do. These children happen to do naughty things because they do not get a chance to think for themselves because of harsh parents who think that they want to build their children by controlling their lives.*

*638*

## S15

*Parents should control their children's lives, but to a certain extent. Parents could be either bad or good depending on how they live. Many parents are good to can control their children's lives but they are also erroneous as all people are. Parents are duty bound to nurture and groom their children up to a certain stage whereby children have their own responsibilities and wills. Children have their rights to choose partners, institutions of higher learning, clothes and some few others, but not all of them as parents are there to check the wrongs.*

*Children are products of a family institution that is entirely governed by parents. Therefore, children are there to be equipped with norms and values of the society in which they live. Parents should with all cost see to it that their children are not a disgrace to society. Parents should make sure that children are all at home at a certain time to protect them from bad things which lurk in the dark, like getting involved in gangs and mugging people.*

*Parents play a pivotal role in their children's lives. Orphans and street kids are doomed to failure in everything that they could think of doing for the betterment of their lives due to lack of parental care. They tend to lead bad lives like robbing people and car hijacking in order to fend for themselves. If their parents were alive they would have given them good advice and nurture them accordingly and be better people. The escalation of teenage pregnancy is also caused by lack of parental advice. Children prefer reserved parents to talkative parents. They do not want to be ruled off from what they have engaged themselves in, for example hanging around with boys and doing all sorts of things at a tender age. If parents do not stop them from doing all those bad things, they tend to be unruly and end up pregnant by students who do not work that could also jilt them. Parents are there to control their children until they are married and start their own families.*

*Parents do have some facets of life where they know that they should not control their children. The issues of choosing marriage partners, universities and degrees they want to pursue and some sensitive issues as well. Parents also have control on the kind of clothes children should put on because it is their money which buy for them. Indecent clothes, which leave their children like whores, cannot do them good. Parents prefer all good to their children to bad things.*

*In conclusion, I would emphasise that parents should have at least ninety percent control over their children. They are there to build and not to destroy. They are there to teach and not to learn. Children are there to learn and obey. A rebellious child is a thorn to the parents, cancer in the flesh or virus in the blood. Children of this caliber are doomed to death as the bible speaks it out.*

503


**S16**

*The period when children are between the ages of 13-20 years is the adolescent stage. During this stage children do not want to be told what to do, they tend to do what they think is right and decide to ignore what everybody else says. Parents should exercise a degree of control and not control their children's lives entirely.*

*Parents should not control their children because once they do, they become too dependant on their parents and they fail to make decisions by themselves. It is true that you may lead a horse to the water but you won't force it to drink. The same applies to adolescents, you can show them what to do but they choose to do what they are told is wrong. Teenagers would rather learn from their mistakes.*

*When parents control their children's lives, the children end up being rebellious and going out of their way to go against their parent's will. Parents usually want to "run" their children's lives because they want what is best for their children. They think that by controlling children's lives their*

*children will respect them, but in actual fact their children will be afraid of them.*

*Parents should ease up during this stage. Adolescents do not want parents who shout and scream everytime they do something wrong. Neither do they want parents who ground them or give them beatings anytime they are late. They would rather have parents who communicate with them; establish the problem and find a solution peacefully. Parents should try to understand their children as they also passed the same stages. Parents should also try to understand that times are changing and influences are becoming more each day. Parents should try to examine the relationships between their children and the other children and should try to offer advice and support.*

*Parents should not control their children's lives, they should have control in their children's lives. Parents should not dictate to their children as to what to do with their lives, they should rather show them the right way. When correcting children, parents should show/tell children their mistake and should suggest a better way of doing things.*

*When parents become overprotective, the more their children want to escape their grip. "Being overprotective is just as bad as being underprotective".*

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## S17

*Parents should not control the lives of their children but they should guide, advise, teach them to respect and communicate. That will enable children to open up to their parents. I believe parent is another word for love, respect and responsibility.*

*These days things have changed, there are dangerous things that teenagers are involved in. But parents should not control their children as they will confuse their children. They should tell them the consequences of the dangerous games they are playing.*

*There is no bond between the controlling parents and their children and as a result children will not disclose or ask questions about their experiences. That is why we have the highest rate of Aids infected teenagers.*

*Research shows that approximately 90% of teenage pregnancy and drug abuse are controlled children. As they do things without responsibility because their parents never taught them. These children only behave themselves in the presence of their parents. Children must not do good things because of the threat they get from their parents. They have to be able to identify good things from the bad ones. They have to learn to choose things that will also give them confidence in what they do.*

*Responsibility is something which is indestructible and parents must strive to show that to their children. Then we can have responsible teenagers who stick to their words and plans.*

*Children have to be taught how to maintain their dignity. As Africans believe that it takes a real parent to raise a child.*

*It's the parent's duty to maintain their relationship with their children by means of communication. Then children will be able to share secrets and experiences with their parents and they will learn to trust and believe in each other.*

*By giving children freedom of speech, we can fight the endemic disease, drugs as well as alcohol. There are some children who really need help and to be guided.*

*We have also to bear in mind that children were not allowed to discuss anything with their parents in the past. But these days things have changed. There must be communication between the parents and the children.*

*Parents should learn to be polite and friendly when they talk to their children even when there is a problem. That will enable children to tell the truth before they are asked and they will maintain a good relationship.*

*Children must learn from the best and if parents display love, respect and responsibility so will the children. Then we can have responsible future leaders in our country.*

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## S18

*In the past parents controlled each and every activity that took place in the lives of their children. Due to historical background and traditional rules, teenagers did not have any problems following the rules.*

*In the materialistic world we live in, it is necessary that parents control the lives of their children. Our daily life is based on acquiring material things which leads teenagers into bad behaviour end they end up being criminals.*

*It is important for parents to know the feelings and needs of their children. This will lead to a very good relationship between them. They must have a good approach when trying to solve a problem because teenagers don't understand or don't want to accept the mistakes they do.*

*Due to disagreements in families, most children run away from home. They end up as street kids because most parents tend to abuse their children when they break the rules and they don't try to look at the problem and try possible solutions.*

*Parents need to be taught about the stages which teenagers undergo in their lives. This will give both the parents and the children a broad mind of how to solve their problems and maintain a good relationship between them.*

*Children also need financial support from their parents, without money they wont be able to go to school and will be illiterate for the rest of their lives. In the society we live in, we need educated people or people need to be educated in order to survive.*

*Without financial support from parents, children end up begging for food or eat out of dustbins in the streets. This leads to a corrupt society because*

*those street kids start stealing in order to survive. Parents need to provide for their children for as long as they are young and unemployed.*
*Children who grow under parental guidance have a brighter future and can improve the economic standard of their families and poverty is reduced. Therefore I think that should parents be given a chance by their children to control their lives, there would be less number of street kids and crime in our society.*
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**S19**
*I think parents are very important in the lives of their children. So I think parents must be able to control their children's lives because they have experience in as far as life is concerned.*
*I think parents must be able to control their children, because children need support in order to grow properly and parents are the only ones who can give children full support. So, if parents are not able to control their children, children will receive less support and motivation because support and motivation are very important to the lives of children, so parents must be able to control their children. Children cannot live properly without support and motivation from parents. Parents are more important to the lives of their children as far as support and motivation are concerned.*
*Parents must be able to control the lives of their children, because they must discipline their children. Parents are also important in disciplining. Children need discipline, so if they aren't able to be controlled by their parents where will they get discipline. For instance, we can compare two children, one who is controlled by his/her parents and one who is not controlled by his/her parents, we will find that the one who is controlled by his/her parents will be more disciplined than that one who is not controlled. And if children could be given a chance to be independent, our tomorrow nation will lack discipline.*
*I also think that parents must be able to control their children because parents have experience in as far as life is concerned. So they (parents) must teach their children what life is all about and they have to teach them to differentiate between what is good and what is wrong. Parents have to warn their children about all bad things they experienced, so that children are aware. Children can grow much better if they are controlled by their parents because they will be able to gain some experiences on how to live a better life from their parents. Because experience is said to be the best teacher , parents will teach their children much better by using their experiences.*
*I also think parents must be able to control their children because children need to be guided and advised. Children need good guidance and advice in order to be successful. So parents are good at guiding and advising. I think parents are the first people whom we can say that they give children good guidances and advices, I think there is no parent who can give his/her*

