

CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS: First glimpses of the destination

6.1 INTRODUCTION

After choosing the final route to my destination, I began to explore the understanding of the respondents in regard to their right to freedom of expression.

The reasons for selecting a qualitative approach were explained in chapter 2. My choice of an interpretive approach is the result of an attempt to understand learners' understanding of their right to freedom of expression.

The academic puzzle that guides my research is: *What is learners' understanding of their right to freedom of expression?* I believe that individuals create their own reality while interpreting events and through this process create their own understanding of their reality. As I explore the realities they use to construct their perceptions and worlds of understanding I intend to understand the phenomenon from the learners' perspectives. My intention therefore, is to reconstruct the reality as I understand it, based on the very large data set.

The literature review constitutes chapters 3 to 5. In chapter 3, in an attempt to gauge what I can learn from the literature about the concept of human rights, I describe the development of human rights and the different shifts in foci during the exploration process. On discussing the literature regarding the right to freedom of expression in chapter 4, I realised that this right tends to be viewed internationally as a core right in a democracy. The global perspective is that it falls just short of being regarded as an absolute right. In chapter 5 I discuss case law, my primary source for this research. The aim is to determine the different legal principles which have been developed through case law and that are used to balance and limit the right to freedom of expression.

In this chapter I deal with the data used to answer my first premise, namely that some learners have limited knowledge of their right to freedom of expression (see § 2.5). This can also be viewed as an exploratory phase of which the aim is to determine whether learners are aware of the entire spectrum of the right to freedom of expression. The assumptions that underpin this premise are that most learners:

- know that the right to freedom of expression entails the spoken word;
- know that the right to freedom of expression entails the written word; and
- do not know that the right to freedom of expression entails symbolic or creative expression.

6.2 PREMISE 1: Some learners have limited knowledge of their right to freedom of expression

After writing the literature review, I was prepared to collect data to interpret learners' understanding of their right to freedom of expression. The process that I followed was firstly to investigate in phase 1 the entire spectrum of learners' understanding of the right to freedom of expression before focusing on specific types of expression. Phase 1 of the data collection consisted of four open-ended questions and one including statements with which learners only had to agree or disagree. My first premise was that some learners have limited knowledge of their right to freedom of expression. I therefore had to determine whether learners were aware of the entire spectrum included in the right to freedom of expression. I anticipated that learners would understand by their right to freedom of expression only that they could speak their minds and write what they liked. The first question was asked to determine how widely learners understood the spectrum included in the right to freedom of expression viz.: "What does freedom of expression mean to you?" (see Addendum I). The second question was asked to explore my premise: "What do you think you are allowed to do under the protection of your right to freedom of expression?"

Table 6.1 provides an indication of the range of respondents' understanding of the right to freedom of expression. The data summarised in table 6.1 will be used as basis for the discussion.

I used Atlas.ti™ to analyse the data, as it is effective for organising large quantities of data (see § 2.12). I made use of post-coded responses as I had not decided on specific codes beforehand. I coded every detail in order to include all the nuances contained in the data (Smit, 2001). During a second attempt I reduced some of the codes and eventually worked with 245. These codes were then classified into twelve categories, which were in turn classified into three families within which two patterns evolved, which enabled me to respond to my premises.¹⁰⁴ Phase 1 included 690 quotations.

The data collected from 89 respondents by means of the questionnaires in phase 1 is summarised in table 6.1. I analyse the respondents' responses. The data in table 6.1 shows that the respondents indicated twelve different types of expression under the right to freedom of expression. At first glance this information indicates that the learners have a relatively deep knowledge of their right to freedom of expression. This would render the premise that some learners have limited knowledge of their right to freedom of expression incorrect, as it seems to indicate that learners have an understanding of the entire spectrum of the right to freedom of expression. On closer examination, however, the data reflects a different picture. Although I thought it significant that the respondents had indicated twelve different types of expression, only a few indicated most of the different modes of freedom of expression. The majority (71 of the 89; 79,9%) only know that one is allowed to *speak* one's mind under the right to freedom of expression. The data in the table therefore indicates that learners know that they may speak their mind in terms of their right to freedom of expression. The 19 respondents

¹⁰⁴ See § 2.13 and figure 2.2 for clarification of the terminology that is used.

