

**WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING NEEDS: A CASE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS  
AND EXPERIENCES OF POLICE CONSTABLES AT SELECTED POLICE  
CLUSTERS IN THE GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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## DECLARATION

Student number: 4911-231-7

I declare that WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING NEEDS: A CASE STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF POLICE CONSTABLES AT SELECTED POLICE CLUSTERS IN THE GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

Kekana Tebogo Johannes

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DATE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Nkekolo Rosina Kekana; who passed away on 11 August 2013; my late father, Maesela Stoffel Kekana; who passed away on 10 September 2009, and also to my late younger sister and the aunt of my children, Mologadi Vivian Kekana, who passed away on 14 September 2008. Words cannot express my sincere gratitude to all of you for the person I am today. My parents always encouraged and insisted that their children should go to school even though they had not go that much further in education. I am sad that you all went away before you could witness this level of my career. I hope wherever you are, you are smiling and rejoicing at this achievement. As for you my sister, I will always remember your laughter, jokes and your love for your family. Ke le gopola ka mehla.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Writing proficiency in the English language is one of the critical workplace competencies required in the police workplace. The aim of this study was to investigate and determine the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs in selected police clusters in the Gauteng province, South Africa and recommend suitable strategies to address those needs. Therefore this thesis reports on workplace English writing needs from a professional perspective to determine how they impact on the workplace English writing competencies of police constables and also as a basis for the development of a language-integrated learning curriculum in SAPS police training academies. Data was collected through a questionnaire and interviews with selected sample of the respondents. This data was collected on: their perceptions of their workplace English writing competencies, the areas within English writing which they consider to be a challenge, their perceptions about the extent to which the SAPS training programme addresses police officers' workplace English writing needs and their suggestions regarding the type of SAPS training programme which can enhance their workplace English writing competencies. This study was prompted by concerns from various research studies and media which reported that police officers have inadequate English writing competencies. Among other things, the study found that the absence of an English writing course in the Basic Police Development Learning Programme contributes significantly to the inadequate workplace English writing competency of police constables in South Africa. The lack of awareness of the importance of other writing sub-skills such as punctuation, word classification and correct capitalisation, contributes to police constables incompetence. This research underscores the importance of police constables' workplace English writing research on a large scale. Such research can be used for improved pedagogy in police training academies in South Africa. Finally, the findings from this study can also be used as a basis for the development of language-integrated learning curricula in the South African police training academies and also to foster awareness about different factors impacting on the workplace English writing competencies of police constables in South Africa.

## KEY TERMS

- Workplace English writing needs
- English language needs
- English for Specific Purposes
- Police constables
- Needs analysis
- Work Integrated Learning
- Genre
- Writing skill
- English Second Language
- English First Language
- English writing sub-skills

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SAPS	South African Police Services
BPDLP	Basic Police Development Learning Programme
LCIL	Language and Content Integrated Learning
NA	Needs Analysis
ESL	English Second Language
ESOP	English Second (or Other) Language
SA	South Africa
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
CSC	Community Service Centre
CIC	Cluster Information Centre
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
FET	Further Education and Training
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
NBT	National Benchmarking Test
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board

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## **Chapter One**

### **ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the orientation and background to this study by delineating the research problem, the research aim, the research question, the theoretical framework, the literature review, the research methodology, justification of the study, definition of key terms, chapter outline, limitations of the study and the thesis outline. The research problem in this study is delineated hereunder.

#### **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Police departments around the world are faced with a challenge of police officers with inadequate workplace English writing competencies (see §2.4.1.1). Although inadequate workplace English writing competency is a known challenge in South African Police Service (SAPS), its causes are not yet known and preliminary investigations seem to suggest that police officers receive inadequate basic training in English writing (Fyfe, Greene, Walsh, Wilson and McLaren, 1997; Ndenze, 2012; Linfoot, 2008). Often this is due to their lack of English language proficiency and inadequate training at police academies as well as inadequate English teaching at high/secondary school level. It is against this backdrop that this research study investigated the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs so that their workplace English writing challenge can be addressed.

It is important that police constables perceptions and experiences be examined because the importance of police officers' English writing competencies cannot be overemphasised (Standard & Associates, 1992; Johnson, 1987; Miller & Pomeranke, 1989; Wilson & Hayes, 1984). Therefore it is important that officers such as police constables be trained well in English writing because they need, among other things, to have an adequate knowledge of grammar rules in English.

The above statement is important because mastery of writing in English, among other things, hinges largely on grammar rules. As with other professions, police work requires documentation. Police officers are expected to write reports and to document scenes and incidents such as crime scenes, and they need to have adequate knowledge in English grammar to do that effectively. It is therefore important for SAPS members to have, among other things, good knowledge of English grammar. This assertion is also supported by Lewis (1993: vi) who postulates that 'language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar'.

It is against the above assertion that this study focused on aspects of grammar such as sentence structure, cohesion, vocabulary, spelling, tense, expression, punctuation, word classification and capitalization. In addition, the impetus among other things came from the study done by Nel and Swanepoel (2010:53) who identified the common errors that English Second Language (ESL) learners tend to make. Nel and Swanepoel (ibid) reveal that ESL learners make phonological, syntactical, grammatical, tense, transfer, punctuation, wrong word and pronunciation errors. Thus prompting the need to investigate police constables' workplace English writing needs by focusing specifically on selected English writing sub-skills because those writing sub-skills are part of grammar ( § 3.4.1).

Furthermore, while SAPS members are struggling with workplace English writing skills, the English language has become a global language. According to Sonntag (2003:xi), English has spread to nearly every corner of the earth. This view is also shared by Crystal (1997:106) who states that English is now the dominant or official language in over 60 countries and is represented on every continent. Wright (2004:84) points out that there is a shift from former marginalised languages to English as the preferred language of choice in the public domain. In addition, Baijnath (2012) concurs:

*Linguistically, with forty spoken languages, establishing a language as the lingua franca, and one which becomes the vehicle of common culture is equally elusive... English dominates communication at the official level.*

The recent introduction of a new SAPS training BPDLP (Basic Police Development Learning Programme) is an effort by SAPS to improve training so that officers such as police constables can provide an improved, effective and professional policing service. However it seems the training programme has not addressed the critical issue of workplace English writing skills despite this new initiative. The other factor that seems to compound the SAPS police officers' workplace English writing challenge relates to the screening-out model for literacy purposes used by SAPS during recruitment. Due to the perennial nature of this problem of inadequate workplace English writing ability in SAPS, it can be argued that this ineffective screening-out model employed during recruitment also contributes to the above-mentioned challenge.

Another challenge that is tied to the SAPS screening-out model are the requirements in becoming a police recruit in SAPS. According to SAPS (2014) if one wants to become a police recruit/trainee he or she should be in possession of a Grade 12 (Senior Certificate) and be fluent in English. There seems to be a tacit assumption within the SAPS training division that a matric certificate means that one can write adequately in English at a workplace. This is despite some studies (Ralenala, 1993; Pantelides, 1999; Mzokwana, 2008) revealing that matriculants in South Africa still find English to be a challenge. Therefore the assumption could be that police training academies in South Africa accept police recruits/trainees whose English writing skills are inadequate. Drawing from the discussion discussed above, it can also be concluded that the South African education system is also one probable factor that exacerbates the problem of inadequate workplace English writing ability in the SAPS police.

Furthermore, paucity of South African research on SAPS police officers' workplace English writing needs also contribute to the challenge of inadequate workplace English writing competency. Research on the South African police workplace English writing needs (in comparison with documented English language needs research of police officers in other parts of the world) also show that there is lack of research in that area. Paterson (2011:287) posits that police studies are dominated by Western scholars and this means little reference to or understanding of other cultures is often demonstrated.

It is evident from the above discussion that there is clearly a gap in the research on and in-depth understanding of workplace English writing needs of SA police officers including the police constables. This area does not seem to have been investigated previously by any study and certainly no investigation of this type has been conducted with police constables in the Gauteng province, South Africa. It is against this backdrop that it was decided to conduct this research in an attempt to suggest strategies for improving the workplace English writing competencies of SAPS officers. The research aims are explicitly discussed hereunder.

### **1.3 THE RESEARCH AIMS**

The primary research aim of this study:

- To determine the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs.

The four secondary research aims:

- To identify police constables' perceptions of their English writing competencies.
- To identify the specific areas within English writing that police constables consider to be a challenge.

- To investigate the extent to which the SAPS training programme address police officers' workplace English writing needs.
- To suggest a training programme that can enhance the workplace English writing competencies of SA police constables.

To achieve the above research aims, the researcher used some specific research questions. These research questions are presented in the subsequent section.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The primary research question:

- What are the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs?

The secondary research questions:

- What are the police constables' perceptions of their English writing competencies?
- What are the specific areas within English writing that police constables consider to be a challenge?
- To what extent does the SAPS training programme address police officers' workplace English writing needs?
- What type of a training programme can enhance the workplace English writing competencies of SA police constables?

## **1.5 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section of the chapter provides the theoretical framework which underpins this study. Since the primary aim of the study is to determine the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs, the specifically selected second language learning theories and approaches to give this study a solid grounding are discussed. The theories and approaches in this study were selected based on the aims of the research study.

The theories underlying this study are Genre theory and Work Integrated Learning theory. In addition to these theories, this study also incorporates the Needs Analysis (NA) framework. Genre theory is selected specifically because it focuses on theories of second language learning. This was done because this study focused on the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs. (§ 3.3.1.1). Genre theory is critical in this study because it focuses on situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalised academic or professional settings (Bhatia 2004:22). This theory is relevant due to this study's focus on the linguistic behaviour of police constables in a workplace setting.

This study is also underpinned by Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) theory. The premise of this theory is that workplace experience is considered valuable in any work institution (Coll et al., 2009). This theory is critical in this study because one of the aims of this study is to investigate the extent to which the SAPS training programme addresses police officers workplace English writing needs. This will also articulate to how in-service training takes place in the ministry of police in SA. In other words, the aim of investigating the training of English writing in SAPS is facilitated through the use of this theory.

The study furthermore involved analyzing the workplace English writing needs of the SA police constables and this required that a needs analysis be done. Therefore this study also employed a Needs Analysis (NA) Framework. This helped with the workplace English writing needs assessment of the police constables.

In addition to the theories mentioned, the study draws on second language learning approaches to writing (Writing as a product and process approach). The models in these approaches are suggested by researchers such as Rohman (1965), Flower and Hayes (1980; 1981) and Hayes, (1996). The models in these approaches guided the interpretation and analysis of the data so that the aims of the research study can be achieved. It is through the guidance of these approaches that answers to the research questions in this study could be provided.

## **1.6 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

This section presents the research design and methodology. According to van der Merwe (2010:4), Leedy and Ormrod (2005:12) the methodology of a research project can be described as the approach in general that the researcher takes in carrying out his or her research project and, to some extent, this approach dictates the particular tools the researcher selects. This investigation adopted a case study method as discussed below.

### **1.6.1 Case Study**

The title of this study is 'Workplace English Writing Needs: A case study of perceptions and experiences of police constables at selected police clusters in the Gauteng Province, South Africa'. What this means is that the researcher in this study selected a certain category of police officers (i.e. police constables) who are on certain police rank in various selected police clusters in different geographical regions. The above information makes this investigation a case study. Details regarding this case study are discussed in Chapter three (3).

### **1.6.2 Design and Approach**

This study employed a multi-method strategy because it is both descriptive and deductive. It followed a mixed research approach. Furthermore it contains qualitative and quantitative data. This approach enabled the researcher to answer the research question successfully. In designing and conducting this research, the researcher began with a preconceived notion or expectation that police constables have inadequate workplace English writing competency. This notion stemmed from the preliminary literature review done during the proposal stage of this study.

### **1.6.3 Population and Sampling**

The police constable sample was drawn from a population of police constables based in the Gauteng province, South Africa. This sample was drawn from the three specifically selected SAPS clusters. The number of respondents in this investigation comprised a total of 203 police constables. The participants of this sample were all at the rank of a police constable during the year of the research (2014). Out of the 203, there were 81 (39.9%) men and 122 (60.1%) women. The non-probability sampling strategy was used to select the participants.

### **1.6.4 Data Collection**

In this study, data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. These two instruments are discussed below.

#### **1.6.4.1 Questionnaire**

One of the research instruments in this study is a questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the police constables were given questions regarding their experiences and perceptions about their workplace English writing skills, and their perceptions regarding the selected writing sub-skills and workplace English writing needs. The questionnaire consisted of thirty two (32) closed ended questions. In some sections, police officers were asked to respond to the items rating their English writing abilities on a five-point Likert scale (Appendix E for full details).

#### 1.6.4.2 Interviews

Interviews were also used to collect qualitative data for the study. The interviews schedule contained eighteen (18) items which the research participants were supposed to answer. A sampled group of South African police constables in the Gauteng province were interviewed. This was done so that in-depth information regarding the specific workplace English writing needs, the factors contributing to the inadequate English writing ability, the perceptions and experiences regarding workplace English writing ability, the suggestions regarding how to improve the workplace English writing abilities as well as how the SAPS as a department can help improve English writing skills in SAPS (Appendix F for full details).

#### **1.6.5 Data Analysis**

Data in this study was analysed using two different strategies. Qualitative data was analysed using perceptual measure approach (Fraser & Walberg, 1981) combined with interpretational analysis advocated by Winegardener (2001) whereas the quantitative data was analysed using statistical computer software call Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A detailed exposition of the research design and methodology is fully explained in Chapter three.

### **1.7 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

This study addresses concerns raised about the inadequate English writing competencies of police officers in the SAPS. Furthermore, the rationale for this study is that for the police organisation to move forward then perhaps it is time for a new approach that seeks to explore more fully police officers' own perceptions of what they value in the organisation, and how they believe they need to move forward (Foster,2003:222).

In addition, the study focused on the specific workplace English writing needs of South African police constables because different professions require different English writing skills. Academic writing needs can also be different to professional writing needs. Therefore, a needs analysis of police constables' specific workplace English writing is imperative. Fulwiler (1987:120) asserts that students "already have habits, biases, notions and fears which determine, to some extent, the quality of their writing". It is against this backdrop that the researcher wanted to investigate their (police constables) perceptions and experiences regarding workplace English writing.

Part of the questionnaire in this study also focused on police constables' background. This is in line with researchers such as Kasanga (2006:142) who argued that teachers' awareness of students' backgrounds is involved in helping students overcome their writing problems. The researcher thought that if this knowledge can be available, trainers/instructors at SAPS can benefit from it. This section is discussed in detail in chapter three (§ 3.3.1.3)

The phenomenon was investigated because adequate English writing ability in a police workplace environment is viewed as a critical skill without which police constables cannot function effectively and optimally. The National Skills Authority (2007:4) defines a critical skill as:

*The lack of ability of people to perform to the level of occupational competence required because of gaps in their skills profiles.*

The researcher believes that this research has contributed towards addressing the challenges relating to workplace English writing of police constables and police officers in general in SAPS. The research is therefore valuable in that it may help to illuminate possible constraints in the teaching and learning of English writing by police constables. This research has determined the specific workplace English writing needs of the police constables in the city of Tshwane in the Gauteng province. In addition, this research has presented possible and probable factors encumbering adequate workplace English writing abilities of police constables in the SAPS.

The researcher hopes that this research will help to develop a course that focuses on workplace English writing ability in SAPS police training academies as well as in institutions of higher learning that offer police practice in South Africa. The researcher further trusts that this research will stimulate further discussions on workplace English writing needs in different workplaces. It is also hoped that this study will serve as a basis for other pedagogically related research on workplace English writing needs as well as English language needs in general in the police services in South Africa.

Stevens (2005:244) argues that current basic police training appears to be adequate for traditional models of policing. He further says that modern forms of policing require police training academies to align their training to the current status quo and this requires a paradigm shift. The researcher hopes this study will contribute towards the anticipated SAPS training paradigm shift.

Lastly, this study was conducted so that the assertions above concerning SAPS police officers' workplace English writing ability do not appear to be based mainly on anecdotal evidence or impressionistic claims. The researcher wanted this putative workplace English writing incompetence to be accepted with the evidence to back it so that relevant and effective initiatives can be developed and implemented.

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Empirical research studies have limitations and caveats and this study is no different. This study is limited with regard to the focus of the topic, its sample, the geographical area, the research instruments and data gathering methods.

The sample in this study was limited to only South African police constables who were based in the three purposefully selected police clusters in the Gauteng province, South Africa. The only police constables who participated in this study were appointed in SAPS in terms of the South African Police Service Act of 1995. Police officers such as metro police officers and police reservists did not form part of this study because the researcher wanted to focus on one specific sample. Only 203 police constables participated in this study and that is how this study is limited.

There may be many specific workplace English writing factors influencing the police constables' inadequate English writing skills at the workplace but this study focused only on the adopted research questions to investigate the workplace English writing needs of SAPS police constables and in that sense this study is limited.

The data collection instruments in this research were limited in the sense that the questionnaire contained only thirty two (32) questions and the interviews contained only eighteen (18). The questions in this study were limited to a certain number because the scope would have been too large for the capacity of this research study. The interviews were only limited to ten (10) randomly selected research participants and the questionnaire was distributed to only two hundred and fifty (250) however only two hundred and three (203) were returned by the selected participants (see Chapter three for detailed information). The data were extracted by selected data collection instruments only (the questionnaire and the interviews). This study was limited in that sense. Furthermore, this is a case study regarding the police constables in a specific selected geographical region and thus cannot be generalised.

Despite these limitations, the researcher trusts that findings in this study are reliable and can be of help to other police constables with similar background in other police clusters in South Africa and elsewhere.

## **1.9 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS**

According to Leedy (1997:60) terminology should be defined in an operational way in the sense that the definitions must be given as they are used in relation to the researcher's project. The key terms used in this study are explained below.