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*children bad guidances and advices. So I think parents should control the lives of their children.*
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## S20

*Life is a long journey and it is sometimes unfair. There are lots of splinters, nails and pins which will stab you in your way of life, so you have to get someone to help you through and take them out and there are also the long, darkest tunnel in life you will need someone especially your parents to help you get out and walk in the light.*

*Many children often get lost because they claim to know what is right and wrong while they are less experienced. Some of them end up being gangsters, streetkids and even thugs. But under the control of parents teens might not become the thugs because parents act as our centre pivots and they also sharpen our future and by so doing they become our role models, our inspiration. And through the parents' control we are also taught to be responsible enough about our lives when grown and become responsible parents.*

*As we know that failure is the womb and we have to be willing to fail, our parents help us to overcome always failing and lead us to greener pastures. Through the control of our parents on our lives we are able to notice ourselves easily because they are supportive and enlightening on our lives. Those teens who end up being gangsters and thugs they had never allowed their parents to control them, they never respect, they never let them lead them and show them the light. Now teens are able to pursue their studies and become responsible caring and loving mothers and fathers. As we know that charity begins at home we have to obey our parents. We have to allow them to control our lives they have the experience on what is happening in this global world.*

*As we know that for a cub to catch prey it has to be taught and shown by its mother how to catch we also have to appreciate the love, support and the control our parents are providing on the days of our lives. There is no bird that can fly with one wing, it needs both the two wings to make it and feed itself in order to survive. So let us let the parents control our lives so that we are able to get out of the dark tunnels and go to greener pastures.*
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## S21

*Yes, parents should be able to control the lives of their children from the age of 13 to 20 years. If parents want the lives of their children to be successful,  they must control them so that those children end up having a bright future and be respected by other people.*

*Most of the children when they reach the age of 13 to 20 years, there are lots of challenges or problems that they come across. For instance boys when they reach the age thirteen, some start smoking dagga, drinking beer, walking around at night. Sometimes they become gangsters. At*

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*sometime they carry guns and knives. When walking around at night, these boys you will find them stealing other people's property.*

*It is important for parents to get involved in the lives of their children so that they are able to teach them what is good or important in life.*

*If you want your children to be intelligent at school you must always be involved in their lives. Parents must be influential in the lives of their children to avoid misunderstandings between a child and a parent*

*Challenges or problems that girls from the age of thirteen to twenty find themselves are such that as a parent you must be able to teach them how to behave themselves as girls. Another thing you must not allow them to take their own responsibility of taking care of themselves because that will lead them to become prostitutes and some will end up being raped.*

*Girls are to become mothers of tomorrow, by that do not allow them to walk around at night because you will find that those girls are going to enjoy themselves at the beerhalls. This is not the responsibility of the child but is for you as a parent to prevent such things by controlling your children even if it is tough.*

*Boys and girls like to get involved in relationships only to find that when time goes on he/she does not know how to handle problems with the partner and that will result in lack of concentration at school, some of them end up commiting suicide because there no one to help them.*

*Parents must control the lives of their children. Parents must not allow them to be independent, even if a child don't want to be controlled, parents must just do it because at the end your children will thank you when they start to realize the good thing in life than the bad things.*

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## S22

*Parents are not supposed to control the lives of their children instead they have to guide them to follow the right track of life. These days many children go out of the parents' hands because of strict control from their parents. Children who are being controlled when they go to tertiary institutions e. g. universities they start to live their own lives and to control themselves.*

*If children don't have enough guidance in life at home, they start behaving like fools or cowards and they abuse drugs, alcohol and even come up with wrong ideas such as thinking of raping and stealing. Children who receive proper guidance at home have no problem of facing the world on their own*

*because they know what life is all about and expectations in the society and they also know how to guide their fellow students at school.*

*Parents are not supposed to control the lives of their children because children who are being controlled know only the rigid rule, they are not flexible, they stick to what they have been told by their parents and which is wrong especially to the teenagers of this day. Parents must leave their children to explore the world on their own, they must only intervene if they see that they are taking a wrong track. Parents are there for guidance and take care of their teenagers only not to control them. Both parents and children must build good relationships not to be a ghost of someone.*

*Parents must play the good role for their teenagers because they are the leaders of tomorrow who need to know what is going on out there, so parents must not interfere of what their children needs to do, all they can do is to give them good ideas and help them with what they cannot cope with and always advise them about what is good and what is not good. Parents have to give their children a great chance to face the world alone this would help them when their parents are gone or dead.*

*344*

**S23**

*If there is one thing that really makes us feel our humanity, it's the relationship with our parents, the love and support that they give us. Our families mould our early lives but sometimes we must stand up and do things for ourselves.*

*Children may have the same age or equal physically, but this does not mean they are both mature enough to be independent. Children are different, some become mature at a very young age and others take a long time before they reach their maturity. Parents must give their children freedom depending on their maturity.*

*Decision is the sign of responsibility. Youth are ignoring the fact of being responsible for their actions. Some expect their parents to solve their problems and there are others who are standing up and facing their problems. There is no way we can allow parents to give freedom to those who are failing to make choices.*

*Employment is playing a major part in our lives. Children must be able to support themselves before they become independent. Children are facing a major problem of unemployment today. Parents must give their children independence when they have jobs.*

*Parents are helping their children financially and emotionally, children must understand and appreciate that children before they become independent they must be able to support themselves. No matter how grown up you are, when it comes to your parents you are still a child.*

*236*


**S24**

*Many parents face challenges of raising their children. They try hard to conquer this moral dilemma of whether they should exercise control or not over their children, especially teenagers, whereas others have tried and accepted defeat.*

*Parents always do their best to equip their youngsters , they also expect their children to see how they (parents0 desire the golden gleam shines brighter on their little ones before their time as teenagers.*

*Defining parental control*

*Quoting Diana Baurnid (1968, 1971) demonstrating on parental control or authority as it is sometimes called, there are clear differences between three parental styles; the first one being the authoritative parenting which is high in both demandingness and responsiveness, another is called authoritarian parenting which is also high in demandness but low in responsiveness, lastly, we also have what we call permissive parenting which is low in demanding but high in responsiveness.*

*I strongly support the demonstration as given by the psychologists Dione Baurid. It is clear and perhaps in my own view it is rather practical than theoretical knowledge of understanding the psychology of adolescence. I also think parents should control the children only under certain circumstances. Naturally speaking almost every human being – wise or foolish grow lacking the ability or capacity to act and react on certain matters, so parents should be there to guide and teach and to some children this might be viewed as ways of controlling. For example a teen-boy and girl of thirteen years cannot sign marriage contract without the acknowledgement of their parents though the law may permit such contract but parents should be involved and if they criticize it with a reasonable doubt it should be considered though might seem controlling the children's lives.*

*I am of the opinion that parental control should exist but to undermine the children as to dictate to them without reasons. In other words it should be fair and just caring in our mind that it is of course reasonable and not completely limiting. The root must emerge from the foundation of love and concern and above all this it should be reasonable. Their concern, not that it should be only tactful but should show the real concern and responsibility that is normal and acceptable to the social (perhaps also social conditions) norms of life. For example all best guidance should be given to help teenagers overcome the problems and every aspect ; like relationships, dating and teaches them the moral orientation.*

*Sometimes children might choose a life of their own because rebellious undisciplined or change to anything else which goes opposite with normal life. But many parents and children who long to have good family. Parents should learn to share their feelings towards each other as parents and children rather than exercising the spirit of authority to control.*