Table 6.1: Range of understanding of the right to freedom of expression

	Types of expression	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	Total	% ¹⁰⁵
1	Speak	17	15	13	15	11	71	71.9
2	Write	1		2	2		5	5.6
3	Listen/Receive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
4	Read			1			1	1.1
5	Hair		2	1	1		4	4.5
6	Uniform		4	2	2		8	9.0
7	Appearance		1	2	1	4	8	9.0
8	Acting		1			1	2	2.3
9	Music			1			1	1.1
10	Art				1		1	1.1
11	Religion		1			2	3	3.4
12	Culture				1	1	2	2.3
13	Dance				1		1	1.1
14	Mismatch		10	1	7	1	19	21.4
	Number of respondents	17	25	13	22	12	89	

who did not indicate that they knew that one can speak one's mind in terms of one's right to freedom of expression, are listed in row 14 under "Mismatch", indicating that they do not have an understanding of the meaning of freedom of expression.

All the respondents either stated that the right to freedom to expression includes the right to speak one's mind, or that they do not have any understanding of the meaning of freedom of expression at all. Other types of expression were mentioned by the respondents who had already indicated that they knew that the right to freedom of expression includes the right to speak. They indicated that they knew that their right to freedom of expression includes more than just speaking. This is the reason the figures in the last column do not add up to 100%.

Of the 690 responses, only eight indicated that they are obliged to wear school uniform and another eight indicated that they are allowed to wear whatever they want. On viewing these two questions as a unit, one could argue that 16 indicated awareness that the right to freedom also encompasses their apparel. Only five responses indicated that their expression of freedom in regard to writing would be guaranteed under the right to freedom of expression. Four indicated that they could wear a hairstyle of their choice. A mere three responses knew that they could express their religion freely. Only two respondents (2,3%) indicated that they could express freedom by acting out or expressing their culture. A single respondent (1,1%) indicated that the right to freedom of expression includes dancing according to his/her preference, listening to any type of music, expressing him/herself through art, or by reading what he/she prefers.

¹⁰⁵ This column does not add up to 100% as the respondents from row 1, "Speak" are the same respondents as in the other rows.

In an attempt to elicit further meaning from the data, I categorised the types of expression into three families, viz. verbal, non-verbal and symbolic or artistic expression. Figure 6.1 is a network display generated by Atlas.ti™ of the coded families and underpins the discussion.