### **1.9.1 Police officer**

SAPS personnel are employed either under the auspices of the Police Service Act 68 of 1995 or under the auspices of the Public Service Act, Act 103 of 1994. This study focused only on those police officers employed under the auspices of the Police Service Act 68 of 1995. For the purpose of this study, 'police officers' refer to only police officers who are sworn, trained in a police training academy and also those who are employed under the Police service Act of 1995. In addition, this key term is used to refer to any other international police officer.

### **1.9.2 Police constable**

Experts from different law and police disciplines define 'police constable' differently. For that reason, an operational definition to guide this study has been formulated based on the definitions of the two words; 'police' and 'constable'. Free Dictionary (n.d.) defines 'police' as follows:

*A body of persons making up such a department, trained in methods of law enforcement and crime prevention and detection and authorized to maintain the peace, safety, and order of the community.*

In addition, Free Dictionary (n.d.) defines constable as follows:

*A peace officer with less authority and smaller jurisdiction than a sheriff, empowered to serve writs and warrants and makes arrests*

The operational definition of the term 'police constable' for the purpose of this study is: any member occupying the rank of a constable from a body of persons making up such a department, trained in methods of law enforcement and crime prevention and detection, authorised to maintain the peace, safety and order of the community, and entrusted with the powers to serve writs, warrants and makes arrest. This definition suffices for this study.

### **1.9.3 Police trainer/instructor**

In this study, police trainer/instructor refers to trainers/instructors who teach or train police recruits/trainees in SA police training academies only. Lecturers or teachers who teach English language modules in higher learning or post-matric institutions which offer police courses are not included in this definition.

### **1.9.4 Police recruit/trainee**

Police recruits/trainees in this study refer to all registered students' police trainees who are still attending and have yet to successfully complete the basic police academy training in a SA police training academy.

### **1.9.5 Training**

Davis and Davis (1998:40-54) define training as the process through which skills are developed, information is provided and attitudes are nurtured in order to help individuals to become more efficient in their work. This definition is appropriate for this study and it is guided by it.

### **1.9.6 Workplace English writing needs**

The term 'workplace English writing needs' is a term that is coined from three concepts namely; 'workplace', 'English writing', and 'needs'. In this study, specific workplace English writing needs refers to aspects that are necessary for one to be able to perform optimally at a police workplace in the following areas within English writing: sentence structure, vocabulary, tense, spelling, expression, cohesion, punctuation, word classification and capitalization.

### **1.9.7 Text**

Police constables are by the nature of their work expected to produce text whenever they are at work. These texts come across as pieces of communication rather than mere compilations of words and sentences. According to Byrne (1979:1) writing is the production of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain coherent whole, which is often called a 'text'. For the purpose of this study, the researcher uses the term 'text' in the narrow sense in which it refers to typical written material produced by police officers, specifically SAPS police constables. These texts may be written statements, filled dockets and written affidavits.

### **1.9.8 Writing skills**

According to Gudschinsky (1973:9) writing skills can be defined as specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form and to mentally interact with the message. The operational definition of the term 'writing skills' for the purpose of this study is: the ability acquired through deliberate and systematic measures which enable people to put their own or someone else's thoughts into written words in a meaningful form.

## **1.10 THESIS OUTLINE**

The chapter outline gives an account of different stages of the research up to and including the main findings. The following paragraphs present the structure of the thesis and also briefly explicate the main themes covered in those chapters.

### **Chapter 1: Orientation and background to the study**

This chapter provides an introduction to and the general orientation of the research study. It gives an account of how the study was ‘conceived’ and for what purpose by delineating the research problem, the research aim, the research question, the theoretical framework, the literature review, the research methodology, justification of the study, definition of key terms, thesis outline and limitations of the study.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework to this study. It also interweaves the principles underlying theories of Second Language (L2) writing relevant to this study by highlighting their interconnectedness to English writing needs. The chapter critically discusses Genre and Work-Integrated theories, which underpin the study, as well as principles underlying Needs Analysis and approaches to writing are also discussed in this chapter. These theories, principles and approaches are discussed and ways they shaped this study is also outlined in this chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Research methodology**

This chapter describe the research methodology by explaining the research paradigm, research design, research instruments, pilot study, collection and analysis of data, population, the sample and the sampling method. The research approaches are also discussed in this chapter.

#### **Chapter 4: Results and interpretation**

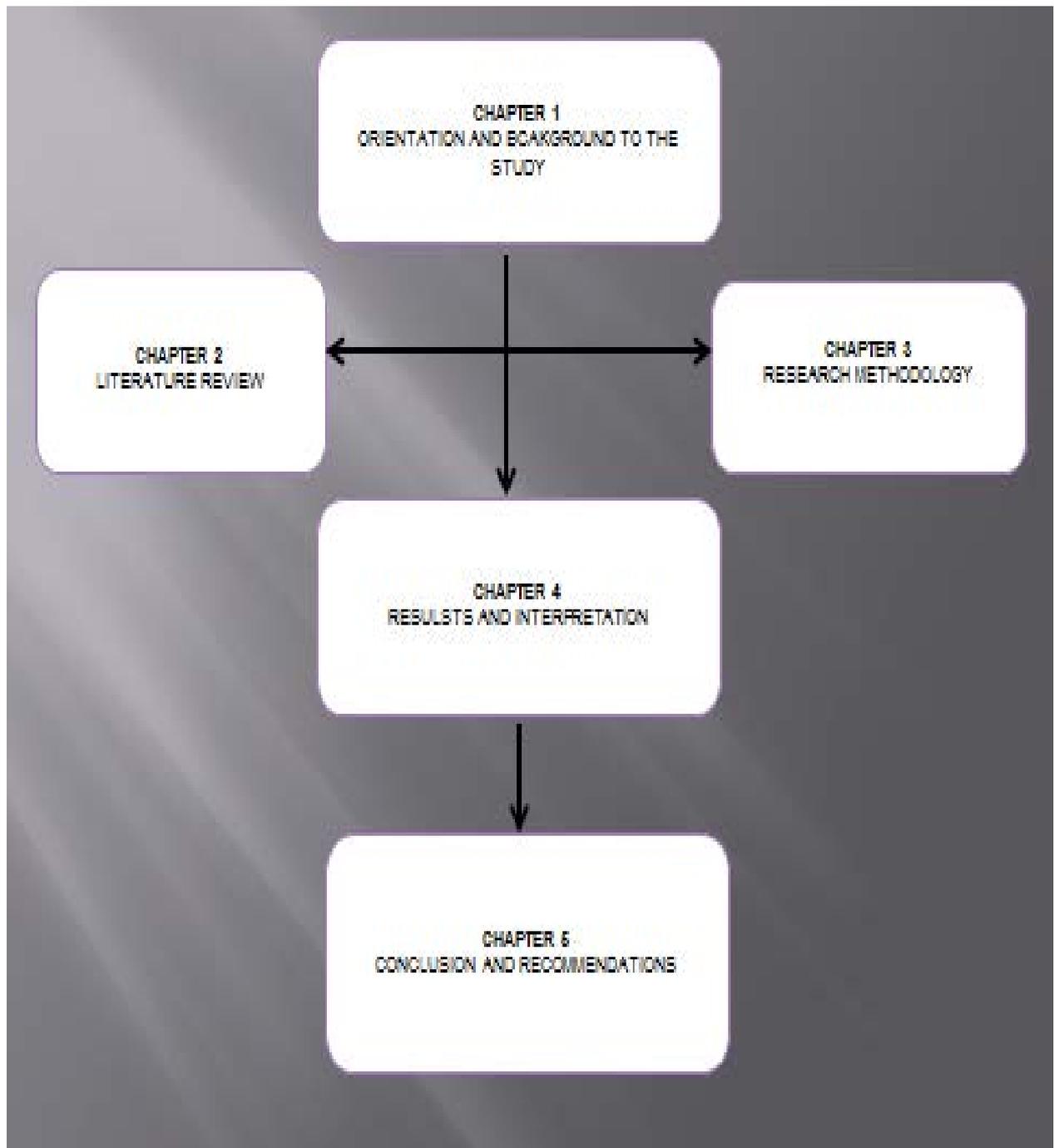
This is the 'life blood' of this research project, which entails an in-depth treatment and analysis of the data. It is in this chapter that the results are reported and interpreted. The results in this chapter are presented in the form of detailed discussions and interpretations followed by figures containing graphs and tables so that they can make sense to the reader.

#### **Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions**

This chapter presents a summary of the key findings. It also examines the extent to which the aims of the research study were achieved. It is in this chapter where evidence-based conclusions are drawn. This chapter also provides recommendations. In addition, suggestions for further research are also outlined in this chapter.

The sequence and connectivity of these chapters are outlined in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Chapter outline



## **1.12 SUMMARY**

This chapter provided a background to the research reported in this thesis. The problem was presented and the limits of the study explained. The research objectives that formed the basis of this study were also presented followed by the method of study, the outline of chapters and the definitions of key terms. Chapter 2 focuses on the theoretical framework underlying this study and the literature review.

## **Chapter Two**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation upon which this study is grounded by discussing literature that is congruent to it. The underlying themes in this literature review discussion are studies done on English writing competency of police officers both in South Africa and internationally, approaches to writing, English second language (ESL) learning and the South African police training academy. Furthermore, this literature review will also encapsulate the theoretical framework upon which this study is based.

#### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

According to Palamidessi and Feldman (2003:101), a theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts like theory but not necessarily so well worked out. Thembekwayo (2010: 12) maintains that a theoretical framework assists in analyzing and rendering of the findings. The themes underlying the theoretical framework in this study are the Genre theory of learning, work integrated learning theory and Needs Analysis framework. These theories are discussed in that sequence in the sections below.

##### **2.2.1 Genre theory of learning**

The philosophy behind genre theory of learning is primarily based on the idea that texts can be classified into recognisable categories and these categories consist of various distinct aspects (Coulthard & Johnson, 2007).

According to Bhatia (2004:23), genre refers to language use in a conventionalised communicative setting in order to give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, which gives rise to stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discoursal resources.

The researcher contends that police recruits/trainees (at the academy phase) and police constables (at the workplace learning phase) should be trained based on a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution (police workplace) provided by the SAPS. The researcher further contends that these linguistic goals in police workplace can be explained by conducting an investigation that has a police genre orientation. According to Bhatia (2004:22), genre analysis is the study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalised academic or professional settings.

Furthermore, this type of an investigation within the ambits of a needs analysis approach can prove to be beneficial in improving the workplace English writing competence of police constables in SAPS. This type of analysis can help in identifying the type of English language content that is relevant for inclusion in the Basic Police Development Learning Programme (BPDLP). This is one of the reasons why the researcher chose to investigate the extent to which SAPS training programme addresses police constables workplace English writing needs (§1.4.)

Genre theory also highlights the idea of domain-specificity (Bhatia, 2004:53). The researcher contends that in the course of their daily routine, police constables produce a range of texts and these texts are domain-specific. According to Bhatia (2004) such texts display typical patterns found in similarly produced texts by other fellow professionals in the same field.

It is therefore important for the SA police ministry to try and draw from other professions (for example, Law and English studies) or disciplines related to their profession if they want to improve workplace English writing competencies of police constables. To corroborate the importance of the domain-specific perspective highlighted above, Leki et al. (cited in Manchón, 2011:5) states:

*The L2 writing profession has increasingly acknowledged that it is counter-productive to analyse English learner's writing or language development without embedding the inquiry in the ... institutional and political contexts where they occur.*

In support of the domain-specific philosophy, Mirel (1993:21) maintains that technical communications research should focus on the situational dynamics in readers' workplaces affecting the functionality (uses) of texts. He further argues that studies on producing documents should, among other things, examine the ways in which writers' choices are shaped by such situational demands as corporate image, consistency across documents, managerial expectations, or interdepartmental politics. This is one of the reasons why the researcher contends that the SAPS should draw from professions or disciplines related to them. Momeni (2011:615) maintains that learners should learn the prescribed rules and conventions of communication in their field because generic knowledge is, in part, knowledge of what texts and their constituents do.

Momeni (ibid) further argues that this kind of knowledge creates an infrastructure for different kinds of talk like legal talk. He further says as a result of that, a police genre as a branch of legal talk has emerged and that is the reason why the researcher argues that SAPS as a department should draw from professions such as Law and English studies when conducting their English writing training.

Bhatia (2004:208), citing Lave and Wenger (1991:100), is also in agreement with Mirel (ibid) when he posits that language learners need to become aware of the conversations of the disciplinary community of which they aspire to be members, which could be done through “centripetal participation in the learning curriculum of the ambient community”. This view recommends that learners such as police recruits/trainees should pay careful attention to the disciplinary conventions embedded in the profession they want to join. This is important because these police recruits/trainees will later become future police constables and they would be required to use the English writing conventions required by their profession.

Bhatia (2004:205) further maintain that genre theory focuses on the purpose of writing as well as the participants. Police constables in their daily work produce texts for different purposes. For example, police constables compile affidavits, statements and accidents reports. The researcher contends that the purpose in these various documents would be successfully fulfilled if the language in them is well written. In support of the above idea, Richards (2005:2) asseverates that part of communicative competence is to know how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions. These functions also articulate to English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). It is therefore important that SA police constables are trained to write well in English and for different purposes.

In the light of what has been discussed above, this theory is important in that it provides the foundation for the design of this study so that the primary research aim of this study, which is to investigate the perceptions and experiences of SA police constables' workplace English writing needs can be achieved.

### 2.2.1.1 Implications of genre theory on the teaching of English writing

In the light of the discussion so far, the teaching of English writing in police training academies could benefit greatly from Genre based theory which has the potential to also promote disciplinary content which is based on the contextual demands mentioned to earlier.

However, it should be noted that the researcher is in no way saying that this is the only option for English writing pedagogy in police training academies. Bhatia (2004:203-204) seems to be in agreement when he notes:

*We often find professionals from the workplace complaining about the inadequacy of new graduates to come to grips with the day-to-day problems of communication at work...the explanation in part lies in the fact that professional practice does not seem to play any significant role in most frameworks for the analyses of professional discourse.*

The above quotation articulates the context demands emphasised in the philosophy behind genre theory.

Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998:310) highlight the importance of genre-based teaching programme by arguing that the scaffolding built into genre-based teaching programmes and the model texts used give learners confidence. This could be one of the compelling reasons for SAPS training academies to utilise some principles espoused by genre theory in their teaching of English writing during their BPDLP training. Similarly, genre theory can be of benefit to the curriculum developers who develop English writing materials in police training academies by providing ideas on how the materials can be developed.

Hereunder follows a discussion on why English writing training of police constables should not end at the police training academy but should also continue at the workplace through in-service training. This idea is discussed in view of insights from Work-Integrated Learning proponents.

### 2.2.2 Work-Integrated learning (WIL) theory

This study is also underpinned by Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) theory (Dewey 1938). The concept behind WIL is that those learners who are exposed to a work environment as part of their studies will learn much better and gain more from their experience. In other words, an integration of knowledge and skills gained in the tertiary education institution and in the workplace are important (Coll et al., 2009). This theory encourages the integration of workplace knowledge and academic knowledge. This theory is critical to this study because it speaks to situated or experiential learning. This theory forms part of the conceptual framework of this study because it articulates to the workplace English writing challenges that are faced by the police constables in the SAPS.

According to the Council on Higher Education (2011:4), there has been interest in fostering university learning that is less didactic and more situated, participative, and real-world oriented. According to this report, WIL specifically describes an approach to career-focused education that includes classroom-based and workplace-based forms of learning that are appropriate for the professional qualification. It is, thus, assumed that English writing competency of police constables can be improved by adopting a WIL approach in conjunction with principles espoused by genre theory in their police training academies.

Furthermore, police constables' workplace English language writing should be monitored and nurtured both at academy level and at the workplace. This should happen because researchers such as Russell (1997:231) argue that competent writing at one point in a person's education or in one position may be radically different from competent writing at some other point in the professional network.

It is also important to mention that the importance of WIL has spun different but related models, such as Work-Directed Theoretical Learning (Barnett, 2006), Problem-Based Learning (Savin-Baden & Major, 2004), Project-Based Learning (Savin-Baden & Major, 2004), Work-Based Learning (Brennan & Little, 1996), Work Place Learning (Holliday & Retallick, 1995), to cite but some.

Since one of the secondary aims of this study was to investigate training of English writing in SAPS, in particular in-service training and academy training, this theory has provided important information so that the above research aim can be achieved by providing the researcher with useful information on the design of this study.

As with the genre theory, the researcher in the subsequent sections discusses the role of WIL theory in the teaching of English writing that is tailor-made for police workplace.

### **2.2.2.1 Implications of Work-Integrated Learning theory on the teaching of English writing**

Work-Integrated Learning theory encourages training in workplace-tailored activities. These workplace-tailored activities should simulate things such as statement writing, accident report writing, affidavit writing and filling out a docket. It can be surmised that the use of this approach can enhance the English writing competency of police constables and police trainees in SA police training academies. In support, Ralenala (2003:68) asserts that ‘for students to sense that their work is important, they need to tinker with real-world problems’

In-service for SA police constables should encapsulate English writing courses and these courses should be made of predominantly activities or tasks that simulate workplace activities for the benefit of police constables.

Indeed, their workplace English writing ability could be enhanced if in both their academy training and workplace learning, they could be provided with work simulated tasks that focus on their English writing competency. However these tasks alone cannot effectively do the work. The researcher contends that these work simulated tasks can work much better if the pedagogy is relevant and the English writing needs of the police constables are known. Needs analysis is of paramount importance if the workplace English writing competency of police constables is to be improved.

In the section below, literature about Needs Analysis (NA) framework in relation to English writing is reviewed.