*Yes, in my opinion parents has the right to be able to control the lives of their children who are 13-22 years because they have to be shown or taught what live is all about so that they do not have to rush into things that*

*can destroy their lives or their tomorrows and become suffering their whole life.*
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**S25**

*Yes each and every parent should be able to intervene in their children's lives because person of 13 years does not even know how life is about when you do not have any guidance in your site, so that parents have to sit down with their children because they are still under parental guidance and they do not have rights to do things without noticed their parents. Parents can even control the live of a person of 22 years, even if he/she is matured because she has the right to be a family man or wife and have children. But parents has the task of noticing this child from being a good person in life who is going to be respected one day because parental guidance is the main thing that need to be done in every child even if has become over 21 years, parents are needed in the other side to show the right way or direction how to deal with something like problems, sickness which are known by elders, so that they need to be on the other side helping their children's lives because they are still not having knowledge about what is going to happen in their lives in the mid 30s to 40s. parents should be able to control the lives of their children because many young people are infected by dangerous diseases which they do not even know because parents does not like to sit down and talk to their children about something which is not good. Things like having sex with elder people while you are still under age. Those who are 21 years and above have to be taught how to protect yourself from being pregnant while you are still not have achieved something good in your future and they have to be able to control their children's lives by teaching them or giving them information about bad things that occurs while you are under the influence of alcohol and drugs and hanging up with people who does not even care about their future. Parents should be able to control the lives of their children by giving them*

*information about how to manage yourself when you become a household name or member so that you can manage your family in good condition without vandalizing up things.*

*384*

**S26**

*Contribution of parents in the lives of their children gives the children direction of life. If parents can just sit down and watch what is going on in their children, they won't benefit anything, the results of all this will be heartbreaks in parents.  At the age of 13 and 20 is were the children starts to do many things as peer groups.*

*In a circumstances where children are grouping themselves in most groups they learn to control themselves and they do need an adult to can calm them even though they are doing wrong things. In peer groups you may find that they start to use drugs and alcohol together with crime.*

*If parents can be close to their children, guiding them, showing them the beauty of life. Those children grow up having knowledge of life, even though they are in the age were they will be forced to do many things as to prove they are clever to peer group, those children wont lose direction because they know what live really mean in their lives. Communication between parents and children is essential.*

*Sometimes children thoughts maybe their parents does not love them because parents are living their lives and not saying anything in the lives of their children. Some of the children are street kids and criminals because of a distance which was between them and parents. Lack of communication may lead children to have wrong thoughts because children need love, care and guidance from their parents.*

*Parents must really contribute in the lives of their children because children cannot stand by their own doing good things. For now the whole world is wondering about crime and aids. These things are connected with young*

*people especially between the ages of 13 and 20, crime is committed by children who does not go to school when everyone is too far from them.*

*Some young people are victims of aids because of lack of knowledge. Parents are having a duty to talk to their children about sex. Parents who do not talk to their children about sex need to consider whether they would rather bury them. Ignorance is the enemy that must be defeated. Some parents make a big deal about talking to children about sex and some say it is against their culture.*

*Loving parents give their children sexual education in a normal and even fun way, it protects children from sexual predators and Hiv. How can a child tell his parents he/she is being sexually molested if the family has never spoken about sex? Parents who talk to their children about what life is they create friendship between them and children.*

*Parents must not just rush children to school and expect the teachers to teach their children everything in life, there will be some things that parents will need to be helped with teachers to help their children, teachers teaches children in school and parents teaches their children in the home. Some parents expect teachers to take responsibility in their lives of their children but lovely parents helps their children to understand what life really mean.*
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**S27**

*Some of our parents can build us a better future if children give them their responsibility. Parent also want the best for their children. According to the word of God the bible tells us that children must obey their parent rules so that they can live a long and happy life.*

*I remember the story of those two brothers from the bible one brother asked his father to give him his belonging because he had no one to look after him he misused all the property that his parent gave him. He suffered until he went back to his parent and asked them to forgive him, it shows us that children cannot control their lives.*

*Children has the right to make decision in some issue for an example to choose their career and so many other things but our parent has more power to our lives as long as we live under their roof they have to control us. The word of God says respect your father and your mother and you will live a long time in the land I am giving you.*

*Let our parent control their children's live for a brighter future and they have more experience in life than children.*

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**S28**

*These days we find that children under the age of 12-20 years have to be controlled as they are living under pressure at fast world.*

*Children have to be controlled because some of them live the life they don't want to live but because they sees others doing things they think that they have to do that. They think that it is the way of living real life. They do things under pressure so that the groups of friends they are living with cannot take them as fools.*

*Because some teenagers don't want to be called fools by their peers they put their life at risk. Others put themselves at risk by smoking because they see their friends smoking dagga, drugs or even cigarettes they started thinking that it is better for them to smoke too. They think that those who are smoking are enjoying themselves. They think that those are living life which is enjoyable, life which is good and desirable. Then their parents have to settle down and tell their children that there is nothing enjoyable in smoking.*

*Some teenagers when they reached the age of 13 or 14 they started thinking that it is their time to have sex. They think that it is their time to enjoy themselves by having sex. When a boy reaches the age of 14 he think that he have to prove that he is a man by having sex with a girl. They think that girls can let them down if they don't have sex. When a girl*

*reached a stage of adolescence she thinks that she is capable of having a boyfriend now and she have a right to have sex as it is her time.*

*Some teenagers have sexually transmitted diseases because they are having sex when they still young and when they are infected they are afraid of telling their parents what is happening in their bodies as they think that their parents will beat them. So parents have to sit down and talk about sex life with their children tell them the advantages and disadvantages of having sex when you are still young.*

*Parents have to control their children when they are still young like when they are at the age of 5-10 years. They have to tell them rules of the house like time at which they have to come back home. They have to know what will be done if they get home late and this will make parents to be able to control their children even when they are teenagers I mean when they are 13-20 years.*

*I think that parents have to have a good friendship with their children so that they will be able to control them because these days life is too fast.*
*562*


*S29*

*Youth is a person in a development period from the age of 12 up until 22. it is a transitional period of consideration of biological, cognitive and social changes. Parents play an important role in this world. They try their level best in order to see us having bright future.*

*Youth are people who grow up with a dream of achieving a goal and high hopes. And if our parents are not controlling us we won't be able to achieve our goals and our dreams will never come true. If our parents were not here to control us we will be living dirty lives and no one will ever respect us. Our parents must control our lifes so that we must be able to face the world. They are helping us from doing crime , evil doings etc and we as children when the age of13-20 we tell ourselves that now I am old enough I can do anything I want at any time and I have the rights to do so. And when*

*our parents are trying to help we tell them that this is our time but when we are having problems or when things are difficult we run to them for help.*

*God made our parents so that they must take care of us. A child must respect his/her parents it doesn't matter you are a father or mother now. Our parents are still respecting our grandmothers. So why we as children copy from what our parents are doing in life. Our parents are going to be happy seeing us suffering and not having good life. Parents should be able to control the lifes of their children and they don't they will be no respect in this world and life will be useless for children. Children will not be able to face the challenges of this world being alone. All they need is their parent's care, love, guidance and etc.*

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**S30**

*Parents must play a very vital role in their families more especially for their children. They should give them support and teach them how to live real life because it is their duty. Children between the age of 13-20 are still under the control of their parents.*

*These days children are the victims of rape. So to defeat this enemy rape, parents should control the life of their children because rights have limits they should talk about sex with them does not destroy them or mislead but drive them to the real life. Parents who don't talk to their children about it they have to change their mind. Loving parents give their children information about sex in normal way. How can a child told his or her parents that he/she is sexually abused whereas their parents has never spoken about sex.*

*Parents should control life of their children in a right way not by beating them when they did something wrong. They have to remember that words are stronger than stick. Most of children who always  being controlled by stick they never change their life so if a child made a mistake you have to sit down with him and talk to him.*