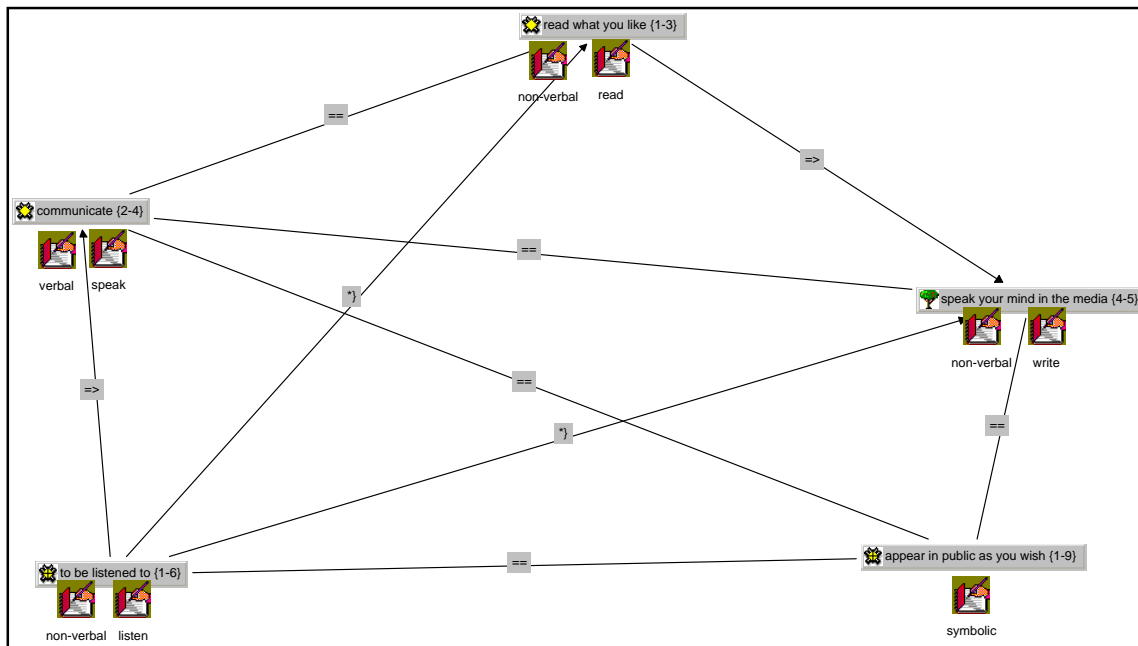


Figure 6.1 Three types of freedom of expression depicted in families¹⁰⁶

The code “communicate” indicates the category of “speaking” that represents the verbal expression family. All the respondents who indicated that they understood the right to freedom of expression were aware of the fact that they could use verbal expression (speaking their minds) as part of their right to freedom of expression. This mode of expression is related to the other modes of expression, e.g. reading, writing and symbolic expression. Communicating or speaking your mind implies that listening is occurring and *vice versa*. The non-verbal expression family includes the categories of listening, reading and writing. The code “to be listened to” indicates the category “listening” which is part of the non-verbal expression family. Speaking brings about listening. The category “writing” (sensory) is also associated with the category “speaking” (verbally) as one can speak one’s mind through writing. The category “listening” (audio) is part of the category “writing” (sensory) as one “listens” (visually) to the message while reading it. There is a causal relationship between the categories “reading” (visual) and “writing” (sensory) as one reads what has been written. “Writing” is also associated with the family “symbolic expression” as one can write one’s opinion on clothing, for instance. The category “writing” also forms part of the family of non-verbal expressions. Writing one’s opinion in public is part of communicating one’s opinion and ensuring that others take note of it. Another category of non-verbal expression is “reading”, as one can decide what to read or not. One’s appearance (apparel) is also

¹⁰⁶ The legend to read the symbols in the Atlas.ti™ generated network displays is explained in figure 2.3 at § 2.15.2

part of conveying one's message publicly and is a non-verbal way of expressing oneself. I refer to this as the symbolic or artistic expression which is, of course, associated with the categories of speaking, listening and writing as one symbolically speaks one's mind and people need to listen to one's message as one has "written" it symbolically. I, however, classify symbolic expression as a separate family since it encompasses various modes of expression.

In regard to table 6.1 one could argue that almost 80% of all the respondents know that verbal expression is guaranteed under the right to freedom of expression. Only 36 out of 690 responses indicated non-verbal expression as part of this right. Only six responses mentioned that they could express themselves through writing and reading. Of the responses 29 indicated an understanding that this right entails symbolic or artistic expression.

The discussion will commence in regard to verbal expression, the type of expression indicated overwhelmingly by the majority of the respondents. The following quotation is an example of what most respondents indicated and understood in terms of the right to freedom of expression:

Freedom of expression is when a person has a right to say what they want to say, and talk out their opinions as human beings. So everyone has the right to say out their thoughts 4:19 (86:89).

6.2.1 Verbal expression

Most learners indicated that they know they can communicate or speak their minds according to their right to freedom of expression. From all the identified codes, the code to "speak your mind" was assigned by far the most, i.e. 63 times. This resonates with my assumption that learners do know that they can speak their mind under the protection of their right to freedom of expression. It appears that learners understand under their right to freedom of expression that they may speak freely (see § 6.2 and quotation 4:19). The assumption that learners do know that they can speak their mind under the right to freedom of expression appears to have been affirmed easily. The focus will now be on the findings related to non-verbal expression.

6.2.2 Non-verbal expression

Although the majority of respondents believe that the right to freedom of expression entails only the spoken word, a number of respondents indicated an awareness that it also includes non-verbal expression. Non-verbal expression includes three categories, viz. writing, reading and listening.

6.2.2.1 Writing

I assumed that learners would understand that they could use their right to freedom of expression verbally (orally) and in writing (see § 2.5). On examining the data in regard to writing, only three responses indicated that the respondents believe that they can exercise their right to freedom of expression by writing in the media while only one respondent believes that people can exercise the right by using posters:

You can voice your expression in school in many ways; through letters, posters, ear to ear ... 5:33 (155:160).

The data shows that most learners do not seem to know that they can exercise their right to freedom of expression through the medium of writing, e.g. through the media, letters, posters, etc. My assumption was therefore disproved, as I believed that the respondents would know that their right to freedom of expression can be exercised through writing. Nevertheless, this finding supports my premise that learners have limited knowledge regarding their right to freedom of expression. As reading entails the ability to read, the focus will now be on indications in the data in regard to exercising the right to freedom of expression by means of reading.