### **2.2.3 Needs Analysis (NA) framework**

Needs analysis is sometimes referred to as Needs Assessment (Holt & Van Duzer, 2000). It has been discussed in detail by researchers such as Munby (1978), Hutchison and Waters (1987), Richards (2001) and many others. Its importance has been emphasised in many disciplines such as English for Specific Purpose (ESP), English Language Teaching (ELT), English as a Second Language (ESL) and many others. Since the primary aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions and experiences of SA police constables' workplace English writing needs, this framework provided valuable information on the design of this study.

The researcher chose this framework for identifying police constables' perceptions of their English writing competencies and NA framework enabled the researcher to achieve this aim because this framework 'tells a lot about the nature and content of learners' target language needs' (Hutchinson, 1988:71). The researcher concluded that this was the appropriate framework to underpin this study.

In addition to the above arguments, Berwick (1989) considers need as a gap or measurable discrepancy in what learners need and what they receive in language programmes. He defines the gap as the inconsistency between the target situation and the present situation. In the context of this study, the researcher investigated the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs because the English writing incompetencies in the SAPS impact negatively on the quality of their work.

When needs are based on a particular context such as a workplace, they are referred to as 'target needs' (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). These needs refer to what the learner needs to do in the target situation. In the context of this study, the target needs were the specific workplace English writing competencies which police constables have to possess in order to function optimally and effectively in a police workplace. The 'target situation' would be the police workplace.

In their 1987 framework, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) further suggest that needs analysis can happen at two levels: an objective needs analysis level (which is on the requirements of language use in a specific situation) and a subjective needs analysis level (which is centred on the examination of the characteristics of the learners). The two levels referred to form the core of this study. Police constables' competencies related to workplace English writing (the type of data they exhibit about what they perceive to be their workplace English writing needs and what writing skills they need to have) were examined. The design of this study was among other theories based on the two levels, that is, objective and subjective needs.

In addition, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:54-55), and Nation (2000:2) further suggests three subcategories:

- ❖ Lacks: the gaps between what the learners know and the necessities (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:54-55);
- ❖ Necessities: what the learners have to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:54-55);
- ❖ Wants: what the learners think they need (Nation, 2000:2).

It should be noted that these categories are still being questioned and have since been subject to contestations in various circles and opinions are sharply divided regarding the three categories.

In addition to the above contentions, in his study about specific English language needs of African students enrolled for first-year science at university level, Ralenala (1993:9) sums up the issue of NA as follows:

*Needs analysis is a structured information gathering procedure which allows the course writer to develop a detailed specification of what the student needs the course for learning based on the setting in which learning will take place, the types of communicative events and activities that the learner will engage in, and the attitudinal key that will characterise the learner's future interactions.*

Bercow (2008:09) also agrees with Ralenala (1993) on the importance of NA when he asserts as follows:

*Assessing and understanding the needs of individuals as well as of the population as a whole is integral to helping them achieve good outcomes.*

To highlight the importance of needs analysis theory in ESP modules and courses (which is what the researcher is advocating for with regards to police training academies), Crystal (2003:108) posits that, in ESP the content is determined by the professional needs of the learner. It should be noted that during the time of this investigation, SAPS Basic Police Development Learning Programme (BPDLP) did not have a course which focused specifically on workplace English writing). Hutchinson and Waters (1987:8) also emphasise the importance of needs analysis in ESP courses as follows:

*Tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English you need.*

The WIL approach, research in NA has led to different but related models. These include the task-based approach (Long & Crookes, 1992), the learning-centred approach (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Jordan, 1997), the learner-centred approach (Nunan, 1988; Brindley, 1989), the performance-assessment approach (Norris, Brown, Hudson & Yoshioka, 1988), the sociolinguistic approach (Crystal, 2003; Munby, 1978), and the systematic approach (Richerich & Chancerel, 1977).

### **2.2.3.1 Task-oriented approach**

The proponents of this approach emphasise focus on tasks rather than learners (Long, 2005). The premise of this approach is that tasks are as important as other aspects in NA research. The emphasis is that development of these tasks should be based on real-world activities. This principle is also espoused by the genre theory proponents (§ 2.2.1). It is, thus, argued that tasks would be based on real police workplace activities. Indeed, there should be synergy between the training tasks or activities (at various police training academies and institutions) and the police workplace activities (at various police departments and police stations).

### **2.2.3.2 Learning-oriented approach**

The premise of this approach is that the learning process which learners go through plays a significant role in determining the quality of learning (Kaewpet,2009). The central idea is that learning is affected by many different factors and these factors should be taken into account when learning is investigated. The importance of this type of approach has been emphasised by researchers including Richterich & Chancerel, 1977; Crystal, 2003; Eggly, 2002; Munby, 1978; Nation, 2000; West, 1994 and Grellet, 1981. The learning process is one of the reasons for investigating the extent to which the SAPS training programme addresses police officers' workplace English writing needs because it is through these learning programmes that police English writing learning can be investigated (§ 4.4).

### **2.2.3.3 Learner-oriented approach**

In contrast to the learning-oriented approach, 'learning' takes the backseat in this approach. The philosophy of this approach puts learners first in a learning environment. Researchers such as Berwick (1989) and Brindley (1989) have been on the forefront of this approach. In this approach, three distinct categories of learner needs are identified: product-oriented vs. process-oriented interpretations; perceived vs. felt needs; and objective vs. subjective needs. These categories of needs are context-dependent.

The needs of learners are important as far as this approach is concerned. In support of this approach, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) maintain that communication needs come to attention when it is believed that learners are taught specifically what they will really use. In the case of this study, the 'perceived' and the 'felt' workplace English writing needs of the police constables were sought by focusing on their perceptions and experiences regarding their English writing competency (§ 4.2.1). The data from this study enabled the researcher to suggest a police training programme that can enhance the workplace English writing competencies of SA police constables (§ 5.1.4).

### **2.2.3.4 Systematic approach**

The central idea espoused by the Systematic approach is that needs assessment should be systematic. Proponents of this approach such as Reviere et al. (1996), and Richterich and Chancerel (1977) argue that, in an investigation regarding needs assessment, information about the learners should be investigated before and during a course (Jordan, 1997) because this approach encourages various methods of collecting data about learners' needs (Richterich & Chancerel, 1977). Collection of data from police constables in this study was done systematically using different data collecting instruments (§ 3.4., 3.4.1., 3.4.2.). In-line with this approach, the researcher also made a recommendation that police constables workplace English writing needs should be approached systematically and continuously by the SAPS (§ 5.3.1.1).

### **2.2.3.5 Sociolinguistic approach**

Munby (1978) is one of the proponents of this approach. This approach draws from the discipline of sociology. Dufresne and Masny (2005:276) are also in agreement with the statement that one area of research can contribute to another and that they have something to learn from each other from time to time. In this approach, the communicative competence of learners takes centre stage. Bhatia (2004:204) argues that we still have little understanding of the relationship between language as communication and language as vehicle for the expression of disciplinary knowledge as part of linguistic training. This is in-line with the principles behind genre theory (§ 2.2.1).

In the sociolinguistic approach, data should elucidate the profile of learners' communication needs which is fundamental in developing the curriculum. This means that the important things in this approach are communicative events, and in the case of this study, these communicative events focus on the workplace English writing communication needs of police constables. It is interesting to note again that the questionnaire in this study is grounded on and draws from the abovementioned principles of NA framework.

Information that can be gleaned from the discussion above is that learner needs identification and needs analysis can be approached from different paradigms depending on the objective of the project. In the context of this study, principles from the framework enabled the researcher to identify the specific areas within English writing that police constables consider to be a challenge. It remains true, however, that there is no fool-proof or error-free approach to investigating learners' needs.

In conclusion, NA framework was central to this study as it informed the shaping and designing of the research respectively in (i) determining the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs and (ii) identifying the specific areas within English writing that police constables consider to be a challenge.

#### **2.2.3.6 Implications of NA framework in the teaching of English writing**

Skills change with the demands of an institution or a workplace. It is therefore important that employees be continuously trained so that they can effectively apply their knowledge in line the required workplace skills. In the context of this study, police authorities should be encouraged to offer opportunities to enhance police constables' English writing competencies by utilising NA framework to conduct skills assessment that relates to English writing at a workplace. This framework could also serve as a guiding tool for curriculum development in a police training academy in the SAPS.

For English writing trainers/instructors in a police training academy or teachers and lecturers of any institution that offers police training modules, this framework could prove to be useful in that it can help them (through needs assessment) to be familiar with workplace English writing knowledge gaps and wants of the police recruits/trainees and police officers in general.

### **2.3 SUMMARY**

The primary research question in this study relates to a workplace context (police workplace) as well as training in the workplace. Genre theory and WIL approach, relate to situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalised academic or professional settings are relevant and appropriate because this study investigated the perceptions and experiences of SAPS police constables' English writing needs in a workplace context (§1.4.).

The study investigated training in the SAPS and, in particular training in police academies as well as in-service training in the SAPS. The WIL approach is more relevant in this study as it articulates to learning in a workplace environment and learning in a workplace can be in the form of training (for example, in-service training). Principles espoused in the WIL approach guided the design of this study.

Furthermore, this investigation focused on workplace English writing needs of police constables and this is where NA framework played a crucial role in the design of the study so that the workplace English writing needs of police constables could be determined and assessed. Triangulation of the theories and the framework discussed in this section of the thesis made it possible that the research questions are answered and the research aims are achieved.

## **2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, literature about empirical studies on English writing competency of police officers, approaches to writing, English second language learning context and the South African police training academy is reviewed. In the course of the review, this section considers the implications of these writing approaches and how they throw light on the English writing predicaments faced by police constables in the SAPS. Limitations of these writing approaches are also discussed. This review, it is hoped, will help in understanding the essence of police constables English writing challenges, and, thus, improve English pedagogies in SAPS training academies.

### **2.4.1 Studies on English writing competency of police officers.**

Research studies across the globe reveal that police officers have inadequate English writing competency (Miller and Pomerence, 1989; Alhuqbani, 2014; Sezer, 2004). Below is a brief outline of some of the international and local research that has focused on police officers' inadequate English writing competency.

#### 2.4.1.1 English writing skills in police workplaces: A global problem

Miller and Pomerence (1989) found that officers tend to submit reports that are hastily written, poorly developed and badly composed and that these reports often include incorrect verb, incorrect tense, wrong pronoun usage, spelling mistakes and poorly structured sentences and paragraphs.

Abo Mosallem (1984) studied the English language needs of Egyptian police officers. One of his findings was that some of the police departments, among other things, gave greater priority to writing. This study highlights the importance of English writing in a police workplace because it is important for police officers to be able to write well so that they can provide service to the community successfully.

In addition to the above studies, Payam (2006:157) in his study about communicative needs of officers at Ankara Police College found that, among other things, vocabulary knowledge is perceived as the one area police college students require teachers to specifically teach and provide additional support.

In the investigation about evaluation of the education and training division of the New Orleans Police Department, Sulzer's (1986) survey concluded as follows:

*35 % indicated that poor writing ability was a problem for new officers, and 85% judged the dimension of Knowledge of Reports and Basic Writing skills to be the weakest area of job competence for recent academy graduates.*

Furthermore, Alhuqbani (2014:205) in his investigation of the English Language Needs, Motivations, and Attitudes of Saudi Police Cadets found that police trainees seem to have difficulty with the English grammar despite being the most teachable sub-skill. This assertion is also supported by D Aulizio and Sheehan (1992) when they note that police training academies should no longer assume that police recruits who have graduated from high school possess even the basic writing skills necessary to write valid reports.

Sezer (2004), in his study on the occupational English language needs of police officers working in various departments of the Turkish National Police Organization, found that police officers stated that their linguistic proficiency levels were not adequate and they could not perform their job requirements (Sezer, 2004:40). Other police officers stated that the English language training at school level was not satisfactory (Sezer, 2004:41).

In addition, K-Romya (2006) in his study titled 'Deficiency of Communication in English, a Major Hindrance for Tourist Police in Thailand' found that police officers encounter problems with vocabulary, in particular, the legal terminology as well as the knowledge of grammar (K-Romya, 2006:267).

Alhuqbani (2008) in his study on the English language needs of Saudi police officers, found that police have never been trained on how to use English for policing purposes. This study corroborates Linfoot's (2008: 267-268) in which he reported that uniformed police officers are among the least trained members of the criminal justice system. This is a concern because one of the important pillars for the justice system to function effectively is to have police officers who are adequately trained to function effectively.

In his investigation, Pettaway (1994) in the study titled 'The development of the New Orleans Police Department Written Communication' found that twenty percent (20%) of new police recruits nationwide were rated as poor writers even though researchers such as Alqurashi (2011:848) found that police officers perceived English as a useful language in their professional lives.

The reports and the findings of the studies discussed above highlights the challenge in this study from a global perspective. The SA scenario is discussed in the next section.

#### **2.4.1.2 English writing skills in police workplaces: A South African problem**

Schönteich (1999:35) of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) found that roughly a quarter of the police services members are 'functionally illiterate' and have difficulty filling in a form, or taking a written statement from a crime victim. These SAPS members experienced difficulty when they took statements from clients. In the same vein it is also found that it was common for prosecutors to nullify statements written by police officers because sometimes those statements were found to be incoherent. Thus it is important that police officers should acquire adequate English writing skills and that they function optimally in their field.

The above research study is the only research study that the researcher is aware of regarding the inadequate English writing ability reported in SA (§1.2.4). However, there has been numerous press reports about the inadequate English writing ability of SA police officers. These reports are discussed hereunder.

A proliferation of recent press reports in the IOL News, Sowetan and Mail & Guardian highlights the writing inefficiency of police officers in South Africa. For example, Press report titled "Poor police literacy hampers justice", (Ndenze, 2012) reports that South African police detectives are so poorly trained that some struggle to take down statements. In corroboration of the statement above, the Auditor-General of South Africa, Terence Nombebe ([Thepa](#),2013), confirms that:

*People who are in government are beyond the ability to be trained and that is in the majority of the departments, skills are in short supply. There is no direct match of skills to the job.*

The above extract also refers to the SA police officers because they are government employees. The problem of inadequate training of police officers is also highlighted by the above extract.

One of the press article which on the inadequate training of police officers (Williams,2012) found that almost 5 000 South African police officers were not trained to occupy the jobs they performed at that time. The Pondering Panda Survey (Sapa, 2012) corroborates Williams (ibid) findings. This survey found that South African police officers are not properly trained.

Calteaux (2003:8) also highlights the importance of written communication in SAPS:

*SAPS members require language and communication training at various levels and for various purposes.*

In addition, Womack and Finley (1986:14) point out the critical role language plays in the day-to-day activities of police in the workplace and argue:

*When deciding on a language policy for the important issue of communication in the SAPS it should be noted that communication literally fills the day of the typical police officer.*

These studies mentioned promoted the need for this study and especially that the challenge was identified to be predominantly around SA front-line police officers who are mainly constables. This challenge is found in their written documents such as affidavits, statements and accident reports. The police officers' problems in workplace English writing in many instances include, but are not limited to, the incorrect use of vocabulary, badly constructed sentences, badly structured passages in their reports and bad control of cohesion and coherence in these reports. This problem sometimes arises due to a lack of knowledge regarding writing strategies (process writing aspects) and awareness of cognitive and metacognitive writing strategies.

In this thesis it is assumed that the impact of inadequate, irrelevant and inefficient English-writing training praxis in South African police training academies, compounded by inadequate pre-police academy writing experience and inadequate English language proficiency, are responsible for the inability of police constables to write well in English. The other assumption is the lack of transition from academic to workplace writing. Regarding the above transition, Nel (2004:11) argues that South African learners have been denied an opportunity to develop relevant and transferable workplace English skills during their schooling as a result of South African colonial and apartheid history.

The incompetence mentioned above serves as the springboard for many other interrelated English language problems within the working life of a South African police constable.

#### **2.4.2 Writing as a product: Traditional product-based view of writing**

Traditional-based view of writing is premised on the text itself – in other words, the text is more important than the processes involved in producing that text. The researcher in this study views this of approach to be at a microscopic level. In this approach, writing is seen as a linear process of plan-write-edit (Hairston, 1982:78). The cognitive processes involved in the development of a text in this approach take a backseat. Based on this approach, in the context of this study, the role of the police trainers/instructors, lecturers and teachers involved in the training of police recruits/trainees will include things such as evaluating written products (police recruits/trainees written assignments and tests) by looking at their form and content using a specific set of rules or rubrics.

Johnston (1987) holds that in the product approach classroom, the teacher is not only pre-occupied with grammatical accuracy, but also acts as a judge of students' writing rather than a facilitator. In support of this view, Eschholz (1980:24) postulates that this approach is concerned with 'form' and 'correctness'. In the context of this study, the researcher argues that a product-based view of writing alone cannot provide a complete picture regarding South African police constables' workplace English writing needs because of its exclusion of other factors impacting English writing competency of police constables.

Writing in the product approach is viewed as a tool for the practice and reinforcement of specific grammatical and lexical patterns (Tribble 1996). Students in this approach are 'writing to learn' and not 'learning to write'. This approach aligns itself with behaviourism theory which regards learning as a mechanical process of habit formation and proceeds by means of the frequent reinforcement of a stimulus-response sequence (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987:40). However there is one major limitation levelled against this model. This limitation is discussed below.

Criticizing this approach, Williams (2003:2) argues that this approach is "mindless, repetitive and anti-intellectual". Eschholz (1980:24) points out the drawbacks of this approach by arguing that this approach can result in mindless copies of a particular organisational plan or style. The researcher views this model to be at a microscopic level since its focus is only the product and this is not effective in police workplace environment where different forms of written documents are required and produced for different purposes.