*Some culture allows children to be punished to make them stronger. A loving beating gives child strength it is necessary to make sure that discipline is taught in a correct way. They said for an example if a thief commit crime and left unpunished then what will stop him from doing that again. The same applies to children if they do something wrong and left unpunished they will continue doing that. Children must be punished but for the right reason.*

*Parents should control the life of their children between the age of 13-19 (teenagers). These days these are victims of Aids because of lack of advice from their parents. Parents should love their children and talk with them about sex and the consequences of it. Most of the teenagers they thinks that they grow enough and they did not need the support from their parents. That is why teenage pregnancy develops. She think that she will have child support grant not knowing that it will not support that child forever and some misuse that money they increase poverty. So as to say parent should play important role on the life of their children , educate them we must teach our children about real life.*

*Children expect to get love and the tender care from her parents. Some children become street kids because of a lack of guidance. Teachers have to control children also because they are parents they have to give better education. We have to know that education is the key to a better future. An uneducated child add to the growing number of criminals. Parents have to tell their children about Hiv and Aids  and STD to decrease the spread of this diseases. They will end up having successful children who will take care of them one day.*

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**Honours Sample essays (English Department)**

**PROMPT**
*In your opinion, is it better to finish higher education in South Africa or Overseas?*
**S31**

*As a South African I prefer to do my higher education in South Africa. Education is gaining new knowledge in different areas of life. Education is the key to a successful life.*

*It is better to do higher education in South Africa as a South African, because most of the knowledge that is acquired in tertiary institutions has to be put into practice after completing a diploma or degree.*

*It is wise to do practicals in the place where one intends to work and live so that it becomes easy to get used to the place and work. It takes a person who can afford to study overseas. Most South Africans are poor and it is not easy for them to afford to study overseas. Unless sponsored by companies which takes mostly the intelligent students to get scholarships to overseas. Such an opportunity is not for everyone who wishes but the chosen few.*

*Some people say studying overseas gives you a chance to mix with people of different countries, I agree with the idea. It is good for a person to be familiar with different cultures of different people. But South Africa is a multi cultural society. It' population is made up of people from different cultures and communities. For example many students even at primary and secondary schools get to mix with students from different cultures and*

*communities at an early age. And even at tertiary level there are many institutions or universities that are made up of students from different communities and cultures.*

*For instance, universities such as the University of Cape Tow, Wits University and Rau are just a few of the places where you have students who are black, white, Indian, coloureds from many African countries, from Europe etc. even at our institution, Univen, we have a bit of that mix even if there are no white students. So whether you are studying overseas or in South Africa you will meet all these people and learn to work and live with them.*

*Some can say it is wise to study overseas maybe because the standard of education might be higher, but we must consider the fact that there is a possibility of one to acquire knowledge overseas but is unable to use it in South Africa. Technology in South Africa is not the same with the technology Overseas.*

*The most important issue is not the place where knowledge or education was acquired but education itself is important. It can be a challenge to travel and get to know places while studying but one can be educated without going Overseas. It is better to study where there is access to practice in the field of study and where it might be easy to use that knowledge in a better way.*

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**S32**

*It is better to do your education in Overseas simply because overseas educational system is more advanced and helpful as compared to South African education.*

*The Overseas education involves a lot of practicals and technological skills, which is more important for human survival and existence. For instance in Japan and China in a tender young age of three you are taught how to manage and budget money which proves to be more helpful and important. Overseas education in terms of teaching people in the younger age the way of surviving through innovation and wisdom. That reflects the vital part that Overseas education plays which also towards economic viability and as such the hardships of life and escalation of a serious global problem (unemployment) will be curbed. Inspite of education that one would have from Overseas one can produce machines equipment which can be helpful in making finished goods from South African wealth (gold) which South Africa supply approximately 48% in the world. Due to lack of proper skills no one can make something worthwhile. The best way of gaining skills is through studying Overseas.*

*South African education deals more about theories than practical things like studying about olden personalities  e. g Aristotle, Socrates rather than putting more stress on life beneficiary skills on how to implement those those theories to make something more important. The journalism for instance in Univen specifically as South African higher learning institution more theoretical than practice which proves ineffectiveness of South African education. This ideas emanates the research and observations I have made as a student of journalism. These hinders South African citizens to possess important, necessary skills as compared to Overseas countries which gives Overseas based education more values as compared and contrasted against South African education. The Overseas based education can help South Africa as one the third world state to improve and maybe to match or even to surpass those superpowers like United States of America (USA) which will also dispel the notion that if you*

*leave your native country, you lose everything including patriotism, loyalty and pride. Because you gain skills from Overseas education, and plough back to benefit your own country (SA) which really proves that the idea of studying Overseas is helpful especially when you started your lower education in South Africa. Because the culture will still be within you. Then when combined both lower South African and higher education becomes more effective.*

*404*


### S33

*Doing the higher education in Overseas is better than doing it in South Africa. The person can come back more sophisticated and highly educated as the standard of learning is not on the same level.*

*Overseas countries are well developed and there are lots of facilities that can be used to encourage higher education. Students who are doing higher education Overseas in well developed countries are better because they will also accumulate higher developed education through highly skilled teacher but are obviously not compared because they are vary, found in different place, developing and developed.*

*When you are doing higher education in Overseas you will be meeting many different people from different countries who have different cultures, values and beliefs and they will also be using different languages. Here you have the advantage of learning of learning other foreign languages and you also be able to identify cultures and you will know that this people are from this culture, they believe in this and that and by knowing that you will be building your status quo.*

*The standard of learning and teaching overseas is higher than the standard of learning in South Africa. Overseas teachers are obviously highly qualified as they are also found in highly developed countries cause to my point of view I think development in a country is also determined by the standard of education or rate of successful people in the particular country.*

*Doing higher education Overseas also benefit South Africa as a whole because those student if they are employed there Overseas they come home rich with foreign money which strengthen our economy.*

*The person who is doing higher education Overseas brings back new unknown well products in our attention so that South Africa will benefit from the production of new products.*

*Higher education Overseas is also better in the issue of technology. Technology in Overseas countries is developed so students who are doing higher education there could be familiar with technological products and sometime have the ability to create something technological.*

*337*

**S34**

*It is good to do your higher education Overseas. First you will broaden your mind by traveling to that place and you can see the difference between the countries South Africa and Overseas.*

*When you study Overseas and you finish your degree you have good chance to get a job Overseas countries most of them are well developed and the standard of education is very high.*

*When you get your education from Overseas and you come back to South Africa you get any job so easy. The employer from South Africa they don't look at your qualifications they want to know first where are you coming from or where you studied your education.*

*In South Africa people who are educated they are not working because of lack of jobs. But foreigners are the ones who holds jobs in this country because of their best higher education. Because they are coming from Overseas.*

*Because of that most of people who are from Overseas are not educated they fake their wrong qualifications and come to South Africa and they know that they are going to get a job.*

*You can find that a person is a lecturer but he passed only standard 9 because of that South Africans they don't want to employ South Africans*

*they want those from Overseas. So it is good to do your higher education Overseas because you will get more experience and many chances to get work.*

*240*

**S35**

*A comparison of standards of education between Overseas countries and South Africa has become a hotly debated topic in recent years. This is partly necessitated by South Africa's transition to democracy and the ever-increasing question of South Africa's skills levels and its preparedness to address its new challenges.*

*Education is a universally important phenomenon both locally and abroad. It plays a crucial role in equipping countries to adequately address unique challenges faced by them. The impact of such education is largely determined by the levels of development of the various countries. Regardless of this act, education remains important in helping countries sustain and in some instances improve their respective lot.*

*Any comparison of education between Overseas and South Africa education is not complete without taking into account the various stages at which those countries are in development.*