6.2.2.2 Reading

I assumed that learners would understand that they can speak and write their mind according to their right to freedom of expression. This assumption too, seems unsubstantiated, as only a single comment was received in the category *reading*, from a respondent who mentioned reading by stating that the right to freedom of expression allows a person to read what they want to read, in other words, to decide what they want to read or not: *I can read what I like* 3:10 (36:36).

I assumed that learners would be more aware of this aspect. The finding confirms the previous point, i.e. if learners are not aware that they can exercise their right to freedom of expression by writing, then surely they will not understand that according to this right they may choose what to read. This finding supports my premise that some learners have limited knowledge about their right to freedom of expression.

As *listening* goes hand in hand with *speaking*, *reading* does with *writing*. The analysis will now focus on aspects of *listening* evident in the data.

6.2.2.3 Listening

Only three comments are indicative of knowledge that the right to freedom of expression encompasses a choice for someone to be heard and a choice to decide what they wish to listen to:

- *That everyone has the right to speak his mind and to be listened to*¹⁰⁷ 1:21 (49:50).
- *I am allowed to ask questions, receive answers, conduct myself accordingly, respect teachers and expect teachers to respect me in return, and to express my view on certain things at school* 2:69 (253:256).
- *I am allowed to discourage anyone who feels the need to express their feelings or opinions. Other people have a right to be listened to, just like I do* 5:46 (221:224).

The crux of the above quotations is not really for people “to listen to what they want to” but rather for their voices to be heard. The quotations do not indicate that the respondents are aware of the fact that they also have a choice as to what to listen to in terms of the right to freedom of expression. The fact that only three quotations indicate that someone’s voice must be heard (listened to) and that no respondent indicated what s/he would choose to listen to, supports the finding that learners do not have a broad understanding of what the right to freedom of expression entails. I therefore assume that

¹⁰⁷ Dat elkeen die reg het om sy siening te stel en dat daar na hom/haar geluister sal word.

learners do not know that their right to freedom of expression extends beyond the spoken and the written word. This type of freedom of expression is symbolic or artistic creative freedom of expression. The data on *symbolic or artistic freedom of expression* will be discussed under the headings: appearance, action, art, religion and culture.

6.2.3 Symbolic and artistic expression

Although symbolic and artistic expression is *per se* a type of non-verbal expression, I have isolated it to discuss it separately, as a variety of expressions are classified under the right to symbolic and artistic expression. In this section I discuss aspects not covered in the previous three sections (see § 6.2.2.1 - 6.2.2.3).

6.2.3.1 Appearance

The respondents indicated in regard to appearance that they understand that they can appear in public dressed according to their own preference. According to them this right allows them to express themselves through their clothes, e.g. *Dress as I like ...* 5:17 (88:89). The fact that they may dress as they like, also gives them the freedom to represent what they stand for: *I can show myself in public as I want to show myself. Show my expressions or show myself wherever and whenever I can* 3:19 (59:61). This same tendency was expressed by the respondent who stated that s/he could express him/herself through choice of clothes: *Wear [sic] clothing that reflects my personality ...* 3:30(112:115). Appearance, however, includes more than just clothes. It includes the hairstyle: *To do hairstyles that I want in my hair, e.g. braiding, "scruling" ...* 2:81(301:303).

6.2.3.2 Action

A relatively large number of respondents indicated that they can do anything anywhere, at any time in terms of their right to freedom of expression without fear of consequences:

- *Freedom of expression means you have to express your freedom and be focus [sic] on your things. You have a right to do anything you really wanna [sic] do* 2:4(22:25).
- *Freedom of expression means being able to express yourself about things that occur in life. It's like being free without any oppression from other people. You can do things without anyone saying no to those things* 4:4 (24:28).
- *Everyone should have freedom of expression in any activity. Every person must have a say, no one must do that for you. If something is wrong you must show or say. Every person has a right to do everything, everywhere and any time* 4:8 (40:44).

The quotations indicate a pattern in the data, viz. that there is a tendency for respondents to think that the right to freedom of expression is absolute.

6.2.3.3 Art

Only four respondents indicated that the right to freedom of expression allows them to disseminate ideas or messages via art. They mentioned, *inter alia*, that they can express themselves through dance and that they may create poetry, for instance to engender peace:

- *It means that you can say anything you want to in words, mouth, dance, art [sic]* 3:22 (71:72).
- *I am allowed to do free speeches or poetry having in mind it will bring peace not actually hurt others. I am allowed to bring peace among others* 2:54 (201:204).