### 2.4.3 Writing as a process: Cognitive models of writing

While a product based view of writing is concerned with the text, writing as a process approach is preoccupied with the cognitive process involved in producing a text. The importance of this model has been emphasised by researchers such as Elbow (1973), Daly (1985), Krashen (2001), Kellogg (1990), and Sommers (1980). This approach focuses on mental activities. Unlike the writing as a product approach, the philosophy behind this model is that cognitive processes during writing are far more important than the actual product. In this approach, the focus is on cognitive processes rather than stages (plan-write-edit). In support of this model, Rohman (1965:106) believes that 'A failure to make a proper distinction between thinking and writing has led to a fundamental misconception which undermines many of our best efforts in teaching writing.'

Hyland (2003:10) also argues that the incarnations of plan-writ-edit approach are consistent in recognising basic cognitive processes as central to the writing activity and in stressing the need to develop students' abilities to plan, define a rhetorical problem, and propose and evaluate. This strategy can benefit the police constables in enhancing their workplace English writing competency because it may enable researchers to focus on the research at a macro level.

According to Hyland (2003:10) this model emphasises the writer as an independent producer of texts and it also goes further to address the issue of what teachers should do to help learners perform a writing task. This approach articulates to issues of pedagogy. This can be important in police training academies because it can guide police trainers/instructors on how best to teach English language writing. This is important because this study investigated the extent to which the SAPS training programme addresses police officers workplace English writing needs. Furthermore, this model regards cognitive processes during writing as important.

In addition to Hyland (ibid), McCutchen, Teske and Bankston (2008) highlight that cognitive models define writing in terms of problem-solving. In other words, what happens in the mind during writing is a problem-solving process. Omaggio Hadley (1993:1) supports this view:

*Writing should be best viewed as a continuum of activities that range from the more mechanical or formal aspects of “writing down” on the one end, to the more complex act of composing on the other end.*

In the above quotation, Omaggio Hadley (ibid) shows that writing is clearly an interplay of complex cognitive activities that a learner needs to engage in order to produce a text. Wong, Chen, Chai, Chin and Gao (2011:1208) state that writing is a highly complex process, composed of various sub-processes that occur, not one after another in a strict linear sequence, but cyclically and in varying patterns. Like with other models in research, this model has been viewed and improved upon by various researchers. Some of these models of writing as a process and their limitations by different researchers are discussed hereunder.

#### **2.4.4 Rohman’s 1965 writing process model**

This cognitive-linguistic model by Rohman (1965) consists of the pre-writing (planning), writing (composing) and re-writing (revising and editing) stages. Rohman (1965) pays particular attention to the pre-writing stage. He argues that this stage is critical in writing and maintains that the pre-writing stage in this model is the stage of discovery when a person assimilates the subject. He further maintains that this stage of the writing process model is underpinned by the following:

- Thinking must be distinguished from writing;
- In terms of cause and effect, thinking precedes writing;
- Good thinking can produce good writing;
- Good thinking does not always lead to good writing, but bad thinking can never lead to good writing;
- A knowledge of standards is not enough to produce good writing.

However, this model has not gone uncriticised. Researchers such as Sommers (1980:378) criticise this model for its linear orientation. She maintains that it separates the writing process into discrete stages and further argues that this kind of model bases itself on speech in two specific ways. She further postulates that it is based on traditional rhetorical models that were created to serve the spoken art of oration. White and Arndt (1991) and Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) argue that writing does not necessarily follow a specific and linear order. For example they argued that revision can be done at any point in the process. In other words, there is no specific stage at which revision cannot happen. They further asseverate that revision can happen as a result of reinforcing the argument or even changing the direction of the argument. Realising the flaws in Rohman's (1965) model, Flower and Hayes (1980) developed their model based on Rohman's model. Their model is discussed hereunder.

#### **2.4.5 Flower and Hayes' (1980, 1981) process writing models**

Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) emphasise three basic processes, namely: planning (pre-writing), translating (writing) and reviewing (revision and editing). They identify four major writing processes, which are:

- **Planning:** This process includes generating ideas (conceptual plan), organising ideas (arranging those ideas logically in one's head), and setting goals (determining what effects one wants to achieve and modifying one's generating and organising activities to achieve local or global goals).
- **Translating:** This process takes the conceptual plan for the document and produces text expressing the planned content.
- **Reviewing:** This process involves reading the text produced so far, with modifications to improve (revise) it or to correct errors (proofread).

To differentiate their models of writing as process as postulated by Rohman (1965), Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) emphasise the interactive and recursive nature of writing in their model. In addition, Flower and Hayes focus on cognitive processes involved in writing in their model to highlight the impact of cognitive overload in a writing task. They argue that their models help avoid cognitive overload by employing effective strategies for managing the writing process. However These Flower and Hayes(1980, 1981) models are also not without pitfalls.

Furneaux (1998) argues that these models are too general, in other words, that they are a 'one-size fits all' type. The philosophy behind them is that all writers go through the same process when writing. Another criticism levelled against these models comes from Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) who argue that these models do not provide explicit information regarding how or when the writers move from one stage to the other. As a result of the criticisms levelled against these models, Hayes (1996) further developed his model based on the same principles of Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) models.

#### **2.4.6 Hayes' (1996) writing process model**

This model is a revised version of Flower and Hayes's (1980, 1981) models. In this model, the basic process mentioned by Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) has been refined and it incorporates the working memory aspect. Process combinations emerging from working memory availability and task schemas have also been brought on board. Deane et al. (2008:5) maintain that Hayes's (1996) model is specific about the contents of long-term memory and it also distinguishes among task schemas.

One of the important aspects of a good model is 'specificity' in its components. The criticism against this model is that it does not adequately specify or explain how ongoing activities are monitored. This metacognitive function is an important aspect that should have been taken care of.

Another criticism brought against writing process models by Newkirk (1990:xix), who postulates that the language used to describe the writing process is confusing and leads to misunderstanding. In other words, the premise behind his argument lies with the meanings of 'process'.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) developed their model based on the principles of Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981) models. Their model is discussed below.

#### **2.4.7 Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) writing process model**

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) came up with a writing process model in attempt to improve on Flower and Hayes's (1980, 1981) models by expanding the reviewing components of the Flower and Hayes's (1981) model. They developed and added a stage to their model, that is, a compare, diagnose and operate stage.

Bereiter and Scardamalia later refined their model. This refinement happened as a result of an attempt to account for the differences highlighted by Flower and Hayes's (1980, 1981) models regarding novice and expert writers. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) developed two models. The first model is the knowledge-telling model which is based on the processes of retrieving content from memory with regard to topical and genre cues. The second is the knowledge-transforming model, which involves more reflective problem-solving analysis and goal-setting. This model underscores the development of ideas during writing. However like all other writing process models, this model also has its limitations which are highlighted below.

Unlike other writing process models, this model received two major criticisms. The one came from Horowitz (1986) who argued that this model lacks purpose and leaves a lot to chance in the classroom. The second criticism came from Young (1978) who argued that this model emphasises fluency over accuracy.

The approaches to writing (the traditional product-based view of writing and the cognitive process view of writing) that have been discussed are crucial for highlighting guidelines for police instructors/trainers, lecturers and teachers who teach English writing in institutions that offer police training in South Africa. The researcher argues that there is a no one-size-fits-all approach to the teaching and learning of writing.

It is the researcher's intuition that the SAPS training programme does not focus rigorously on teaching writing and that this impacts negatively on the workplace English writing competencies of police constables. This further creates problems for police constable and students after their basic police training as far as English writing is concerned. Traditional language programmes (programmes that approach language learning as linear) have been in use for a long time, especially in the South African education system. According to the researcher these types of programmes align themselves with the product approach to language learning and ignore other processes involved in writing. The researcher contends that these types of programmes are still being used in the South African education system, including in the SAPS police training academies, and they are not productive.

However it should be noted that there is no single model that can address the complexities of writing deficiency on its own. There are other strategies that could, in conjunction with these models discussed, improve the workplace English writing quagmire in which police constables find themselves. For example, one of those strategies could be to adopt hybrid model type of pedagogy that addresses English writing in police training academies. This hybrid model could be developed based on the principles espoused by the models discussed above.

The theoretical perspectives discussed above are important because they throw light on the challenges of English writing in the police workplace. It is important for the stakeholders involved in the training of SAPS police officers to be aware of these theoretical perspectives. Hiebert (1991:4) sums this up:

*A superficial grasp of the theoretical perspectives that underlie one's practice has typically left large numbers of educators vulnerable to what Feitelson (1998) calls the 'fads' of literacy instruction.*

To conclude this section, it would be futile to talk about these theoretical perspectives in isolation and not relate them to the police workplace environment as well as to the SAPS training academies. The next section presents pertinent issues in English Second Language learning and during the course of this presentation evidence will be shown how these issues can impact on English writing competency of police constables in the SAPS. Furthermore, writing in the SAPS training academies is discussed.

#### **2.4.8 English Second Language learning contexts**

This sub-section presents a discussion on empirical studies done on the challenges in English Second Language (ESL) learning contexts. The rationale behind this is to highlight the challenges that ESL learners like the police constables in this study face. In South Africa, the largest learner population consists of learners for whom English is a second language and they are referred to as ESL learners (Walker, Ranney & Fortune, and 2005:323) or as English Additional Language (EAL) learners (Jordaan, 2011:80). The police constables in this study form part of these cohort of learners because the majority of them indicated that they speak English as a second language (§ 3.3.1.1). During the course of this discussion, the researcher will also show the implication of these challenges in the SAPS context.

The study done by Crago *et al* (1997) reveals that English Second (or other) Language (ESOL) learners are being 'pathologised' because educators may interpret language differences as deficiencies. In connection with the above challenge, the researcher contends that this could also impact on aspect such as English writing ability. Educators need to know the difference between learning difficulties and language-based academic problems (Ortiz, 1997) to avoid the mistaken diagnosis of a 'learning' difficulty in ESOL learners (Statham, 1997).

Jordaan (2011:81) maintains that ESL learners in SA rural and township schools receive education that is affected by teachers who are not literate and who also have poor subject knowledge. This is also supported by Uys *et al* (2007:77) who found that teachers lacked the knowledge and skills to teach the four language skills. Uys *et al* (*ibid*) further argue that teachers who are not adequately literate will impart inadequate literacy knowledge to learners. This also applies to teachers who teach English writing at schools. If this is the situation with teachers who are supposed to be conduits of literacy knowledge, one can imagine the situation with police instructors/trainers who are not English writing specialists. The probability is that SAPS officers (including police constables) received inadequate training in English writing from teachers such as the ones reported above. Therefore the challenge of inadequate English writing competency among police constables is not only emanating from inefficient and ineffective teaching practices in SAPS training academies alone.

According to the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB, 2000) South African educators face the challenge of large numbers of ESOL learners in their classes. O'Connor and Geiger (2009) reinforce the above identified challenge by maintaining that problems amongst ESOL learners due to large class sizes are compounded by language issues. Institutions like SAPS training academies should strive for a suitable teacher-learner ratio in their classrooms if they want to improve their teaching and learning environment.

Furthermore, according to O'Connor and Geiger (2009:259) ESOL learners' first language also influences their development of English, for example, pronunciation affected their phonics in their writing. Therefore teachers in ESL are also facing a challenge of L1 influence. This makes teaching and learning in an ESL context even more challenging.

In addition Nel and Swanepoel (2010:48) report that the National Teacher Education Audit (1995) found that the majority of teachers in South Africa are underqualified or not qualified to teach and that these teachers do not have the skills to teach a second language and do not know the principles of bilingual/multilingual education. They also further argue that these teachers limited proficiency in English resulted in their poor language skills being transferred to their ESL learners, whose understanding and usage of English were affected.

It is also claimed that ESL learners in SA enter the tertiary level with weak language and literacy skills (Jordaan, 2011:80). This is also supported by other studies (Ralenala, 1993; Mzokwana, 2008; Pantelides, 1999) which revealed that many matriculants in South Africa still find English to be a challenge. Because police training academies in SA receive police recruits/trainees, who in many cases are straight from high school, this means that police recruits have inadequate English writing competency. This again proves that the SA education system also contributes to the inadequate English writing challenge experienced by SAPS ministry.

In SA the ESL challenge relating to inadequate English writing ability is compounded by the Outcome based Education (OBE) system which discouraged teachers from teaching language and literacy skills explicitly as shown in Heugh's (2009) study. Police constables in this study probably are products of this system and this could be what contributes to their inadequate English writing ability.

In addition to being taught by teachers who are not proficient in English, learners in the ESL context experience a challenge that is attributed to English First Language (EFL) teachers. Jordaan (2011:80) argues that the complexity of the English language used by EFL teachers demands high levels of auditory processing and short-term memory.

The discussion above has highlighted some of the many challenges faced by both teachers and learners in ESL teaching and learning contexts, in particular learners and teachers in South Africa. The researcher also highlighted the implications that these challenge have on the SAPS training academies. The subsequent section discusses the SAPS training academy context, in particular the police constables in SAPS.

#### **2.4.9 The South African police training academy**

This section presents a brief discussion on police constables, their service as well as the selection process of police trainees in SAPS training academies. This section is created with the hope that it will provide the reader with the reason why workplace English writing training in SA police training academies should be investigated.

##### **2.4.9.1 Who are the police constables in the SAPS?**

In the context of this study, this section presents a brief account of the term 'constable'. This is done to provide in-depth information to the reader even though this term is explained briefly in chapter one (§ 1.10.2).

Constable is one of the levels of the functional rank structure of SAPS. These rank levels indicate the seniority of the police officials (SAPS, n.d.). The SAPS functional rank structure is as follows (SAPS, n.d.):

1. General
2. Lieutenant General
3. Major General
4. Brigadier
5. Colonel
6. Lieutenant Colonel
7. Major
8. Captain
9. Lieutenant
10. Warrant Officer, Sergeant and Constable

All police constables who are appointed in SAPS are appointed in terms of the South Africa Police Service Act, 1995 (Act no 68 of 1995) (hereafter referred to as the Police Act, 1995) and they differ from civilian staff or personnel in that the civilian staff members are appointed in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act No 103 of 1994). Constable is the lowest rank in the SAPS.

Police constables, including those who work at Community Service Centres (CSC), need to be helped to improve their workplace English writing ability because in today's world the level of expectation for a person to function well in a modern print environment is higher than ever before (Grabe, 2001). Therefore, police constables in CSCs should be helped to be able to write effectively in English.

Although this study acknowledges and recognises the importance of other writing aspects in writing skills, it has, for the purpose of form, confined itself to the purposefully selected and specific aspects of writing skills displayed by SAPS police constables at selected police stations in the Gauteng province, South Africa. These selected aspects of writing skills helped in the identification of police constables' specific workplace English writing needs. This was done to find empirical evidence regarding specific aspects of writing skills that could help in improving the English writing ability of police constables in SAPS.

#### **2.4.9.2 How to become a police constable in the SAPS?**

In the South African police system, all police constables go through a two (2) year BPDLP. The programme consists of ten (10) months of training at the training academies, twelve (12) months of practical training at various police stations and two (2) months of integrated assessment at SAPS training academies. In other words this programme consists of twelve (12) months academy phase and twelve (12) months of workplace learning phase.

Stevens (2005:195) mentions the minimum standard model for police officers training developed by the International Association of Directors of Law Standards and Training. This model maintains that minimum curriculum requirements for basic training programmes should identify a set of core competencies required for satisfactory performance of entry level tasks. These competencies should include both knowledge and skills identified through job task analysis, and additional abilities in areas such as professional orientation, human relations and ethical use of discretion that the commission deems consistent with the role of police and corrections officers in a free society.

After police applicants are approved, the applicants are put into a further selection process. This process includes an administered selection battery, which consists of various different cognitive measures such as spelling and reading tests (Meiring, 2007:17).

All police constables graduate from Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) accredited SAPS training academies and part of their assessment is English writing ability. Whether the assessment of English writing ability at these SASSETA accredited SAPS training academies is done 'thoroughly' or to a level that is acceptable is another question. These police graduates obtain a Level Five National Qualifications Framework aligned qualification (Montesh, 2007:14). Police recruits who are not successful after the BPDLP training receive remedial training are assessed again after a period determined by the training academy.

The Table below from SAPS website (2015) presents an overview of the SAPS BPDLP at the time of this research (SAPS, n.d.).

**Table 2.1 South African Police Service BPDLP programme (2015)**

<b>Learning Area</b>	<b>Name of the learning area</b>
Learning Area 1	Orientation to the SAPS
Learning Area 2	Law
Learning Area 3	Community Service Centre
Learning Area 4	Crime Investigation
Learning Area 5	Crime Prevention
Learning Area 6	Street Survival

Below is a brief outline of the exit level outcomes of the SAPS BPDLP from the website mentioned above (SAPS, n.d.).

**Exit level outcomes**

1. Balance the constitutional and legal rights of individuals with the competence to legally infringe those rights in the service of maintaining a safe and secure society.
2. Evaluate policing principles and their application in relation to crime prevention.
3. Conduct a criminal investigation by gathering information and evidence.
4. Evaluate situations and select tactical techniques and skills needed to perform policing duties and maintain the safety of the self and others.
5. Support a criminal prosecution by preparing documents and giving evidence in a court of law.
6. Apply the principles of operation and service delivery within a Client Service Centre (CSC) in a policing environment.
7. Maintain professional conduct to enhance the principles of service delivery to the community.

During the time of this research, the SAPS BPDLP did not have a specifically developed module that focused on English writing for workplace purposes. The researcher views this as one of the contributing factors to the problem investigated by this study.

Based on the press reports proliferating in South Africa about the inadequate English writing competencies of police officers, it seems clear that these SASSETA accredited SAPS training academies are failing to come up with advanced English writing programmes that can equip the police recruits with adequate and relevant English writing skills that are tailor-made for a police work environment.

#### **2.4.9.3 Where and what type of service do police constables provide?**

Police constables offer their services at Community Service Centres (CSCs), among other places. One reason police constables and police officers should be equipped with relevant and adequate English writing skills is that they provide services at CSCs where they are confronted with impromptu writing tasks daily. The police stations that serve local communities provide a window to the effectiveness of the SAPS because it is at this level that the majority of the citizens in the country access the services of the SAPS, as mandated by Section 205 of the Constitution (SAPS, 2010:7).