*The education of third world countries is largely development oriented whereas that of first world countries is mainly focused on industry and technology. South Africa is situated between the two extremes and can best be described as a second world countries since it displays elements of both first and third world countries.*

*Taken from a development perspective, South Africa's education appears to be best suited for local circumstances and as such preferable over Overseas education. However, when industrial and technological considerations become an imperative, the education of Overseas countries such as Japan and the United States of America take the lead.*

*This situation doesn't make any type of education lesser than another. The main considerations should be whether it is relevant to prevailing local*

*circumstances and whether it meets the educational demands of a specific country at any given time.*

*It is arguable that South Africa currently needs both kinds of education. This will ensure that it meets demands placed upon it in terms of development, industry and technology.*

*In order to achieve the above objectives, South Africa has to nurture its own home grown development –oriented education system and import industry and technology education from Overseas countries. The two sets brought together help advance South Africa as a country and are, in a sense, complementary to each other.*

*This emphasizes the point that instead of merely stating the advantages of the local education system with those of the Overseas education system, and the disadvantages of both an approach is adopted according to which both systems of education are compared in an integrated manner taking into account both their weak and strong points respectively.*

*It is a fact that comparatively speaking, a perception has been created that Overseas education ranks over and above South Africa education. Although this is partly true, it doesn't go the whole way in that it stops short of acknowledging the contribution of South Africa's own development education system.*

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# APPENDIX E
## Geography Honours Sample essays

**PROMPT**

*Discuss the role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) may play in our understanding of Environmental Conservation.*

### G1

*Indigenous knowledge system is regarded as the way in which the indigenous people use to conserve the environment. It was therefore seen as derived science.*

*Through culture and belief the indigenous people have adopted strategies which they would to conserve the environment.*

*The environment was conserved through agriculture, health care, food production, education and also conservation.*

*Agriculture*

*The indigenous people used to spend most of their time in the field. This has also made them to come up with strategies for conserving the environment.*

*Through shift cultivation the indigenous people tend to realize that the soil is no longer fertile and this has made them to move to other area.*

*Such movement have made or allowed the unfertile soil to gain its state for the soil to become fertile like the way in which it was before.*

*The indigenous people also have another strategy of conserving the environment and it is called pastoralism.*

*Pastoralism are those people who used to have lots of livestock. They did not want them to feed from one area for a long time because such an area might not be having enough food after a long time.*

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*They also have to move from one point to another (from point A to B). this has also allowed the pastors to be back to its original state as they will be moving from one point to another.*

*Health care*

*The indigenous people have also found vegetations which are not supposed to be disturbed for any other purpose rather than for health care. Plant species such as Aloe vera was not supposed to be disturbed because it was used for medical purposes. Aloe vera was used for pimples even today people practice that that strategy.*

*Food Production*

*In the past indigenous people used to feed themselves on wild fruits. So these have made them to avoid cutting trees which provides them with food for survival.*

*Plant species such as the fig tree it was not suppose to be cut down because it provide them with food.*

*The same applies to Morula tree. It was one of those fruit trees which was used for many purposes. Its fruits was used as a source food and it was also used for making traditional morula beer.*

*Education*

*Through culture and beliefs of the indigenous, their means of conservation have been existing to date. This have become as a part of education because it have merged with our great grand father's and even today such practices still exists.*

*Through inheritance education have been spread from generation to generation*

*Environmental Conservation*

*The indigenous people have come up with strategies of conserving the environment for decades. This means that conservation was practiced long time ago before it even become as a subject which is introduced at higher institutions today and at the school level.*

*Environment need to be conserved for future generations. Besides for future generation human beings and environment interact. Both depend on each other for survival. Human beings cannot live without vegetation and vegetation also depend on human beings.*

*508*

**G2**

*Indigenous knowledge is the knowledge used by our ancestors in order to serve society. Indigenous means the origin. It is the origin of plant and animal species. Biodiversity knowledge system means epistemology and ontology. This is the idea about knowledge. How knowledge is invented or created, how it is used or misused.*

*Every society has a way of conserving nature. And also a way of passing knowledge from one generation to the next. This passing of knowledge from generation to generation can be done through language.*

*According to Herbert Vilakazi in his journal (2000), the knowledge that we have as Africans is as important as that knowledge for the Western. The only idea is that when those people came to Africa, they rob us. They took our knowledge for granted. They never took into consideration, they labeled our knowledge as evil and theirs as Christianity. If the African knowledge was not that important, we would not be alive because they would have destroyed everything including plants suitable for medicine and the like.*

*In our tradition (the Venda tradition) there are some procedures that are used in order to maintain the environment. For example in agriculture. The pastoralism herd their animals in a certain area, when they realize that that area is no longer having food for their livestock, they shift to another area. In some cases, they used to divide the area into subareas/stratus. They may divide it into four areas for example. They will herd their flock in point A, when they see that point A is no longer productive they move to point B, then point C and point D. when they finish point D, they know that the first*

*point will have generated again. They move to point A and do the same. By so doing their flock never starved because of shortage of food.*

*Indigenous people were very much intelligent when they go for wild animals, they don't kill the young ones and the pregnant ones. They take it as taboo. They say that the young animals have got no enough good meat. By so doing, those animals were protected and give birth to another ones.*

*Indigenous people had some rituals or beliefs which they use to protect valuable or important places. For example, Tshipise, Sagole Spar, Nwanedi reserve etc. they say that it is taboo to go there. If you go there something bad may happen to you or you may even die. And by so doing the area remain protected.*

*Some plants that are good for medical purposes were also conserved. For example, Mutavhasindi. They say that if you want to go there you should go there at night , without clothes and you should be a clan to a certain family. If you are not a member of that family, you were totally rejected to that place. By so doing the Mutavhasindi remained protected even today.*

*Indigenous people use wood for fuel purpose because they know that people may cut all the plants even those that provide food for them, they say that A is not all plant that are fit for fire. People are not allowed to cut the Morula plant (as an example0 for wood purpose, especially when this plant is not dead. If you are found that you chop it you may be caught even today. This knowledge helped a lot because those plants are still available even today.*

*In our understanding of environmental conservation today, we should know that we are not the ones who developed the idea of conservation. This environment has been conserved long ago by our ancestors. If it were not conserved, some of the species would have been extinct by now. Our ancestors be appreciated for what they have done. If we look today areas like Mphephu resort, Mutavhasindi, Tshipise and the like are now valuable than before. They are now for tourism purposes.*

*Plants like Aloe (tshikhopha) are still used for medical purposes even today. The language used by our ancestors to pass these knowledge from generation to generation should not be overtaken. They have to be rewarded or appreciated for what they have done.*

*What I can conclude is that without indigenous knowledge system, we would have been extinct or die, we would suffer without plants for medical purposes. Some of the animals like elephants, zebras would be extinct as even indigenous knowledge is still important even today.*

*735*

**G3**

*Indigenous knowledge systems (I.K.S.) was described as knowledge indigenous people or other defined society which evolved over time hence drawn from generation to generation through process of communication.*

*Indigenous knowledge system was used by Warren as a synonym of local experience where he define it as unique to a particular culture. To be indigenous according to Mathias Mundy, a knowledge should be active component of culture hence bestowed used and communicated by member of that culture.*

*In contrast to correlation of tradition as I already said, indigenous knowledge system is dynamic rather than being static meaning that it is subjected to constant changes through indigenous experimentation. Local people generate new knowledge every day by observing their environment hence test new knowledge through errors and experience. They also include new technologies in their knowledge systems.*

*Indigenous knowledge system as related to agriculture and conservation of biodiversity it contain wide range of local experience in natural resources used and management techniques.*

*Shift cultivation*

*Shift cultivation is an indigenous practice that help to mitigate and reduce possibility for an environmental degradation. Cultivating from block A in*

*1991 and shift to block B in 1992 provide chance for block A to recover, this strategy work in a sustainable manner to the environment.*