One respondent also indicated that his/her right to freedom of expression allows him/her to listen to any type of music: *I can listen to any music* 3:9 (35:36).

Four respondents indicated that they can use their right to freedom of expression through art, i.e. only 4,5% of the 89 respondents who participated in phase 1. Since appearance and religious expression are linked, I shall now focus on the data relevant to religion.

6.2.3.4 Religion

Only eight respondents indicated that their religious expression is guaranteed according to their right to freedom of expression. One mentioned that it allows people to pray at any time and anywhere: *I dress as I like, pray wherever and whenever, make my own choices in life. Stand up for my own beliefs whatever it is wrong or right* 5:17 (88:90). One respondent mentioned that the right to religious expression allows people to express their religion by wearing religious (traditional) attire: *You can state your viewpoint on certain things. Maybe even fashionably, e.g. if you are a Muslim woman, you'll express parts of your religion through your traditional attire* 5:24 (115:118). One respondent even said that the right to freedom of expression allows a person to be moved from one class to another because of religion: *If we are belittled in school, because of our beliefs, we are allowed to be moved to a different class* 3:42 (163:165). This respondent does not really understand the right to freedom of expression clearly, as it is actually the right to freedom of religion that will allow them to be moved from one class to another in the circumstances described.

The pattern continues. Very few respondents are aware of the fact that the right to freedom of expression allows them to express their religion, viz. only eight of the 245 codes indicated that respondents were aware of the fact that freedom of expression includes the right to religious expression. The pattern is the same as that in all the previous modes. Almost no respondents were aware of the fact that the right to freedom of expression encompasses more than just the right to speak.

6.2.3.5 Culture

Three respondents understand that according to their right to freedom of expression they are allowed to publicise their culture. One stated that the right to freedom of expression allows a person to participate in any cultural activity: *I am allowed to take part in any activity, sport or culture, and may choose any subjects. This is a form of freedom of expression as individuality is developed* 3:41 (159:162). This respondent has confused the right to freedom of expression with the right to freedom of association¹⁰⁸ which guarantees, among other things, that people can choose with whom or what they want to associate/be associated. In other words, the right to freedom of expression, among other things, allows them to make choices about subjects and extramural activities.

¹⁰⁸ Section 18 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Two other respondents stated that according to their right to freedom of expression they are allowed to express themselves through their culture, e.g.:

- *That you have the right to express who you are and your religion/culture ... 5:5 (28:30).*
- *It means that I can express myself in any way that I want and not get in trouble. Like get arrested or thrown out of school. I can express myself in different ways like clothing, art and even my culture ... 4:10 (48:52).*

Again, almost none of the respondents are aware that the right to freedom of expression allows them to share their cultural beliefs. Very few respondents are aware that the right to freedom of expression encompasses more than verbal expression.

6.2.3.6 Informing

Some respondents did not necessarily indicate how they would use their right to freedom of expression but believe that it allows them to inform people about themselves or to disseminate a clear message: *I am free to express myself in any way 3:12(37:38).*

Respondents indicated that the right to freedom of expression allows them to express their sexual orientation, express themselves physically or in any way they wanted to be heard, e.g.: *Expressing my religion, my sexual orientation and expressing the way I want to be heard 2:49 (175:176).*

It also allows them to advertise, form their own opinion, be taken seriously and regard their opinion as acceptable. Learners want to speak out if they disagree with someone or something, yet these respondents feel that no one else is allowed to disagree with his/her point of view:

- *It also means that if I feel strongly about a situation (right or wrong) I am allowed to voice my opinion on that subject and be taken seriously 3:15 (42:45).*
- *No one may tell me that my opinion is incorrect 3:3 (20:21).*

The emerging pattern is reinforced by the fact that these and other respondents seem to absolutise the right to freedom of expression.

6.2.4 Mismatched data

After interpreting the data on the right to freedom of expression, I received a substantial amount of data indicating that some respondents do not understand the right to freedom of expression. As I may not disregard mismatched data, I shall now discuss this rich data which will be interpreted according to two categories, viz. understandings not linked to the right to freedom of expression or other rights, and confusing freedom of expression with other rights.