Modise (2010:59) concurs and points out that service delivery in the SAPS predominantly occurs at the CSCs level of police stations and the CSC serves as the front desk of the police station. He further maintains that it is the area where interaction between South African communities and the police personnel is most likely to be found. The bulk of work that happens in that area is written work. The researcher argues that improved English writing ability on the part of police constables who work at the CSCs can have a positive impact on many facets of their service delivery.

The following are some of the duties (services) performed by a CSC official which require written work (SAPS, n.d.):

- Dealing with general enquiries from the public;
- Dealing with complaints lodged by the public and in some cases attending to scenes of complaints;
- Making arrests and detaining suspects;
- Recording information regarding crime on SAPS computer systems.

It is clear from the duties indicated above that someone who has to do these tasks has to have adequate SAPS workplace English writing abilities so that written documents can be:

- Accurate (documents should be exact and free of grammatical errors);
- Clear (documents should be coherent);
- Concise (documents should be succinct and terse, not superfluous).

In addition to the above, the researcher also believes that each written word in a police report should at least be apt. The above-mentioned aspects are important in written police work because some of their (police constables') written work is used as evidence in the court of law. This study, therefore, arose out of a desire to determine the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs by identifying their specific workplace English writing needs.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented the theoretical foundation upon which this study is grounded by discussing literature that is congruent to this study. The underlying themes in this literature review were also discussed. Furthermore studies on English writing competency of police officers both in South Africa and internationally were discussed. In addition, writing approaches and English second language learning is also discussed in detail. Lastly, the South African police training academy context was also discussed. The research methodology of this study will be presented in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Three**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents and discusses the research methodology and the research design, including the pilot study. This study had two phases, the pilot and the actual study. Furthermore, it also discusses the population, the sample and the sampling method. The research questions as set out in §1.4 are also repeated here because they informed the research design:

The primary research question:

- What are the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs?

The secondary research questions:

- What are the police constables' perceptions of their English writing competencies?
- What are the specific areas within English writing that police constables consider to be a challenge?
- To what extent does the SAPS training programme address police officers' workplace English writing needs?
- What type of a training programme can enhance the workplace English writing competencies of SA police constables?

To find relevant and evidence based answers to the above research questions, the first procedure was to adopt a research paradigm for this study. This research paradigm is reported below.

## **3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which an investigation is accomplished (Weaver and Olson, 2006:460). Olsen, Lodwick, and Dunlop (1992:16) maintain that a paradigm is a pattern, structure and framework or system of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions while Lather (1986: 259) asserts that research paradigms inherently reflect our beliefs about the world we live in and want to live in.

Philosophical perspectives are important in informing research designs. This study adopted a mixed research paradigm in the form of using qualitative and quantitative research approaches for investigating the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs. This type of research design has proved to be valuable in-depth information when investigating a phenomenon. This assertion justifies the researcher's choice of mixed research approach as the research design of this study. The hypothesis that SA police constables have inadequate workplace English writing competency was tested by conducting a case study based on the research design above discussed above.

### **3.2.1 The case study**

Gerring (2004:341) defines a case study as an in-depth study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) in which the scholar's aim is to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena. A case study is relevant in investigating the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs. In addition, Eisenhardt (1989:534) and Yin (1994:41-42) maintain that case studies can employ multiple levels of analysis within a single study. In this study, this was achieved by using a questionnaire (quantitative approach) and the interviews (qualitative approach) as data collecting instruments.

Furthermore, this is a case study because not all the police constables in the Gauteng province, South Africa were selected. Only a certain number of them from a certain geographical area were selected to participate in this study using a specific criterion. In addition, the three SAPS clusters selected in this study are part of the overall four SAPS clusters that operate in the city where this study took place. These clusters are located in various parts of the city. These SAPS clusters consisted of twenty police stations. Police cluster one had nine police stations followed by cluster two with six police stations and lastly cluster three with five police stations. This is further evidence that this is a case study.

### **3.2.2 The research approach**

Seliger and Shohamy (1989) maintain that a combination of methods yield a composite picture of a particular phenomenon. Since this study used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, it was necessary to give a brief overview of the two distinct approaches mentioned above and that is done in the subsequent section.

#### **3.2.2.1 The quantitative approach**

This study adopted a quantitative research approach. Nunan (1992:231) describes a quantitative research as an approach where data are recorded in numerical form. In addition Creswell (2003:13) maintains that quantitative methods involve the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data and writing the results of a study in a manner consistent with a survey or experimental methods. Furthermore, it is argued that a quantitative approach grows out of a strong academic tradition that places considerable trust in numbers that represent opinions or concepts (Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar and Newton,,2002:19)

From the discussion the above, it seems that the general consensus among researchers is that the fabric of the quantitative research approach is numbers. In this approach, the prime idea is that the phenomena being investigated can be understood through the use of numerical elements in data analysis.

Quantitative data is important in this study as it has helped in identifying and understanding the themes investigated. The reason for using a questionnaire is that it is relatively economical, has standardised questions, can assure anonymity, and questions can be written for specific purposes (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:238). Furthermore, according to Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar and Newton (2002:23) quantitative data can help with the qualitative side of a study during design by finding a representative sample and locating deviant samples. This was done to contribute to internal validity in the study as well as to dispel doubts about the credibility of data collected through one source or instrument.

Quantitative data in this study was collected through the use of the questionnaire. The other research approach which was used in this study is the qualitative research approach discussed below.

### **3.2.2.2 The qualitative approach**

Creswell (1994:1) describes qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. In addition, Nunan (1992:231) maintains that 'qualitative data' refers to data which are recorded in non-numerical form. Silverman (2000:41) maintains that qualitative research designs tend to work with a relatively small number of cases. Bryman (1988:90) also maintains that qualitative research follows a theoretical, rather than a statistical logic.

Qualitative data is important in this study as it has helped in providing deeper understanding of the themes investigated. According to Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar and Newton (2002:23) qualitative data can help the quantitative side of the study during design by aiding with conceptual development and instrumentation. This qualitative data is located within the interviews with police constables.

This type of data enabled conclusions to be drawn based on identified patterns and themes which were elicited by this type of data. The in-depth information provided by the qualitative data provided a holistic picture of the phenomenon investigated. The statement above justifies the researchers' choice of qualitative data to be a component of the research design of this study. Furthermore, the inclusion of qualitative data in this study served to provide data to consolidate and expand the data obtained via the quantitative approach for a more complete picture of the problem. In addition, this type of data contributed to a situation where unbiased, relevant and accurate conclusions based on the participants' perceptions and experiences were drawn.

The rationale for using a qualitative research approach in this study is that it was concluded that the questionnaire alone would provide only surface value data and not be able to fully unearth the hidden nuances of the phenomenon being investigated. This argument is based on one of the arguments of proponents of the qualitative research approach such as Walker and Evers (1999:23), who maintain that the distinctive human dimension of education cannot be captured only by statistical generalisations and causal laws.

Qualitative data in this study was collected through interviews. As Silverman (2000:41) indicated that qualitative research designs tend to work with a relatively small number of cases, the interviewees in this study were fewer (§3.4.2) than the respondents who participated in answering the questionnaire.

The subsequent section discusses the population and the sampling method used in this study.

### **3.3 THE POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.3.1 Population**

Population refers to individuals who possess specific characteristics that are of interest to the researcher (Strydom, 2005:193). In addition, population refers to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications (Polit and Hungler, 1999:37).

Furthermore, population according to Welman and Kruger (1999:47) refer to groups, organisations, human products or events. In this study the population was SAPS police constables of all races and all genders and who were employed by SAPS as police constables in the Gauteng province and city of Tshwane during the time of the study. This is what Ralenala (2003:156) identifies as reachable population. The rationale for choosing police officers who were at the rank of a police constable is that it was concluded that they were the people involved in day-to-day running (note that this does not refer to managing the police station) of police stations, therefore, they would have a much broader picture regarding the problem being investigated.

##### **3.3.1.1 Sample and sampling procedure**

According to Polit and Hungler (1999:95) the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling. According to Bailey (1982:83), sample refers to a portion of the total population, an approximation of the whole rather than the whole itself. Nunan (1992:232) concurs with Bailey (1982) when he says that a research sample refers to a subset of individuals or cases from within a population. This section focuses on the detailed description of the sample of the research participants and the sampling procedures followed in this study.

The police constable sample was drawn from a population of police constables based in the Gauteng province, South Africa. The police constables were all based in the city of Tshwane. The target sample for this investigation comprised a total of 203 police constables. The participants in this sample were all at the rank of a police constable during the year of the data collection (2014). All the police constables in this sample underwent 24 month police basic training (BPDLP) in South Africa. All the research participants indicated that they spoke English as a second language (L2).

Furthermore, part of the reason for focusing on L2 learners was that researchers such as Tan (1999), Pendergrass et al. (2001), Sidek, Ramachandran and Ramakrishan (2006), and Venkatraman and Prema (2007) argue that specific English language skills play a crucial role in some workplaces where English is used as a language of operation and the subjects are not native speakers of English. They further maintain that these skills enable the workers and perhaps even students to succeed in their environments.

The total number of research participants in this study is 203 police constables. This sample allows the results to be generalised to the SAPS clusters selected in this study. According to LoBiondo-Wood & Haber (1998:263-264) the larger the sample the more representative it is. The researcher thought that a sample of 300 police constables would be a fair number given the nature of this research where several instruments will be used to collect data and also the target geographical area. However the researcher was informed prior to collecting data by the Cluster Information Centre (CIC) cluster commanders in the selected police clusters that it was not going to be possible to have the requested 300 police constables from the three selected police clusters. Therefore the situation was beyond the researchers' control. He was advised that 250 would be maximum, as a result 250 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 203 were returned.

The researcher is satisfied that the findings in this study can be generalised to the police constables in the selected police clusters in SA since a total of three out of the four police clusters were used for this study. This constituted 75% of the police clusters in the selected geographical area. The sampling procedure is discussed in the next paragraph. This procedure is discussed so that the results obtained from the sample can be generalised to the population (Marshall, 1996:522).

### **3.3.1.2 Sample and sampling procedure for the questionnaire data.**

A non-probability sampling method was adopted for the 203 research participants who took part in answering the questionnaire. According to Buckingham & Saunders (2004:103) non-probability refers to quota sampling. Furthermore, Leedy (1993:200) maintains that in this kind of sampling method there is no way of forecasting, estimating or guaranteeing that each element in the population will be represented in the sample.

The rationale for using this method is found in Silverman (2000:104) when he asserts that this type of sampling allows a researcher to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which he or she is interested. It was felt that this approach was relevant and suitable for the problem investigated because each subject who was available had an equal chance of being selected without any form of prejudice.

### **3.3.1.3 Sample and sampling procedure for the interview data.**

Convenience sampling method was adopted for the 10 research participants who were interviewed. According to De Vos (1998:199) a convenience sample is the use of readily accessible persons in a study. In this study any police constables who were available and willing were interviewed. Huysamen (1994:183-190) indicates that a sample of 25 or more subjects is a preferable unit for analysis.

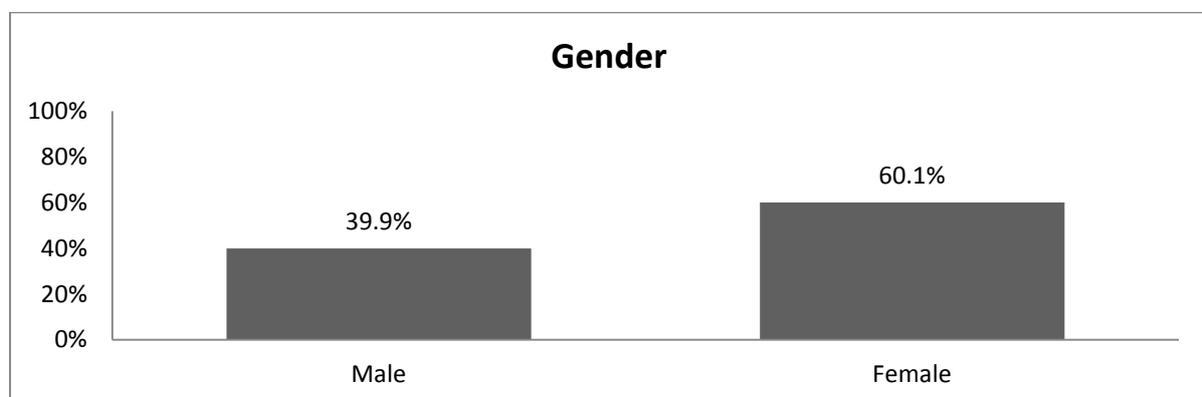
In this study the researcher opted for 10 research respondents out of the 203 research participants because of the depth of the information that was required from the respondents. The rationale behind convenience sampling was the limited time frame the police had due to their busy work schedule as well as the time frame allocated to the researcher by the SAPS

Furthermore, according to Schwedt (1997:140), the site or place of a study is chosen on the basis of a combination of criteria including availability, accessibility and theoretical interest. The rationale for choosing the Gauteng province in South Africa as well as the city of Tshwane is that the researcher is a resident of that city in that province. The police clusters identified in this study were also chosen because they were close and accessible to the researcher.

In conclusion to this section, a profile of the target sample in this study is presented and discussed below. It should be noted that the variables in the profile of the research participants were selected because they are important with respect to the problem being investigated, as it shall be evident in chapters four and five. In this section the figure providing the variable information will be followed by a brief discussion of the variable and its role in the study.

Figure 3.1 below indicates that the male research participants in this study constituted 39.9% and the female constituted 60.1%.

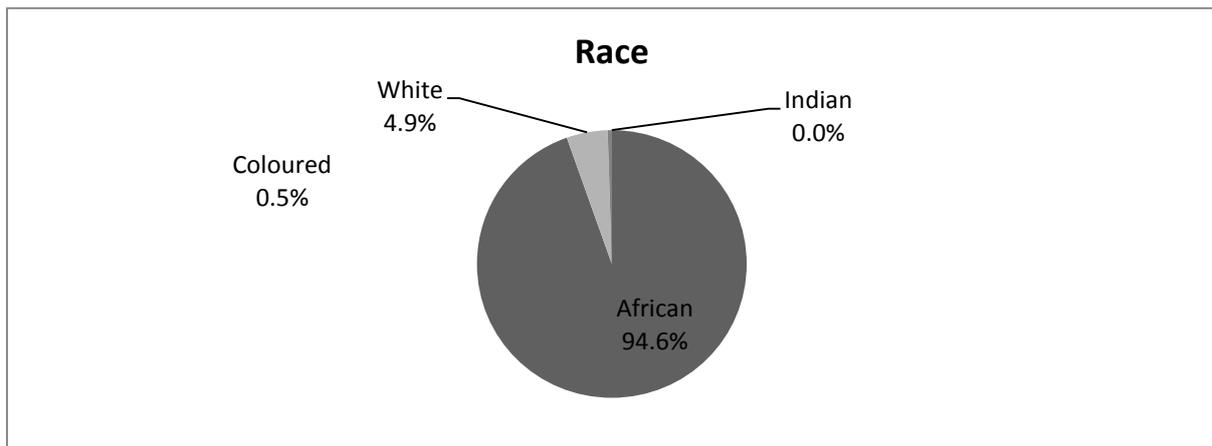
**Figure 3.1 Gender of the research participants**



The variable represented in Figure 3.2 below show that Africans were the predominant group among the participants, representing 192 (94.6%) of the sample population. Whites comprised 4.9% (10) of the sample, coloureds comprised 0.5% (1) and Indians comprised 0.0% (0).

The data discussed in the paragraph above are shown in Figure 3.2.

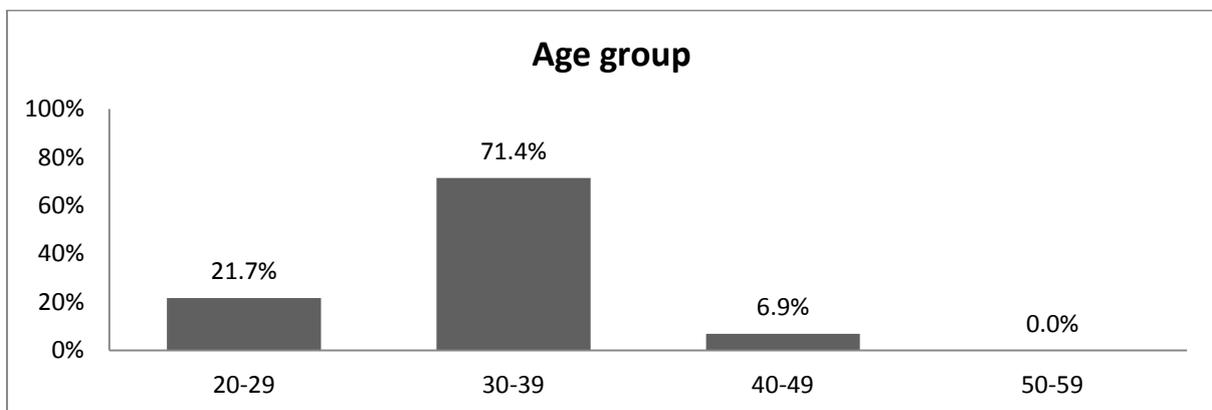
**Figure 3.2 Race of the research participants.**



The largest group in this variable were participants aged 30-39 (145 or 71.4%) followed by that aged 20-29 (44 or 21.7%). It is also shown that the group aged 40-49 represented the smallest percentage of respondents with only 6.9% (14). There were no participants in the 50-59 category.

The data discussed in the above paragraph is shown in Figure 3.3 below.