*Incomplete clearing of vegetation.*

*Clearing vegetation but leave stump and tall trees helps the root systems to adhere to soil during rainfall. This reduce potential for erosion. Even shallow ploughing which is now known as minimum trilloge is crucial as well.*

*Slush and burn*

*Slush and burn proved to be useful as a indigenous practice because on forest zone many plant proved to be in a state of continuous adaptation. Burning process helps in enriching soil fertility rather than burying green composts. Many species proved to be enriched by exchange of gene from their relative weeds because of this burning process.*

*Taboos*

*Taboos is also used as indigenous practice for managing biodiversity. Other places are not allowed to be harvested as they are regarded holly place or as contain spiritual items. If you kill a black wild cat, you will not have children in future and your family member will die one by one. Because of this allegations; black cat was conserved.*

*Indigenous knowledge system adopted to a wide range of local condition hence provide abundant of food supply while on the other side mitigate potential for disease, diseases and pest problems. If make use of wide range of species and world race which vary in the reaction against pest and disease problem. It produce sustainable utilization of natural resource through experience of farmer who did not depend on scientific information and market.*

*Indigenous knowledge systems have been available up to this recent outsiders but more information were ignored for a number of reasons. It was criticized that during colonial era, Africans had little knowledge to impart and their indigenous practice were too primitive hence were against*

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*Western and Asian techniques. Indigenous practice like slush and burn were criticized of being destroying forest and soil fertility hence was responsible for environmental degradation.*

*510*

**G4**

*The indigenous knowledge system and the conservation of the environment are having the relationship. The indigenous knowledge can be defined as the knowledge that is used by the particular group of people and this knowledge is found in a particular area. The indigenous knowledge system is the knowledge that is originally found in the particular area and this knowledge are used by the people that live in that particular area. Different culture have different knowledge and these knowledge is normally passed from one generation to the other generation by mouth.*

*The indigenous knowledge played a role in the understanding of environmental conservation. The use of the indigenous knowledge help in the understanding of the environment and the problems that human can cause in the environment and as a result of this the indigenous knowledge help to reduce the environmental problem such as overexploitation of resources by human beings.*

*Because of the indigenous knowledge people were using the indigenous system in maintaining and conserving the environment and this was proven useful. Indigenous knowledge and the environmental conservation should not be separated, this is because the indigenous knowledge system help or assist in the conservation of environments e.g. Indigenous knowledge system use the taboos as another technique of conserving the environment. By using these taboos, people are not allowed to use or exploit the natural resources of the particular area. This is done by formulating certain taboo which on the other hand, put some constrain to the people in using the natural resources. E.g. people are not allowed to go to certain areas that particular group of people believed that the spirits of their ancestors are found at that particular area e.g. mountains. As a result*

*of this that particular environment is being conserved or protected. This means that the problems of the depletion of natural resources in that area cannot be experienced.*

*The indigenous people used to practice their agricultural activities and they preferred to use the organic waste from their animals as manure and this help to protect the nutrients in the soil and also provide the environment for the micro fauna. This means that the nutrients from the soil is maintained by the use of the indigenous knowledge system.*

*Environmental conservation is influenced by the indigenous knowledge because the indigenous knowledge help in the people's understanding of the environment.*

*390*

**G5**

*Indigenous knowledge is important in the conservation of the environment. Indigenous people have knowledge on how to preserve the environment even though they were not using scientific and written down laws. It was based on agriculture, health care, conservation and food.*

*Agriculture*

*Culturally, there were areas that were restricted from cultivation, areas like steep slopes. People were not allowed to grow their plants their. Fields and places for grazing were put to rest for certain periods, allowing those places to regain natural vegetation.*

*Food*

*Trees which bears fruits were not allowed to be used as wood or to be cut down. It was a taboo. By so doing , they preserved food from these trees, for example, baobab tree, morula. That is why we still have these kinds of trees in our areas.*

*Healthcare*

*Trees and plants that are used as medicine are not allowed to be used as wood for fire or to be cut down. If you are found cutting those trees and you are not a sangoma, you would be charged. For example, an aloe plant.*

*Conservation*

*Some of the areas were conserved. Areas like Funduzi – not everybody was allowed to go there. These preserved the natural vegetation around the area. There are geographical and environmental ways of preserving natural environment. Geographical is divided into aquatic and terrestrial.*

*Aquatic – plants and animals in water are protected or conserved. For example, introduction of seasonal fishing, if fishing is to be done throughout the year, then all fish in the river or specific dam will be extinct. Funduzi – people are restricted to go there, only specific people are allowed to go to that place, so vegetation around the area and aquatic animals are protected.*

*Terrestrial – not everybody is allowed to go to Thengwe and cut Mutavhasindi. It is the Mutavhasindi people who are allowed to cut it during the night and being naked. That is why Mutavhasindi is still protected.*

*People need to protect and preserve environment because we depend on environment for protection, food and others. Vegetated environment controls good climatic condition. Vegetated area will be cool. Deserted areas are too hot. Bad impact on the environment brings bad results back to us. We must protect the environment in order to enjoy the benefit of good and conserved environment.*

*Knowledge and understanding about the environment and how to conserve it is passed from generation to generation through cultural education. Parents pass the knowledge to their own children. Children pass knowledge to grand children. Environmental conservation is bound to cultural, belief and language of specific people. Every society have ways have ways of caring for nature, these ways are passed from generation to generation.*

*445*

**G6**

*Indigenous knowledge can be defined as the indigenous knowledge that indigenous people have gained from their ancestors. It can be defined as*

*derived science which pass from one generation to the next generation within the particular culture of a specific geographical area. It plays an important role in the understanding of an environment.*

*Indigenous knowledge can be discussed based on the following. They are the basis of Agriculture, Food, Health and also Education.*

*Agriculture*

*Indigenous knowledge can help us in our understanding of environmental conservation because it will give us knowledge of better and conserving agricultural activities, such as cultivation.*

*Shift method of cultivation*

*When using this shifting method of cultivation, it will be making the previous cultivated area to gain like before. And by so doing biodiversity is conserved. Even the species will get some shelter, species such as rat, hare.*

*Method of cultivation will also be in horizontal shape so as to avoid erosion, denuding our environment. By so doing the fertile soil layer would be kept for a long period. Unlike replacing the fertile area with fertilizer which is a chemical and harm the soil forever.*

*Pasteurisation*

*This means that indigenous knowledge will make us to conserve our environment by dividing our camps into small suitable camps for our livestock. They will be grazing in the camp for one month and the next month they move to the next camp instead of keeping our livestock in one area for a long period.*

*Sacred places*

*Indigenous knowledge will make people to understand that not all people are subject to enter in the secret place at any time without the consent or permission of the indigenous people or king in a particular tradition. Example, not all people are allowed to enter Funduzi lake the way they like. There are some indigenous laws that they/one should follow e. g. first timer should look at Funduzi lake under his/her waist. You don't look at it directly*

*at your first time. Hence trees next to that lake are regarded wholly [sic].*

*Indigenous knowledge will help us understand our environmental conservation with respect of medication.*

*Health*

*With medication – some trees in Venda are used for medical purposes. When somebody is ill, such a person can get a portion of such a tree and get healed. Example, Mutavhasindi tree it is used for men's health. For that matter that would mean that indigenous knowledge is very much important. If someone do not know such place and tree, he can just get in and endanger himself because the place would not be supposed to be visited by any one.*

*This means that by conserving those trees, big animals such as baboons, will have shelter.*

*Fruit – some trees are conserved for fruits, by so doing it will help people with fresh air in the atmosphere. Example, trees such as "Munambelo", Muzwilu will help us with good fruits and wild animals will get food from them and that would be the way of conserving our species.*

*499*

**G7**

*Indigenous knowledge is the knowledge of indigenous people. That is the knowledge of the particular people originated in that particular place. The indigenous knowledge is being inherited from generation to generation through time.*