6.2.4.1 Misconception

Some data indicated that respondents who do not understand the right to freedom of expression link it to something very different, e.g. being protected by the police, choosing their own food, ensuring a good life by doing things for pleasure, being allowed to participate in any activity of their choice, sharing ideas, acting correctly and being proud of the African National Congress (ANC):

- *I have a right to be under the protection of the police 4:34 (150:151).*

- *To eat what I want to eat during lunch as long as I have money to pay for it 2:35 (122:124).*
- *The law of good leave [life]. Things you do you do it for enjoyment. To leave [live] better than the law of apartheid 2:15 (46:48).*
- *I want to be proud, including of my party, the ANC 4:27 (124:126).*

Furthermore, it is clear that some respondents have vague knowledge of rights and do not have detailed knowledge about different rights, or are unable to differentiate among rights. To them rights entail something like possessing a passport, doing activities or possessing things. The rights to freedom and equality are intertwined with all the rights.

6.2.4.2 Other rights

Some respondents confuse different rights with one another. They know something about human rights, but do not understand the differentiation of the rights: *You know your basic rights, but you don't know all of them [rights] in detail 1:315 (1058:1061)*. The initial focus will be on respondents who intertwine the right to freedom of expression with any type of human right and then on those who confuse the right to freedom of expression with the right to education.

- ***Intertwined rights***

Many respondents fail to see their right to freedom of expression as a right on its own as described in the Bill of Rights, but rather view it as a collective norm governing a variety of other rights. Eight respondents believe that all their rights can be demanded according to their right to freedom of expression, while six view the right to freedom of expression as equal to freedom:

- *Means to be free everywhere like when you are walking along the way and also when you are talking with different races in South Africa. And means everyone in South Africa has the human rights for his/her life 4:5 (29:33).*
- *The freedom of expression means to me to be free in this country I live in and to go where I want because no one can tell me anything. We live in South Africa; everyone has a right 4:13 (63:66).*

Table 6.2 reflects rights which a number of respondents indicated that they are entitled to according to their right to freedom of expression. The following words of a respondent echo some of the expectations:

Like early vandalism or abuse – mental, physical and emotional - and blackmail is not allowed, but often still happens. To me I think the school suppresses us to [sic] much and should motivate learners to express themselves, because now they're too scared to say anything 5:44 (210:215).

- ***The right to education***

One of the open-ended questions required learners to explain what they would be allowed to do at school in terms of their right to freedom of expression, while the next question asked what they would not be allowed to do at school under their right to freedom of expression. It could be that this question misled some respondents into thinking that these questions were about the right to education, but even if that is the case, it may be an indication that they do not understand the right to freedom of

Table 6.2 Other rights respondents perceived in terms of the right to freedom of expression

Right	Section in the Constitution	Quotation
Equality	9	<i>It means I have the right to say or do what I feel, whether right or wrong. I have the right to be considered whether in a minority or majority 4:15(70:71).</i>
Human dignity	10	<i>I am allowed to be taught and not allowed to be corporally punished [sic] for unnecessary silly mistakes 2:52 (191:193).</i>
Freedom and security of the person	12	<i>I think it is a good thing because if I [sic] under violence or discrimination I [sic] under good right 4:35 (156:157).</i>
Freedom of religion, belief and opinion	15	<i>If we are belittled in school, because of our beliefs, we are allowed to be moved to a different class 3:42 (163:165).</i>
Freedom of association	18	<i>Make my own choices whether I attend it or not, etc. 5:29(142:143).</i>
Freedom of movement and residence	21	<i>To say anything to respect any person who is older than me or younger than me to have the right to go anywhere in the country without being ashamed 4:37(165:168).</i>
Freedom of trade, occupation and profession	22	<i>I think I'm allowed to do anything. To work we ever [sic] I like 2:33 (119:121).</i>

expression. One respondent indicated that s/he would not be allowed to do more under the right to freedom of expression than what s/he is currently allowed to do:

Not much more as what we currently can do or say! We can just have as much freedom of expression and human rights but circumstances at school will always remain the same¹⁰⁹ 1:64 (167:170).