**Figure 3.3 Age of the research participants.**

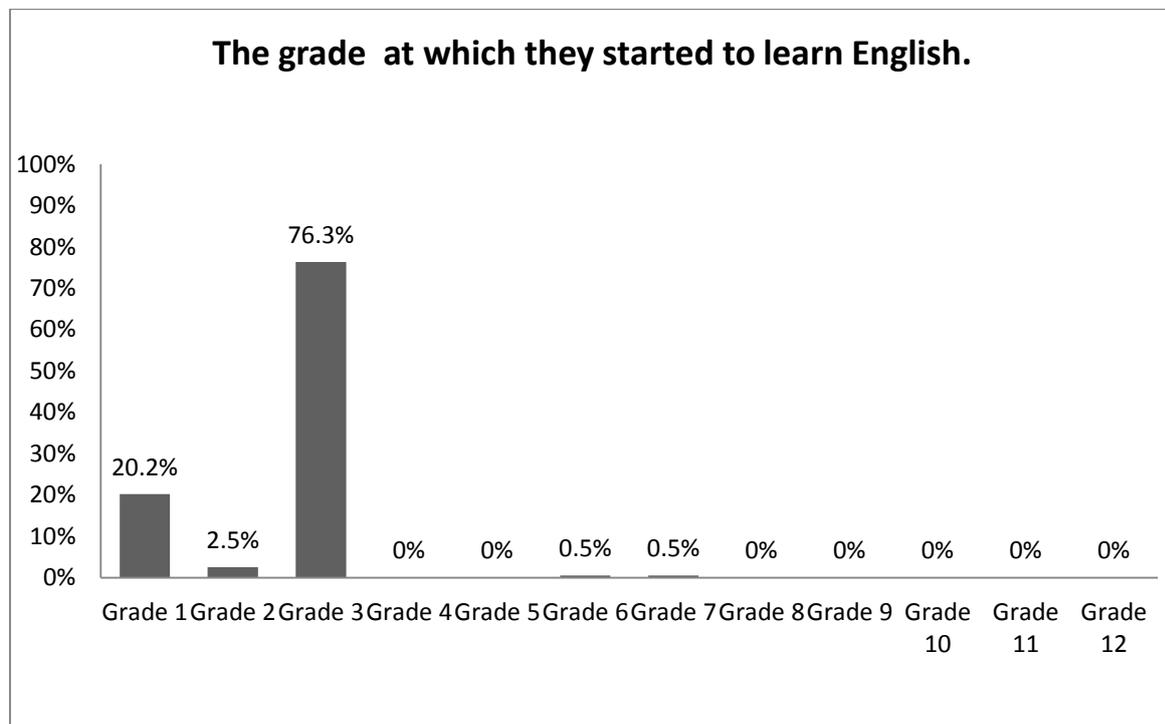


The respondents were also asked about the grade in which they started to learn English at school. Of the 203 research participants, 155 (76.4%) indicated that they started learning English in grade 3 and 41 participants (20.2%) indicated that they started to learn English in grade one. The researcher is of the opinion that these participants probably attended private schools or former Model C schools, or did not study in South Africa.

Five (2.5%) of the participants indicated that they started to learn English in grade two. Only one participant (0.5%) indicated that she started learning English in grade six while another one (0.5%) participant indicated that she started to learn English in grade seven. This question was meant to measure the spread of when the participants started to learn English. This is important in understanding the factors that hamper adequate workplace writing ability in English and (as a result of starting to learn English late in the school years) this also helps in understanding some police constables' perceptions regarding English writing.

The data discussed in the paragraph above are shown in Figure 3.4 below.

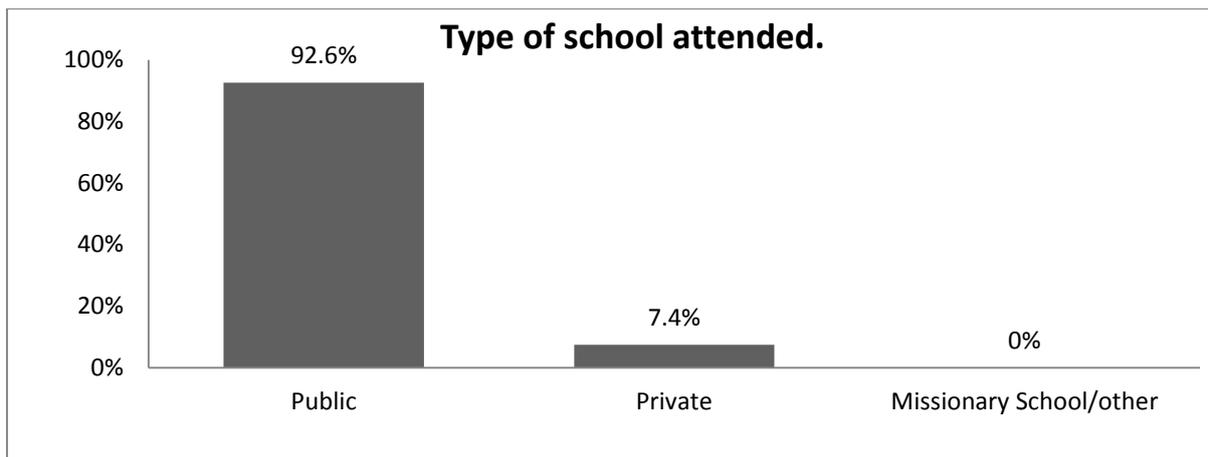
**Figure 3.4 The grade in which participants started to learn English.**



The respondents were asked about the type of school they attended. Of the 203 participants, 188 (92.6%) indicated that they attended a public school. Only 15 of the research participants (7.4%) indicated that they attended a private school. Not one of the participants indicated that they attended a missionary or any other form of school. This variable was important to investigate since there is a lot of anecdotal evidence and few research studies which indicate that learners from private and former Model C schools in SA speak and write better in English compared to those from government or public schools. For example Webb *et al* (2010:279) claim that Model C school learners have 'reasonably adequate English proficiency' compared to rural and township school learners.

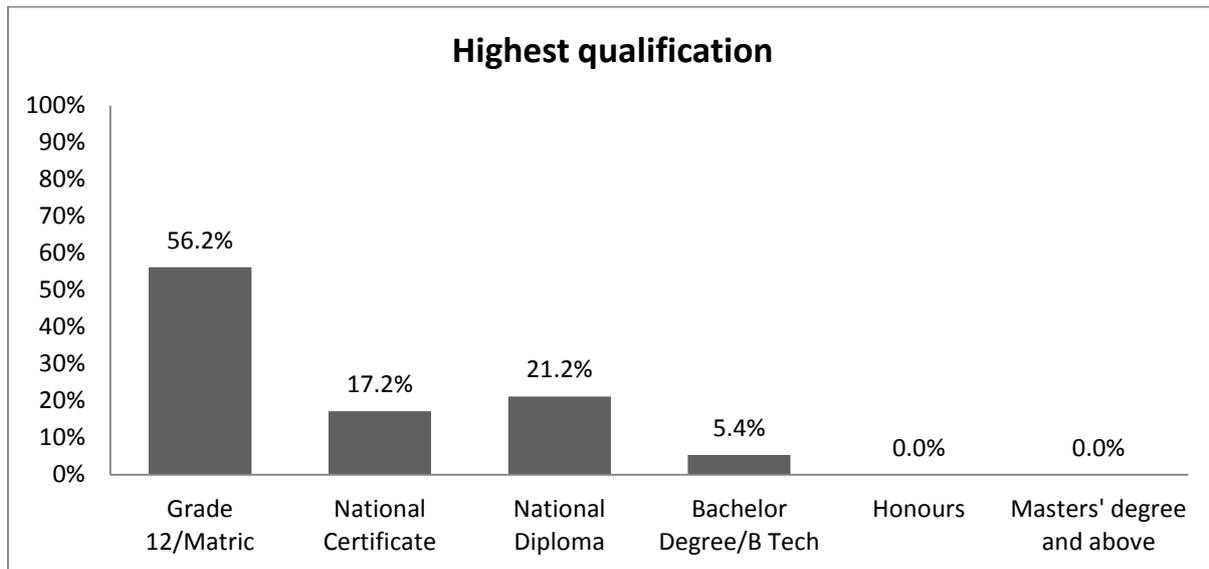
The data discussed in the paragraph above are shown in Figure 3.5 below.

**Figure 3.5 They type of school the research participants attended.**



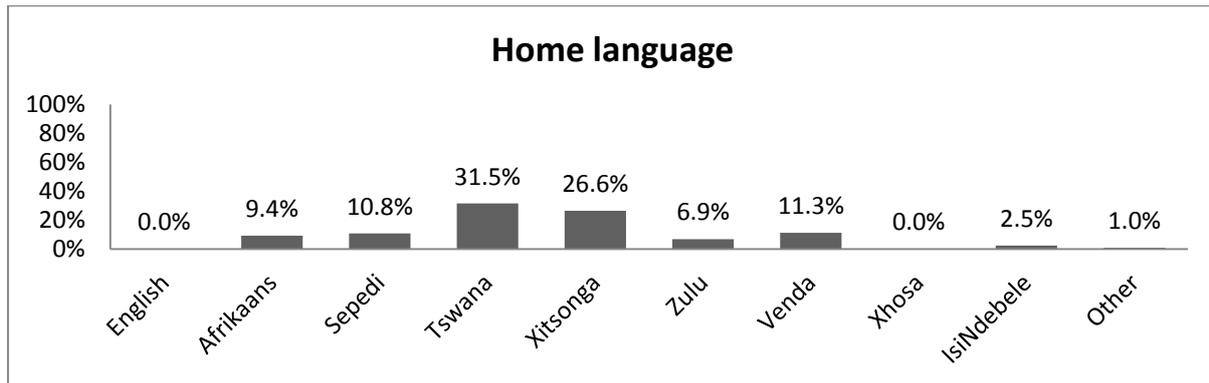
A total of 114 (56.2%) participants had a matric certificate/grade 12 while 35 participants (17.2%) had a national certificate (M+1). Only 43 (21.2%) of the participants had a national diploma. Again, only 11 (5.4%) of the participants had a bachelor's degree from a university. Not one from the research sample had an honours or master's degree. This question was important in this study because the assumption is that people with higher educational qualifications stand a better chance of having an adequate knowledge of writing in English since English is used as both a teaching subject and language of instruction in SA.

The data discussed in the paragraph above are shown in Figure 3.6 below.

**Figure 3.6 Research participants' qualifications.**

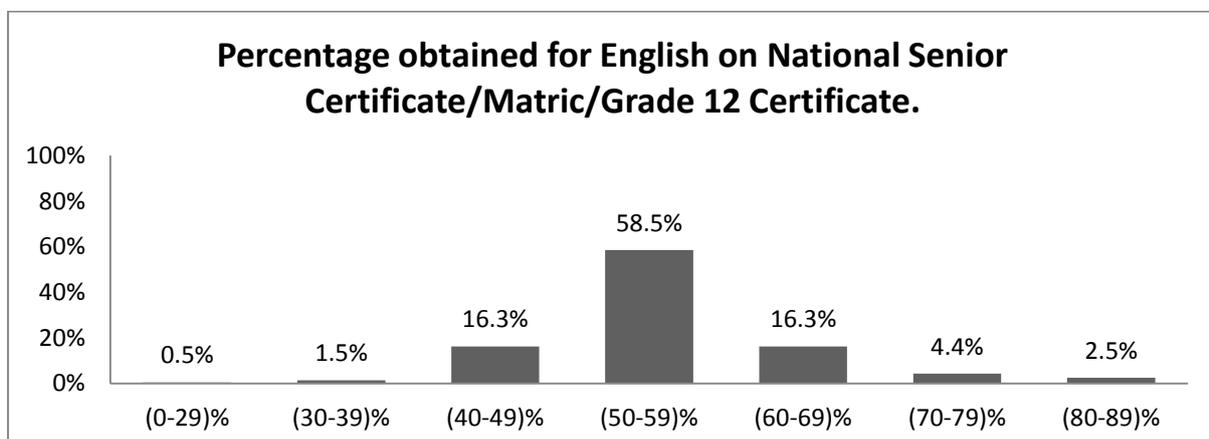
The participants were asked about their home language. A total of 64 participants (31.5%) indicated that their home language was Setswana, followed by Xitsonga with fifty four participants (26.6%). Only 23 (11.3%) indicated Tshivenda as their home language, followed by 22 (10.8%) who indicated Sepedi. Afrikaans was in position number five, with 19 participants (9.4%) indicating it as their home language. Furthermore, 14 participants (6.9%) from the sample indicated that their home language was Isizulu. The other language that featured was IsiNdebele with five (2.5%) participants indicating it as their home language. Only two (1.0%) of the participants indicated that their home language was not among the options provided in the questionnaire. Not one of the research participants indicated that their home language was English or Isixhosa. The reason for asking this question was to establish the home languages of the police constables. This also served to ascertain that indeed they (research participants) did not speak English as a first language (L1).

The data discussed in the paragraphs above are shown in Figure 3.7.

**Figure 3.7 Research participants' home language.**

Participants were asked about the English percentage they obtained in their National Senior/Matric/Grade 12 certificate. The data revealed that 119 (58.6%) of the research participants obtained a pass percentage of 50-59, while 33 (16.3%) of the participants obtained a pass percentage of 40-49 in English during matric/grade 12. A pass percentage of 60-69 was obtained by 33 (16.3%) of the research participants. Only nine (4.4%) had a pass percentage of 70-79. Those who had the highest pass percentage were in the 80-89 category, and there were only five (2.5%) in that category. Three participants (1.5%) fell into the 30-39 category. Only one participant (0.5%) got a percentage of 0-29. This variable was investigated to find out how the participants performed in matric/grade 12 as far as English was concerned. This was important as it has the potential to influence the perceptions of participants in this study regarding their workplace English writing needs.

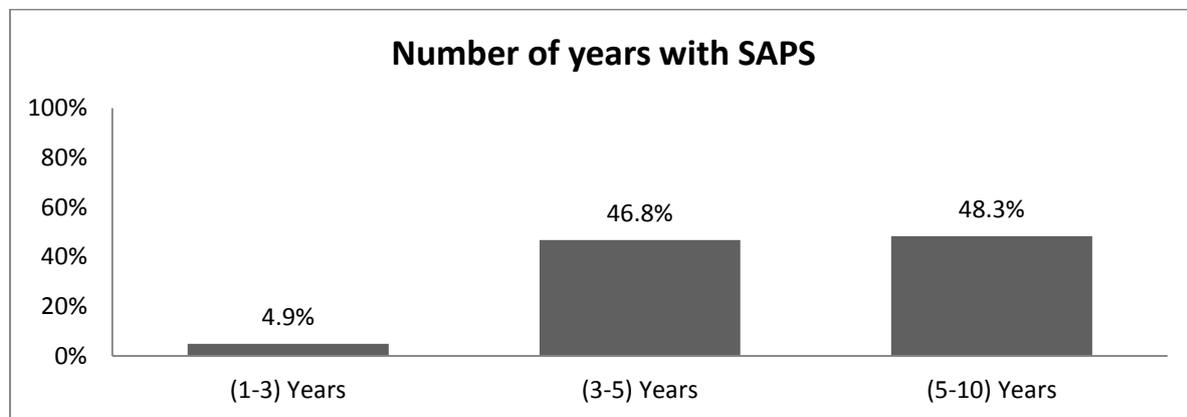
The data discussed in the paragraph above are shown in Figure 3.8 below.

**Figure 3.8 English in the National Senior/Matric/Grade 12 Certificate.**

The majority of the police constables in this study (98 or 48.3%) had been employed by SAPS for between five (5) and ten (10) years, followed by those (95 or 46.8%) who had been employed by SAPS between three and five (5) years. Only 10 (4.9%) indicated that they had been employed by SAPS for between one and three years. The thought behind this variable was that the number of years employed by SAPS would influence the workplace English writing needs of participants.

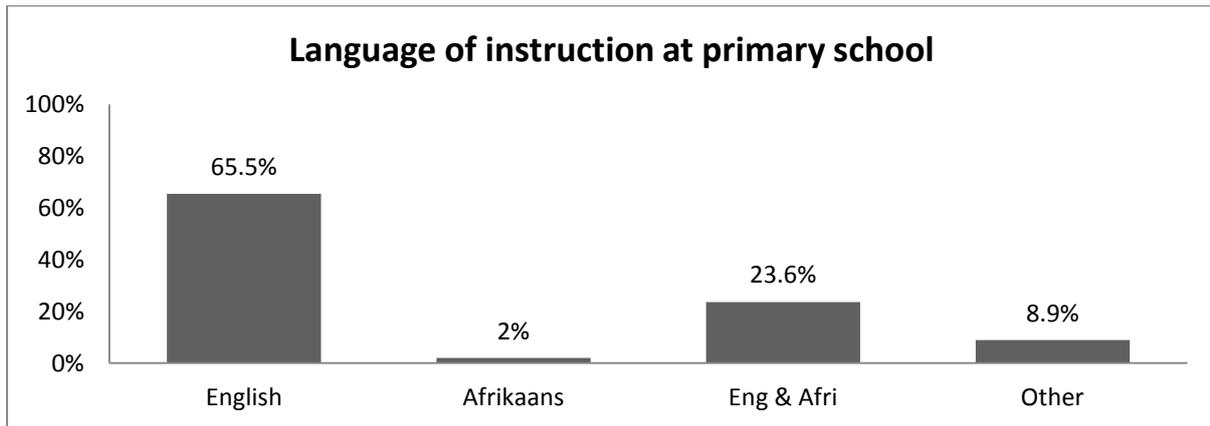
The data discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Figure 3.9 below.