*Indigenous knowledge has been used over many years to solve the environmental problems and other associated problems. Vilakazi Herbert in his journal of 2002 has discussed how African indigenous knowledge has helped in conserving the biodiversity or the environment as a whole. He had shown that the Western culture had changed the way of thinking of Africans and they look down upon their knowledge. Vilakazi (2002) has said that even before the Western people come to our country indigenous people still had their own ways of conserving nature.*

*If one can take a look at the way the lakes, like lake Funduzi has been conserved by indigenous people, one can be able to understand environmental conservation. The indigenous people has protected that lake and there are some taboos which makes people not to go near the lake or exploit the resources near or at the lake.*

*The indigenous people used to practice shifting cultivation which helped to conserve the environment. By practicing shifting cultivation it means that they were cultivating at a particular place and after some years they will go and start cultivating at the other place. This type of cultivation helped because the other place which has been cultivated was given time to regain its ecological state. It was able to regain its power again before it could be cultivated again.*

*By knowing the kind of knowledge one may understand that land does not need to be cultivated over and over again because it can lose its ecological state completely. The use of fertilizers has degraded the quality of land if people would have practiced shifting cultivation the land would be in its good quality.*

*Through indigenous knowledge the indigenous people have protected the species like the Mutavhasindi. This type of species are known for their healing powers and other uses. The indigenous people has protected these species so as to conserve them. This implies that these type of species can be utilized by the present as well as the future generation.*

*These species has been protected so that people may not exploit these species as they wish. For people to exploit these species they have to first ask permission from the chief and there is a way in which they are exploited.*

*Environmental conservation has been practiced even by the indigenous people. In the past when people needed to cultivate, they did not just cultivate anywhere but they had to get permission from the chief and he will show them where to cultivate. People were not cultivating on the ecological fragile areas like river valleys. The chief will show people where to cultivate*

*and when to cultivate. The chiefs had knowledge of environmental conservation and knew that if people cultivated on the ecological fragile environments, they would experience some environmental damage or problems.*

*By understanding the indigenous knowledge system, one can get a clear picture of how the nature was conserved and there were no side effects. Indigenous knowledge is very important and should be practiced presently to conserve the natural environment.*

*When one needs to understand environmental conservation, the way indigenous people conserve the environment needs to be taken into consideration. The Western way of conserving the environment usually has side effects.*

*569*

**G8**

*Indigenous knowledge refers to the knowledge that the indigenous people has inherited from their ancestors. On the other hand, the indigenous knowledge systems refer to the tools that the indigenous people use to conserve nature and their well-being. Indigenous knowledge systems looked at five key concepts as a way of conserving the environment.*

*1. Through Agriculture*

*for agriculture to be sustainable, the indigenous people used different techniques. The indigenous people used waste products from the animals as fertilizer, these fertilizers does not contain any chemicals that can harm the soil. They also practiced shifting cultivation. In this case, the indigenous people used to cultivate a particular place for a certain period of time. After that specific period they leave the place to rest and gain its original state. They will then come back to that place a long period of time.*

*Indigenous people also practiced pastoralisation, in this case, the farmers used to move from one grazingland to another with their herds. They spent a particular period at a certain place and move to the other place. They leave the place to rest and gain its original state. Shifting cultivation and*

*pastoralisation was done in order to prevent environmental threats such as soil erosion that leads to land degradation.*

*2. Health Purpose*

*The indigenous people used to conserve some of the plant species for health purposes. Some of those plant species were a cure for certain diseases. For example, Aloe was conserved because it was known as the cure for various diseases. Mutavhasindi also conserved for health reasons.*

*3. Food Production*

*Some of the wild trees were conserved because they produced wild fruits that could serve as the source of food when hunger strikes. People were not allowed to cut those trees because they are of great importance.*

*4. Education*

*In order to sustain the indigenous knowledge, the indigenous people were able to teach the younger generation. Therefore the knowledge was passed from generation to generation.*

*5 Environmental Conservation*

*The natural environment was also conserved through the use of indigenous knowledge systems. The indigenous people had their own cultural beliefs and also uses taboos to conserve the natural environment. For example in aquatic environment, there was a season that people go fishing also people were not allowed to pick up water from the hot springs e.g. Mphephu resort hot springs.*

*In another aquatic environment, for example, lake Funduzi was also conserved using taboos, no one had access to the lake, people had to ask permission first from the ancestors and also people were not allowed to pick water from the lake.*

*An example of a terrestrial environment will be the conservation  of Mutavhasindi. Not all the people had access to that particular plant species. A particular clan had access to it and only males. It was also a taboo to pick up even a leaf from it. Therefore it was also conserved through beliefs and taboos.*

*Indigenous knowledge systems could still be useful if applied in the modern world. Maybe some of the diseases could be cured through use of indigenous systems. We could also have a sustainable natural environment if we consider beliefs and taboos that the indigenous people had.*

*531*

**G9**

*Indigenous knowledge system can be defined as the knowledge that people acquire from their ancestors and pass this knowledge from generation to generation. It's a people's derived science. Indigenous knowledge system is influenced by culture, tradition and values of a specific culture. By using indigenous knowledge there was conservation of agriculture, food, health and also aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem.*

*Agriculture – Indigenous people used to cultivate rotationally. For example shifting cultivation. People used to cultivate a one place maybe for five years continuously. After five years they then change to another area where it is fertile. By doing so, the first area will go back to its fertile state. By doing so they are conserving the soil.*

*Those who were hunters know that there are certain animals that according to some culture were not supposed to be killed. For example female animals and young animals were not supposed to be killed as this could bring bad luck to a community. By doing so they were conserving lots of animal species.*

*Pasteurization was also a way of conserving the environment. The farmers used to change where their animals graze after a particular period. This promote the conservation of grass and trees.*

*Other fruits and herbs were not allowed to be eaten as a result of this indigenous people were conserving trees. Some other trees were not supposed to be cut down. They inherited from their ancestors that cutting those tree for wood purposes is a taboo.*

*There are local examples here in Limpopo. In Nzhelele area there is a lake called lake Funduzi. This lake was believed to be belonging to the*

*Tshiavha clan. People were not allowed to go there except the Tshiavha clan. Even the tshiavha was not suppose to go there any time. They only goes when there were rituals such as ancestors worship when they were praying for something. That lake was very rich with water, trees around, animals outside and inside water and also grass and fertile soil. It was conserved by believing in the taboos. People that if you can just go there, the ancestors will be angry with you. They can injure you, bring bad luck to your family and even kill you. Indigenous knowledge here played a major role of conserving the environment. They believed that the lake had supernatural powers.*

*Another example is that at Thengwe area there is a tree that has been conserved. The tree is called Mutavhasindi. This tree is believed that it belongs to the Mutavhasindi clan. People were and are still not allowed to go there and exploit the trees. It is even not allowed to pick only its leaves. That tree has medical values. Only traditional healers can exploit it. It is believed that those who are allowed access to that tree they must go there at night being naked. Through taboos that tree has been conserved and also the forest around is conserved because there is a fence around. The tree has medicinal value. Through indigenous knowledge the spot has become a tourist attraction area.*

*Herbert Vilakazi in his journal encourages the African indigenous knowledge should be taken seriously. He said that it is time now that we goes back to our roots. Indigenous knowledge can be used continuously to conserve the environment. The future generation could have some choice of resources as the present one.*

*560*

### *G10*

*indigenous knowledge system is the knowledge of indigenous of indigenous people. This knowledge is not the knowledge that any one can find in the books or any other documents, the indigenous people were passing it to another generation through mouth.*

*Indigenous knowledge systems were not taken into consideration. But it was seen that the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the environmental conservation can yield positive results in the sense that there will be a suitable environment which the future generation can have the same choice of which the present generation has.*

*As population is growing at an alarming rate, it also increases pressure on the environment. Most activities that people practice out more pressure on the physical environment, those activities can lead to irreversible impact such as flooding, desertification and degradation.*