Nine respondents indicated that they understood in regard to their right to freedom of expression that they have a right to education. Another said that s/he could expect the educator to supply quality education:

- *I am allowed to be taught, and not allowed to be corporally punished for unnecessary silly mistakes 2:52 (191:193).*
- *I think I am allowed to do anything at school under my right to freedom of expression because I will learn many things to make my future to be better than now 2:94 (236:239).*
- *As a learner I have the right to get educated so that I can satisfy my consequences [sic]. And I can study more and more so that I can reach my goals 4:57 (257:260).*

Other respondents stated that according to their right to freedom of expression they can demand a completed school, to participate in sport, have sports grounds, sports equipment and stationery:

I think my school must be complete and the teachers are teaching well and we have all stationary [sic]. We have sports grounds where we play our sports and we have all sports equipment 4:52 (231:234).

¹⁰⁹ Nie veel meer as wat ons nou kan doen of sê nie! Ons kan net soveel "vryheid tot spraak" en "menseregte" hê maar die skoolomstandighede sal maar altyd dieselfde bly.

This quotation echoes the pattern in the previous quotations, viz. that some respondents have a vague and general understanding about human rights, but no understanding of the differentiation of the rights. The right to freedom of expression also gives them the right to decide when to attend school or to study at school until late or go to the library whenever they want to: *I think I'm allowed to go to the library whenever I like. If I feel like I don't wanna [sic] come to class today, they don't have to force me 2:56 (208:210). One indicated: I am supposed to be honest in school work and have good morals in regarding [sic] to my teacher 2:41 (144:145).*

The findings show that not all learners understand their right to freedom of expression. As a matter of fact, they have only a vague knowledge of rights and confuse the rights without differentiating among those in the Bill of Rights; hence they cannot be expected to understand a specific right in the Bill of Rights.

The selected quotations reinforce the fact that respondents have a vague general knowledge of human rights but do not understand the specifics of the right to freedom of expression. Therefore one could hypothesise that some learners do not understand the different rights or what they entail.

6.3 CONCLUSION

The data interpreted in this chapter indicates that learners do not have a very broad and deep understanding of their right to freedom of expression. Of the respondents 80% know that they are allowed to speak their minds verbally. A few of the 80% understand that the right to freedom of expression entails more than verbal expression. My first assumption, namely that some learners know that the right to freedom of expression encompasses the spoken word, has been proved by the findings in this chapter. My second assumption, i.e. that some learners know that the right to freedom of expression encompasses the written word, was disproved. Almost all the respondents know that they can speak their mind under the right to freedom of expression. There were, however, a few learners who indicated that they know they are allowed to read and write what they want to under the protection of their right to freedom of expression.

My third assumption, viz. that some learners do not understand that they have a right to symbolic and artistic expression according to the right to freedom of expression, has been proved by the findings. Only a few learners mentioned that they understand that symbolic and artistic expression is part of their right to freedom of expression. Interestingly and unexpectedly, however, this was indicated by more respondents than those who knew that they can read and write what they want to according to the right to freedom of expression.

My premise that learners have limited knowledge of their right to freedom of expression was substantiated during the first, exploratory phase. The data indicated clearly that most learners have a limited knowledge of the right to freedom of expression and they do not have an understanding of the

spectrum included under this right. Only a few know that the right encompasses more than only the right to speak. The findings from phase 3 will be used to crystallise these findings and to scrutinise them for resonance with the findings from phases 1 and 2 (see § 8.1).

A large number of respondents indicated that they can use the right to freedom of expression without fearing the consequences:

- *Without other people making offensive remarks about my opinion*¹¹⁰ 1:22 (50:52).
- *Everything you want to do without any fear. Is our right to enjoy freedom through our life. No one should "unfree" [sic] through our freedom. Is our right to express anything because of our freedom* 2:22 (68:72).

The quotations above reflect a pattern that surfaced during the investigation of the spectrum of the understanding of the right to freedom of expression and is a realisation of a tendency among some learners to believe that the right to freedom of expression is absolute. Stakeholders do not know how to deal with these newly found human rights, e.g. learners seem to think that they have absolute rights and that they can demand these rights without assessing the situation or considering other stakeholders: *You have a right to say anything you want at anyplace and at any time you want* 4:20 (90:92).

On the other hand, some learners still believe that they cannot exercise their rights because they still believe that they should respect authority and do not dare to differ:

I am not allowed to tell how I feel about my school uniform or my hair, they are the ones who decide for me what to wear and what to do. They make rules for me 2:89 (354:357).