**Figure 3.9 Years in SAPS employment.**



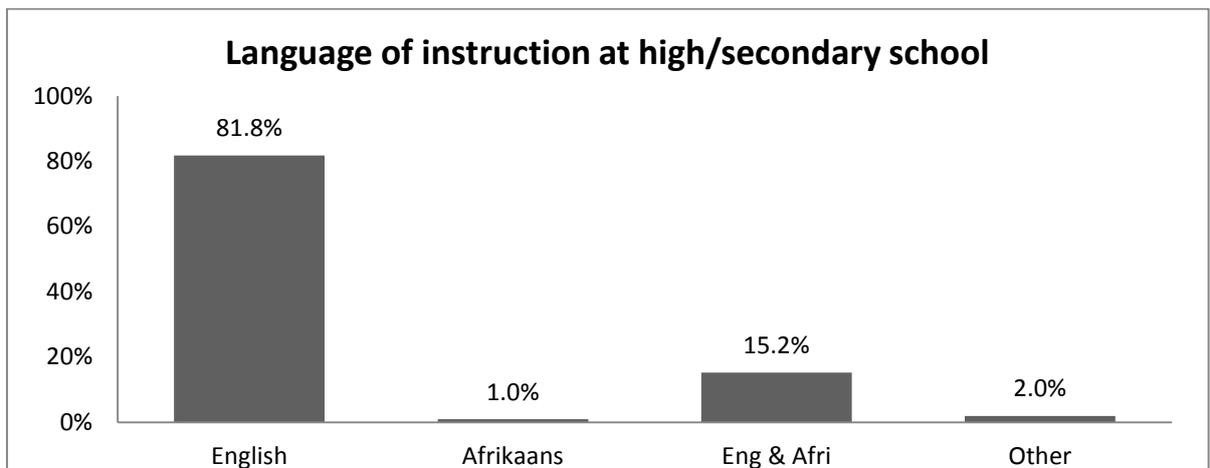
A total of 133 of the research participants (65.5%) indicated that the language of instruction at the primary school they attended was English while 48 participants (23.6%) indicated that the languages of instruction at the primary school they attended were both English and Afrikaans. Only four (2%) indicated that the language of instruction at their primary school was Afrikaans. Only 18 of the research participants (8.9%) indicated that the language of instruction at their primary school was a language other than English or Afrikaans. This variable was investigated since it had the potential to influence perceptions on language issues (including writing).

The data discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Figure 3.10.

**Figure 3.10 Language of instruction at primary school.**

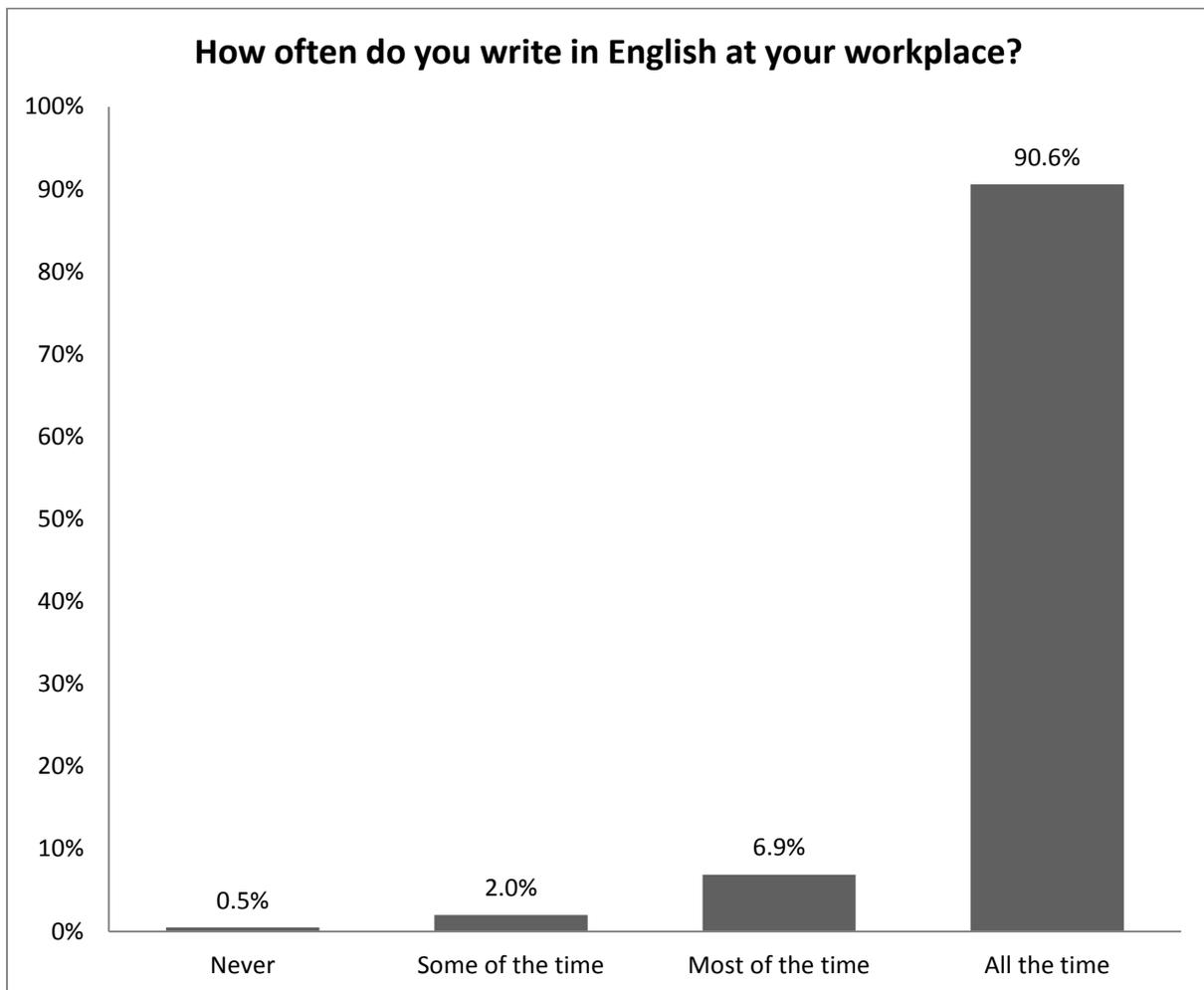
Participants were asked about the language of instruction at secondary/high school. A total of 166 of the research participants (81.8%) indicated that the language of instruction at the secondary schools they attended was English while thirty one respondents (15.3%) indicated that the languages of instruction at the secondary schools they attended were both English and Afrikaans. Only two (1.0%) indicated that the language of instruction at their secondary school was Afrikaans. Four of the research participants (2.0%) indicated that the language of instruction at their secondary school was a language other than English or Afrikaans.

The data discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Figure 3.11 below.

**Figure 3.11 Language of instruction at secondary/high school**

The participants were also asked about how frequently they write in English at their workplace. The purpose of this question was to establish the extent to which police constables write in English at their workplace. The researcher is of the opinion that, if the frequency of writing in English is high, it is imperative that police constables' workplace English writing competence be sufficient to help them function effectively. The data in Figure 3.12 below show that a staggering 184 (90.6%) indicated that they wrote in English at work all the time. This data supports Womack and Finley (1986:14) who maintained that it should be noted that communication literally fills the day of the typical police officer. This further emphasises the need for police constables to be able to write well in English.

**Figure 3.12 Perceptions on English writing at work**



### 3.4 THE PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted before the actual study. In this section, the researcher will discuss the pilot study and its importance in this study. A pilot study is as a small-scale trial run of all the aspects planned for use in the main research (Bless and Higson- Smith, 2000: 155). This section reports on the pilot study and its role in this study. The rationale behind the adoption of the pilot in this study is that it has been propounded that the pilot often enable researchers to refine clarity and try out their variables, measurement processes, and other research strategies (Vockell and Asher, 1995:31).

A pilot study is needed to detect possible flaws in measurement procedures (including instructions, time limits, etc.) and in the operationalization of independent variables (Welman and Kruger, 1999:146). It is important to mention that since this pilot study was a small-scale trial run of the actual study, the aims were not the same as the ones for the actual study (§3.1). The pilot study was only meant to do the following:

- To check for inadequacies in the questionnaire and the interview questions (Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, 1990:176)
- To check if the questions are yielding the kind of data required (Silverman, 1993:151).
- To check for as many as possible the aspects that might have the potential to hinder the success of the actual study.

In a nutshell, the pilot phase was meant to look into the data collection instruments with regard to relevance, clarity, unambiguity and suitability of questions to the research problem. The pilot procedures in this study are discussed below.

It is important to mention that the pilot was conducted after permission was granted by the SAPS (Appendix B). The questionnaire was administered by the researcher. These questionnaires were completed individually. The pilot study took place after the researcher made and secured an appointment with the officer assigned to facilitate the process.

The pilot study was conducted in the Gauteng province, South Africa, in the city of Tshwane. Three police clusters were selected for the pilot phase. These SAPS were selected because they were near the place where the researcher resides.

Silverman (1993:151) maintains that it is important for questions to be piloted with a small number of subjects before being used. Thus, in this pilot study, ten (10) research respondents were randomly selected from the above mentioned SAPS clusters. Six respondents were female and four were male. These police constables did not form part of the main study. These research participants participated in answering the questionnaire and the interview questions. Out of these 10 participants, four were randomly selected to take part in the interviews. Table 3.3 below shows the above discussed data.

**Table 3.1 Pilot sample of police constables**

	<b>Questionnaire participants</b>	<b>Interviewees</b>	<b>%</b>
	10	3	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above table indicates that all 10 research participants completed the questionnaire. However only a total of three (3) out of this cohort participated in the interview sessions. The findings in relation to the aims of this pilot study are discussed hereunder.

The pilot revealed that police constables felt that the questionnaire itself was long. The questionnaire comprised 41 questions of different formats. The other important aspect that was found out is that it was reported that some of the questions were unclear and difficult to understand. The findings revealed that indeed there were inadequacies as far as the questionnaire was concerned. The pilot study also revealed that while the research instruments yielded the required data, there were, however questions which were yielding data that was not relevant to the research aims of the actual study. These questions were eliminated since there were no aspects that were found to have the potential to hinder the success of the actual study. Few minor changes were made to the questionnaire to reduce their length and some of the questions were rephrased. No significant content changes were made to the questionnaire.

No problems were found with regard to the interview questions. The research participants felt that the questions for the interviews were clear and unambiguous. This could be because they have come across some of these questions in the questionnaire and answered them.

This feedback from the pilot helped in improving the instruments. The final version of the questionnaire contained a total of 32 items grouped under Section A and B. The final interview schedule comprised 18 questions from the initial 21 questions. The final drafts of these research instruments are attached as appendices in this thesis (Appendices E and F).

The pilot study proved to be valuable in this study because it helped in identifying potential aspects that could have created problems in carrying out the actual study successfully. The data collection instruments were revised and made more relevant because of this pilot study.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

This section presents and discusses the data for the actual study and how it was collected and synthesised. Furthermore, it also presents and discusses the data gathering techniques used in this study. According to Polit and Hungler (1999:267) data collection is the information obtained in a course of a study. Two different techniques were used to collect data and this was in line with Denscombe's (1998:84) statement that it is advisable to use different data collection techniques or procedures to collect data about the same phenomenon because by so doing the researcher gains multiple perspectives on the phenomenon itself. The data gathering instruments used for the quantitative data will be presented first and later on followed by the instrument for qualitative data collection. A questionnaire and interviews were used as data collecting instruments in this study.

In addition, it is important to mention that in this study the sequence is that the quantitative data collection was the first to be conducted followed by the collection of qualitative data. The rationale behind this sequence was to avoid getting participants exhausted and end up not providing 'genuine' answers but answers for the sake of completing the task. It is also important to mention that the researchers' role in this whole process was to collect the data, analyse it and write the report.

The above mentioned data collection instruments are discussed in the subsequent section.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

Nunan (1992:231) defines a questionnaire as an instrument for the collection of data, usually in written form, consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subjects. Buckingham and Saunders (2004:43) asseverate that questionnaires are defined as a prepared set of written questions for purpose of statistical compilation or comparison of the information gathered.

In this study a two-part questionnaire consisting of section A and section B was used. Section A consisted of twelve (12) questions and Section B of twenty (20) questions. The purpose of Section A in the questionnaire was to seek biographical data such as the number of years the participants had been employed by SAPS, race, highest qualification and home language. The purpose of Section B was to elicit data on the participants' perceptions and experiences regarding their workplace English writing needs.

The questionnaire centred on the following aspects within writing: sentence structure, cohesion, spelling, vocabulary, tense, expression, punctuation, word classification and capitalization. The rationale behind focusing on such errors is that such errors occur more frequently in writing black learners produce (Nel & Swanepoel, 2010:53). This was achieved by phrasing the questions in such a way that research participants could indicate their perceptions and experiences regarding each question on a scale ranging from one (1) to three (3), one (1) to four (4) and one (1) to five (5). The nature of the questions in this questionnaire were closed questions. This was done so that bias could be avoided and participants could answer within the same framework. Furthermore, other types of questions in section B of the questionnaire were questions in which participants were asked to choose an option from one (1) to two (2), one (1) to three (3), one (1) to four (4) and one (1) to five (5) options. This questionnaire was designed to take 30 minutes to complete.

In addition, some of the questions in this questionnaire contained Likert-type scales questions. Likert-type scales are self-rating scales with categories such as 'disagree', 'disagree slightly', 'agree' and 'agree slightly' (Neuman, 1997:259). These questions were closed-ended (Fink, 1995:15). These questions were useful because they provided data that also threw some light on the data from the questions with scales. Furthermore, the questions in the questionnaire were pre-coded. Buckingham and Saunders (2004:74) posit the following reasons for pre-coding the items in the questionnaire:

- It makes it easier to record information because it is simpler and easier to tick an item than to have to write out an answer.
- It saves time later. It creates a smaller number of manageable categories and ensures that participants limit their answers to a predetermined range of categories that will prove manageable.
- It ensures that the researcher gets the sort of data he or she wants by forcing respondents to restrict their answers to the predetermined categories.

To ensure that the questions in the questionnaire articulated with the research construct, consultation with selected specialists in this field was made. Furthermore, assertions by Buckingham and Saunders (ibid) justify the researchers' decision to adopt a questionnaire for collecting data in this study.

The administration of the questionnaire discussed above is explained below.

### **3.5.1.1 Questionnaire administration**

The questionnaires were delivered to the office of the Cluster Information Centre (CIC) commander by the researcher. The CIC commander then distributed them to the different police station commissioners under their cluster and the police station commissioner or the person delegated by the station commissioner distributed them to the police constables at that particular police station. The researcher informed the CIC commander to inform the police station commissioners or others responsible for distributing the questionnaire that police constables should not consult with other people when completing the questionnaire. This information was also included in the questionnaire and to ensure reliability and authenticity of the data. These questionnaires were completed individually.

Some police constables completed their questionnaires at the police station while others completed them at home. The researcher informed the CIC commanders, who, in turn, informed the police station commissioner, about the date on which the completed questionnaires had to be brought back to him. When the questionnaires were completed and ready for collection, the CIC commander called the researcher to come and collect them. The majority of the participants reported that they took about twenty-five (25) minutes to complete the questionnaire while others reported that they took close to twenty (20) minutes to complete it. This did not affect the research data because the questions were not time-based.

### 3.5.1.2 Data collected using the questionnaire.

The table below shows the total number of research participants who took part in the actual study in terms of the police clusters which they belonged.

**Table 3.2 Data from the participants sample by SAPS cluster: Questionnaire**

<b>SAPS cluster</b>	<b>Distributed questionnaires</b>	<b>Returned questionnaires</b>	<b>Total participants</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Cluster 1</b>	180	139	139	68.4%
<b>Cluster 2</b>	40	38	38	18.7%
<b>Cluster 3</b>	30	26	26	12.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100%</b>

N=203: Note. Questionnaires not returned) =47

### 3.5.2 Interviews

According to Nunan (1992:231) an interview is the elicitation of data by one person from another through person-to-person encounters. The oral interview has been widely used as a research tool in Applied Linguistics (Nunan, 1992:149). Nunan (ibid) further writes that interviews can be characterised in terms of their degree of formality, and can be placed on a continuum ranging from unstructured through semi-structured to structured.

Furthermore, Buckingham and Saunders (2004:78-80) maintain that the interviewer should try his or her best to avoid leading questions. They further argue that the questions should be as 'neutral' as possible and that the researcher should always take care that question order does not influence later responses.

In this study in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect the narrative data. (Appendix F). The interview schedule comprised 18 questions. The 13 questions in Section B of this interview schedule were phrased in such a way that articulated to the same themes that were addressed by the questionnaire. This was done to corroborate and illuminate the data sought by the questionnaire. Furthermore, this provided an opportunity for the research respondents to provide more information in relation to the responses they provided in the questionnaire.

In addition, the interview schedule comprised Section A and section B. Section A was meant to collect biographical information regarding the research respondents. Section B was meant to collect information regarding English writing perceptions and experiences of the research respondents. Section A comprised five questions whereas Section B comprised 13 questions. The interviews were designed to last between 15 and 20 minutes

This semi-structured interviews adopted in this study allowed for an in-depth understanding of the themes investigated. The research respondents were allowed and encouraged to use their own words when answering the questions. Indeed, Buckingham and Saunders's (2004:76) state that "the more we allow respondents to answer questions in their own words, the more insight we are likely to get into what we are hoping to measure and validity tends to be greater".

These interviews helped to allow the respondents to provide more information whenever the need arose and to bring about a better understanding of the questionnaire responses.

The above assertion is predicted on ideas propounded by researchers such as Ralenala (1993:62) when he writes:

*Personal interviews as a research instrument have the advantage of providing wider background to the problem on a person-to-person basis. Such background helps put the questionnaire responses in a better perspective for data analysis and interpolation.*

In addition, to make sure that the questions in the interview schedule articulated to the research construct, consultation with selected specialists in this field was made.