*The indigenous people have their own ways of protecting the environment. For example when they practice agriculture (intensive agriculture) they plant trees around the agricultural plot as a way for preserving their crops from the wind. By doing so these trees hold the soil so that the soil cannot easily being eroded by water during heavy rainfall and irrigation. They were also not using fertilizers and pesticides to improve agricultural productivity. They were using the waste of cattle and goods to make the soil to be more productive. By doing that they minimize the chances of land pollution*

*Indigenous people were not using machinery to clear out vegetation, instead they were using manpower or labour power for clearing vegetation by doing so they were also minimizing chances of environmental destruction. In terms of ploughing in the highland they used terraces to protect the soil from erosion during heavy rain, they used stones to protect that erosion.*

*Shifting cultivation was most important method of cultivation. This type of method involves the shifting of cultivation from one area to another. They were doing this to avoid the so called unproductivity of soil. If for example the area were cultivated last year (2004) they skip one year or two years sothat the area will regenerate. They used to move from one plot to another in different years. This method nowadays is called crop rotation.*

*Another method used to conserve the environment is pastoral nomadism. In this method people were moving from one area to another together with*

*their cattle or any other domestic animals. They may go to an area where there is enough grazing and build their shelter to stay there temporarily until the cattle graze all over the particular area. When there is no longer enough grazing, they can travel for a long distance until they find another place with enough grazing and also build their shelter with sticks and grass. This processes conserves the environment because when they left the area, the grazing will also regenerate.*

*Indigenous knowledge system also play a role in understanding of environmental conservation because there are also some trees which the indigenous people used for healing especially by traditional healers. For example there is a tree in Mutare area. That tree is called a big tree. People are not allowed to use that tree only the traditional doctors are allowed to use it but in a sustainable manner.*

*There are also some lakes around Limpopo Province which are used for taboo. Ordinary people are not allowed to swim of to use the water from those lakes. Examples are lake Funduzi.*

*Having seen the knowledge that indigenous people have, one can judge that this knowledge is most important for environmental conservation. By tapping indigenous knowledge systems we can have a sustainable environment that can meet future generations.*

*602*

# Appendix F
# INTERVENTION STRATEGY

In order to assist students to develop the ability to express themselves in argument writing, the strategy "reading – analyzing – writing" is recommended. As pointed out in the preceding chapters, linking reading to writing is deemed to be effective, because reading facilitates the acquisition of information, experience and knowledge. When students are helped to recognize logical thinking in what they read, it is envisaged that they would be able to use the knowledge to organize and develop ideas in their own writing.

The text below is used as an initial sample text for practical application.

## The conviction of Ntelamo Zileng'i

In 1996 Ntelamo Zileng'i was convicted of killing her baby Kaiko while camping quite close to the Thate Vondo Sacred Forest in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. In my opinion, Ntelamo should not have been convicted for Kaiko's murder as there is a lot of conflicting evidence.
Firstly, there is the issue of the blood found in the car. It was alleged that it was baby's blood. However, the methods used to identify the blood were later found to be unreliable and the blood could have come from an adult.
Another piece of conflicting evidence concerns the wild dog. Ntelamo claimed that Kaiko was taken by a wild dog. Some of the other holiday campers said that they did not see any wild dog, but there were several who confirmed Ntelamo's story, and who stated that they heard a wild dog's cry just before Kaiko disappeared.
And finally there is the matter of the baby's romper which was later found with holes in it. The prosecution maintained that the holes could only have been made by a pair of nail scissors. These scissors were the ones the prosecution claimed Ntelamo used to murder her baby. The defence on the other hand demonstrated that the holes could just as easily have been made by a wild dog's teeth.

In the light of the conflicting evidence, I believe that it was wrong to convict Ntelamo Zileng'i without definite proof of her guilt.

## Suggested Procedure

The procedure to be followed falls into two stages, namely: Language Input and Writing Practice. One of the key points that must be kept in mind when searching for materials is to choose appropriate sample materials that are

both of interest and of informational value to the learners. The interest and information value are supposed to motivate the learners into reading and writing. In addition, the materials should be well-constructed so that they illustrate principles of good organization.

## First stage: The language input

The text entitled 'The conviction of Ntelamo Zileng'I' is used as a sample to show what an argument essay can be like and also to introduce some of the cohesive elements used, the overall organization, and the methods for developing the main idea. The students are asked to read the input very carefully. Then they are asked to analyze the organization and content.

In analyzing a given paragraph, the students are assisted in recognizing (a) the topic sentence, (b) the supporting details, (c) the development, and (d) the techniques of support. For example, the following questions could help the students in eliciting the required information:
1. Underline the topic sentence and circle the key words that express the main idea of the text.
2. Find the statement that expresses the viewpoint.
3. Find the supporting details and the paragraph pattern.
4. Note the important elements of the text.
5. Note the concluding statement.

From the sample text above, the students may come up with the following:

1. Ntelamo Zileng'i was convicted of killing her baby while…

2. Thesis statement: *should not have been convicted for Kaiko's murder as there is a lot of conflicting evidence.*
3. Supporting details based on evidence: first (argument point 1 + counter argument); another (argument point 2 + counter; and finally (argument point 3 + counter).
4. Introduction; Development; and Conclusion.
5. Conclusion: Restatement of viewpoint: In the light of…

In analyzing the text, the students have to be enabled to know how each part contributes to the whole (structure). Then the students are helped to analyze the various components: i) the overall organization and paragraph structure, ii) the topic statement or controlling idea and supporting details, iii) devices used to ensure coherence, iv) the methods of development, and v) the function of each paragraph.

The rationale behind this activity is to develop students' discourse competence receptively and assist them in acquiring the sense of organization. The conscious analysis of the models that the students are given enables them to outline and write their own arguments more effectively.


## The second stage: Writing Practice

With the knowledge gained from the comprehensible input, students should be ready to write their own tentative arguments. This stage has a built-in process for the students, namely: : Brainstorming = Writing = Revision.

**Brainstorming**
When students are assigned a topic from among those they had already suggested, they are divided into groups of four or five for discussion. They discuss freely while putting down words, facts and ideas that are connected to the topic. Once this part is over, they move to individual work with their notes. The students could be given topical issues like:
1. In your opinion, should the courts be lenient or hard on those shoplifting offenders?
2. Write an essay in which you argue either for or against the idea that the state should look after old people.
3. In your opinion, should the laws and churches enforce mandatory HIV and AIDS testing before any man and woman can get married?

**Writing**
After the brainstorming session, the students can now begin to organize their ideas armed with the notes from their discussions. They first formulate a topic statement, a sentence containing the main viewpoint with more than one support which reflects the structure of the argument. Then they expand the thesis statement into several topic sentences that could begin each body paragraph of the argument.
The following questions could act as the guidelines for the students as they revise their arguments:
1. Does your argument have three parts; introduction, development, and conclusion?
2. Does your thesis statement clearly indicate your viewpoint about the topic?
3. What supports (evidence) have you provided for your thesis statement?
4. Has your argument included a logical counter-argument?
5. Has your conclusion been arrived at logically through the argument?
6. Are your sentence structures grammatically correct including punctuation.

**Peer Evaluation**
After the individual writing session, the students swap their argument essays. They read, analyze and evaluate one another's work on content, organization and language using the checklist given below.

Checklist for peer-evaluation:
Locate the essay's thesis statement and the topic sentence of each body paragraph. Make a distinction between relevant and irrelevant information, and underline irrelevancies. Make some suggestions on  a piece of paper for improvement.
This approach is not the only one that can be adopted in a reading, writing content-based strategy. It is one of many, but facilitators may choose what best meets the needs of their learners. This approach creates room for cooperation with content facilitators at the appropriate time.

This is for initial argument writing. For specialists in English, some introduction to discursive analysis could be accompanied by a sophisticated text,

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