This leads toward the premise that some grade 11 learners in the Gauteng Province of South Africa do not know how to exercise their right to freedom of expression. They either think this right is absolute and abuse it, or they are not aware of the implications of the fact that they are allowed to speak out:

Everything you want to do without any fear. Is our right to enjoy freedom through our life. No one should "unfree" [sic] through our freedom. Is our right so express anything because of our freedom 2:22 (68:72).

These two perceptions form the basis of the two assumptions of my second premise (see § 2.5) which will be explored in the following chapter. Figure 6.2 provides an overview and route map of the investigation in regard to the data and premises in the various chapters.

The findings indicate that most learners know that they can speak their mind under their right to freedom of expression. Unfortunately, for most of them it is limited to this understanding. Only a few respondents know that the right to freedom of expression encompasses much more than verbal expression.

¹¹⁰ Sonder dat ander mense vieslike op- of aanmerkings daaroor sal maak.

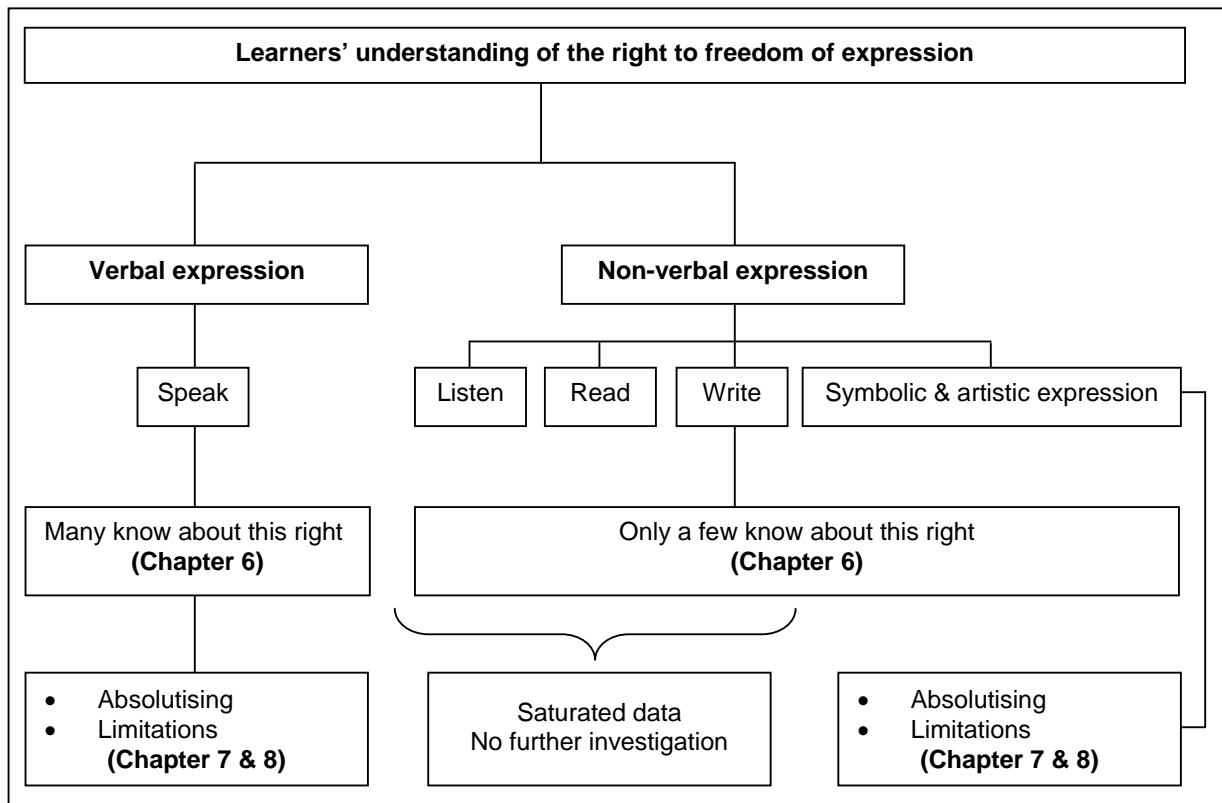


Figure 6.2 Overview of the data analysis on the right to freedom of expression

On glimpsing the horizon of my destination of understanding, I realise that I do not yet know much about the landscape and that many experiences lie ahead before I reach my destination. I shall therefore proceed to the next chapter to explore and interpret the data on my second premise, i.e. that some learners do not know how to exercise their right to freedom of expression.