### **3.5.2.1 Interview procedure**

To arrange for the interviews, the researcher telephoned the office of the Cluster Information Centre (CIC) commander and arranged for a date with the research respondents. The dates were then communicated to various police station commanders under that SAPS cluster. Research respondents were arranged by either the station commander or any other person assigned by the station commander.

All the ten interview sessions were conducted by the researcher alone. The participants in this study were interviewed individually. In addition, all the ten interview sessions were conducted face-to-face. The consent form was again discussed with the participants before the interview could begin. The researcher did not want to take it for granted that they understood the consent from during the questionnaire session.

The researcher further asked the participants orally for permission to record the interviews. The interviews took place a week after the questionnaire was completed to avoid the carryover effect. The individual face-to-face interviews were conducted in the office of the respondent. There were no disruptions or disturbances during interview sessions.

The research participants provided the data voluntarily and were under no duress. The interviews were later transcribed verbatim. In other words, they were not summarised or abridged. This was done for analysis purposes. The interviews were kept informal, to some extent, so that the respondents could feel at ease when providing information.

Some participants took only ten (10) minutes to complete the interview session. The interviews were conducted in English only. In some instances, the participants code-switched to their mother tongue to emphasise or make their meaning clear. This did not affect the type of data collected. Lastly, this data from the interviews were obtained using an audiotape recorder.

### 3.5.2.2 Data collected using the interviews

Table 3.2 below shows the total number of research interviewees who took part in the actual study in terms of the police clusters which they belonged.

**Table 3.3 Data from the participants sample by SAPS cluster: Interviews**

<b>SAPS cluster</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>	<b>Gender</b>		<b>%</b>
<b>Cluster 1</b>	4	Male 3	Female 1	40%
<b>Cluster 2</b>	3	Male 1	Female 2	30%
<b>Cluster 3</b>	3	Male 2	Female 1	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Male 6</b>	<b>Female 4</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Vithal and Jansen (1997:27), the purpose of data analysis is to make sense of data. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2005:18) concur that data analysis is the process of bringing meaning to the mass of collected data. This section presents how data were analysed in this study. It is also important to mention that these data were screened to verify that the respondents engaged with all items in the data collection. It is also important to reiterate that this study made use of both quantitative and qualitative data. Therefore this section will present how the questionnaire (quantitative) and interview (qualitative) data were analysed.

### **3.6.1 Questionnaire data analysis**

The data from the questionnaires was analysed using statistical computer software called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Pallant, 2005). The data from the questionnaire was captured and stored in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Respondents' responses were coded using different numbers in order to enable analysis. The responses were grouped according to the items they were answering. The data in this spreadsheet contained the respondents' information such as demographic information and their perceptions on the SAPS English writing they received.

In analysing this data set, the profile of the home language tapestry of the police constables was the entry point. The whole questionnaire was scored by means of descriptive statistics. The inputs from participants' scores were computed by means of SPSS where the focus was on things such as frequencies, means and standard deviation. A statistician assisted in the analysis of this data. The statistical analysis included displaying and comparing the means, standard deviations, factor analysis and frequency distribution. It is important to mention that the researcher interpreted these results unaided.

### 3.6.2 Interviews data analysis

Interviews or qualitative data were analysed using a process of close examination of data in order to find constructs, themes and patterns called interpretational analysis (Winegardener, 2001:5) combined with perceptual measure approach (Fraser and Walberg, 1981). This process draws from the realist approach which is based on coding respondents' answers into the different sets of reasons they give (Silverman, 2000:124). This strategy was helpful in analysing the interview data in this study.

As mentioned earlier, data from the interviews was obtained using an audiotape recorder, captured and saved in a coded folder in the researcher's computer. The recorded data was transcribed and stored in a Microsoft Word document on the researcher's computer. This helped in improving the speed of analysing and handling the data.

In conclusion, it is also important to mention that the data reported above were collected on sixteen (16) research trips of different lengths (4km – 68km away from where the researcher resides) between August and September 2014. Data collection took six (6) weeks. There was no control variable regarding the time of the data collection; the researcher collected data at any time of day that was convenient for the research participants. The researcher is satisfied that this did not affect the research participants in a way that would affect the data negatively.

The discussion above was informed by the pilot study conducted and this pilot study is discussed below.

The next section discusses how reliability and validity were achieved in this research study.

### **3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE STUDY**

This section presents reliability and validity issues in research by focusing on the challenges of reliability and validity in research studies and how these challenges were addressed in this study. Reliability and validity were important in this study because Gomm (2004:12) maintains that validity and reliability are the main criteria by which research is judged. Reliability will be discussed first followed by validity in the subsequent section.

#### **3.7.1 Reliability**

Reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable (Joppe, 2000:1). In addition, Hammersley, (1992:67) maintains that reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions. Furthermore, Buckingham & Saunders, (2004:72) also maintain that reliability is achieved by using research instruments that produce the same results from the same conditions each time they are used.

One of the challenges about reliability relates to replication of the research. In relation to that challenge, Nunan (1992:59) argues that replication can be enhanced if the researcher is explicit about the status of the researcher, the choice of informants, social situations and conditions, the analytic constructs and premises and methods of data collection and analysis.

The other challenge brought by reliability is consistency in research. According to Gomm (2004:45) consistency may be tested by using statistical tests designed for the purpose such as the Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (KR20) or Cronbach's coefficient alpha by split-half techniques or by factor analysis. Furthermore, the other challenge faced by researchers is how to enhance reliability in research studies. Buckingham and Saunders (2004:76) maintain that reliability tends to be enhanced when using pre-coded questions. The discussion about how these challenges were addressed in this study follows.

In this study, the challenge of replication in research was addressed by being explicit about the status or the role of the researcher (§3.4), the choice of informants (§3.3), social situations and conditions (§3.2.1), the analytic constructs and premises (§3.1) as well as methods of data collection and analysis (§3.4 and §3.5). The challenge of consistency in research was addressed by focusing on the questionnaire questions and this was addressed statistically through factor analysis. A one-way ANOVA table was used to test the P-value statistically was used. The significant level was set at  $\alpha < 0.05$ . A significant P-value suggest that at least one group mean is significantly different from the others.

- Null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): all population means are equal.
- Alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): at least one population mean is different from the rest.

To show consistency in the questionnaire questions, the paragraph below discusses the P-value percentages with respect to the selected questions. A P-value was calculated for each portion of the specific Workplace English writing needs questionnaire.

For the scale of English writing ability needs (Q 14) with nine (9) items, the P-value is less than  $3.94e^{-30}$  which is less than 0.05; for the scale of writing activity needs (Q 15) with nine (9) items, the P-value is  $8E-140$  which is less than 0.05; for the scale of present English writing ability needs (Q 17) with nine (9) items, the P-value is  $5.37E-40$ ; for the scale of writing aspects with potential to improve writing ability needs (Q 18) with nine (9) items, the P-value is  $3E-116$ ; for the scale of areas within writing that proves to be difficult to the participants when it comes to writing in English (Q 21) with nine (9) items, the P-value is  $4.23E-20$ ; for the scale with respect to how the type of classroom teaching that they went through during their basic police training helped them to improve their English writing ability that is well suited for police workplace (Q 25) with two (2) items, the P-value is  $2.1E-132$ ; for the scale of English writing needs with respect to what they (police constables) want to be helped with (Q 31), with nine (9) items, the P-value is  $1.59E-78$ .

All these measurements calculated on each of the above mentioned core questions are below the set value of 0.05 which means they all point to the alternative hypothesis (i.e. at least one population mean is different from the rest). This indicates that all the selected questions in the questionnaire are significant. It is also important to mention that the researcher is also aware that some researchers make use of the Cronbach alpha for the same purpose (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:54). Furthermore it was also ensured that the interview questions address the same themes as those addressed by the questionnaire questions. The rationale behind this was to enhance consistency with regards to the data collection instruments.

The other challenge brought by reliability is that of enhancing reliability in research studies. In this study, reliability was enhanced by pre-coding the questionnaire items (Appendix E). The other strategy that was used to enhance reliability is called triangulation. Bush (2002:91) states that triangulation is one of the ways to help in examining authenticity and quality of educational research. It is against this background that it was decided to triangulate in this study.

It is further maintained that there are different kinds of triangulation such as meta-analysis (data source triangulation), theoretical triangulation, methodological triangulation and many others (Gomm, 2004:318). Methodological triangulation is achieved by using data collected by different methods about the same phenomenon (Gomm, 2004:318). In this study, this was achieved by utilising different kinds of data collection instruments. Furthermore, triangulation was done to effect the balancing of data to avoid bias and doubts about the reliability, objectivity and credibility of the data from a single measure or source of data collection.

### **3.7.2 Validity**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:28) validity is defined as the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Hammersley (1992:57) describes validity as the truth which is interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers. LeCompte and Goetz (1982:32) agree to the definitions when they maintain that validity is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings.

It is argued that validity is achieved by using research instruments that measure what they are intended to measure (Buckingham & Saunders, 2004:72). Gomm (2004:33) concurs with the above points by saying that the validity of an instrument is about whether it gives accurate measures of what it purports to be measuring. In other words, validity can also be enhanced by involving experts in the field of study (Gomm (2004:40). Validity also articulates to generalizability of the findings and this is sometimes known as external validity. According to Gomm (2004:13) external validity refers to whether what was found in the research can be generalised to other people, places and times.

Validity also articulates to culture of the research participants or what is known as cultural validity. According to Perry (2013:309), the current high stakes standardised assessments and classroom-based tests do not provide maximally informative information about the performance of culturally diverse students because of their bias toward white, middle-class students, which can affect the interpretations and decisions that are made about culturally diverse students.

One of the challenges about validity in research is concerned with the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. This challenge also articulates to accuracy. The other challenge raised by researchers is that of involving experts in the field of study while another challenge relates to generalizability of the research findings. Researchers are also concerned about the issue of avoiding bias based on culturally diverse research participants.

In this study, the challenge regarding the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure was addressed by ensuring that both the questionnaire and the interview questions articulated with the research construct. This was also enhanced by ensuring that the research questions and the research aim articulate to each other precisely (§ 1.3). This strategy also addressed the accuracy challenge.

The challenge of generalizability was addressed by focusing on the research sample and the target geographical area. The sample of the research participants from the population consisted of a relatively significant number (203 research participants). The number of police clusters involved in this study constitutes 75% of the total police clusters in the city where this study took place.

The city where this study took place has four police clusters, each consisting of a certain number of police stations. This research project made use of three of the police clusters and these clusters consisted of twenty police stations (§ 3.3.1.3). The researcher was satisfied that this percentage is significant for generalizability purposes in this study. Furthermore, the challenge of bias based on culturally diverse research participants was addressed by not segregating the research participants based on their culture or race (§ 3.3.1).

### **3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher sought ethical clearance from the Higher Degrees Committee in the Department of English Studies at the University of South Africa (Unisa) before commencing with the research. The ethical clearance was granted and letter is attached as appendix C in this thesis. Therefore this study adhered to the research policy of the University of South Africa. In addition, the researcher also sought permission to conduct research within the SAPS at the Head Office of SAPS in terms of National Instruction 1/2002 (Appendix A) and the permission was granted. This permission letter from the SAPS is attached as Appendix B in this thesis. Therefore, this study has adhered to the research policy governing research within the SAPS.

Furthermore, consent was sought from the research participants. The participants in this study were informed that they were free to provide data in their own private space if they preferred and that their right to privacy would be respected and upheld. All of them (203 or 100%) opted for this. All the respondents provided quantitative data individually under no supervision. The questionnaires were completed at their own time in any unrestricted place. In addition, an honesty principle was adopted by not fabricating data to support a particular conclusion. Again this was applied by acknowledging all the sources utilised in this study by means of full reference as well as by informing the respondents in this study about their rights before they could provide data. Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were assured of their right to terminate the interview or completion of the questionnaire at any time and to refuse to answer any questions about which they felt uncomfortable.

No names of the research participants were referred to in the research study. In this way the principle of confidentiality was observed. The data in this study is confidential and the only people who had access to it are the person who transcribed the qualitative data, the statistician, the promoter and the researcher. Consent was also sought separately for audio-recording of interviews (Appendix D). Thus, the study adhered to the required ethical considerations for conducting research where human-beings are used as the research subjects.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the crux of this chapter was to elucidate in detail the research design and methodology. This was done by focusing on research methodology aspects such as the research sample, approach, pilot study, research design, instruments and procedures. Ethical considerations regarding the research participants were also discussed in detail. In the following chapter the findings are presented, analysed and interpreted.

## **Chapter Four**

### **RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research findings from the participants' questionnaire and the interviews. The findings from each of the research question will be discussed first, followed by the findings from the interviews. The research questions are presented below.

The primary research question:

- What are the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs?

The secondary research questions:

- Research question 1: What are the police constables' perceptions of their English writing competencies?
- Research question 2: What are the specific areas within English writing that police constables consider to be a challenge?
- Research question 3: To what extent does the SAPS training programme address police officers' workplace English writing needs?
- Research question 4: What type of a training programme can enhance the workplace English writing competencies of SA police constables?

As indicated in the Introduction, under each research question, the findings from the questionnaire are presented first, followed by the findings from the interviews.

## **4.2 THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The research findings for all the four research questions are presented and discussed in the subsequent section. This section also discusses the interpretation of these findings.

### **4.2.1 WHAT ARE THE POLICE CONSTABLES' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ENGLISH WRITING COMPETENCIES?**

The discussion in the subsequent paragraphs provides the findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews.

#### **4.2.1.1 Findings from the questionnaire.**

The findings in this section will be presented and discussed along the following themes:

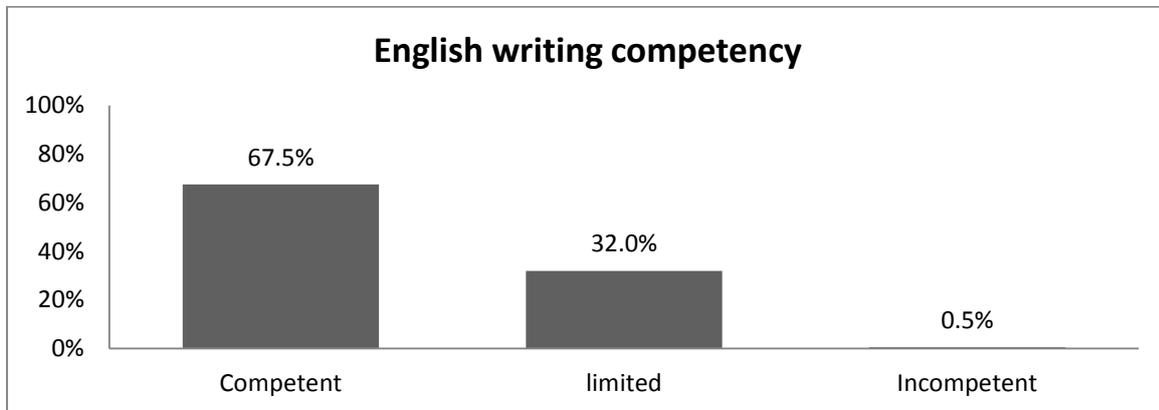
- (a) English writing competency
- (b) English writing complaints
- (c) English writing sub-skills
- (d) English writing limitations
- (e) Importance of the English writing sub-skills
- (f) English and SA police workplace

#### **(A) English writing competency**

As shown in Figure 4.1 below, 137 (67.5%) participants indicated that they were competent in English writing skills, while 65 (32.0%) indicated that they had limited skills and about 0.5% were incompetent. The findings in Figure 4.1 show that the majority of the police constables are positive about their English writing competence. Given this result, it would seem that police constables are oblivious to their inadequate English writing ability and the researcher contends that this could be due to the fact that police constables are under the impression that there are no complaints from their clients about their inadequate English writing ability (§. Figure 4.4).

The findings from the above discussion are shown in Figure 4.1 below.

**Figure 4.1 Participants' rating of their English writing competency.**



In addition to the above question about their English writing competency, the participants were further asked to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding their current English writing knowledge. The research participants were asked if their current knowledge of writing in English was adequate to enable them in carrying out their functions as police officers effectively. The responses in Figure 4.2 reveal that nearly half (100 or 49.3%) of the research participants indicated that their current knowledge of English writing is adequate to assist them to carry out their police functions effectively. However, 102 (50.2%) indicated that their current knowledge of English writing is okay but that they are not satisfied with it. Furthermore, only one (0.5%) opined that his knowledge of English writing is not helping him carry out his functions as a police officer effectively.

The findings from the above discussion are shown in Figure 4.2 below.

**Figure 4.2 Perceptions about English writing knowledge.**

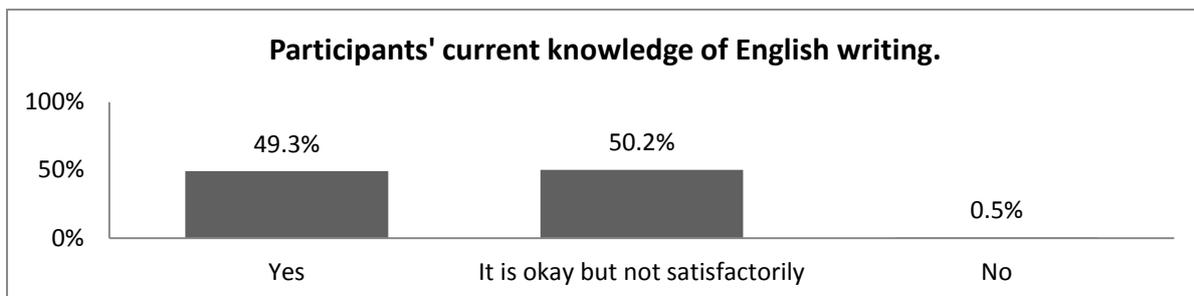
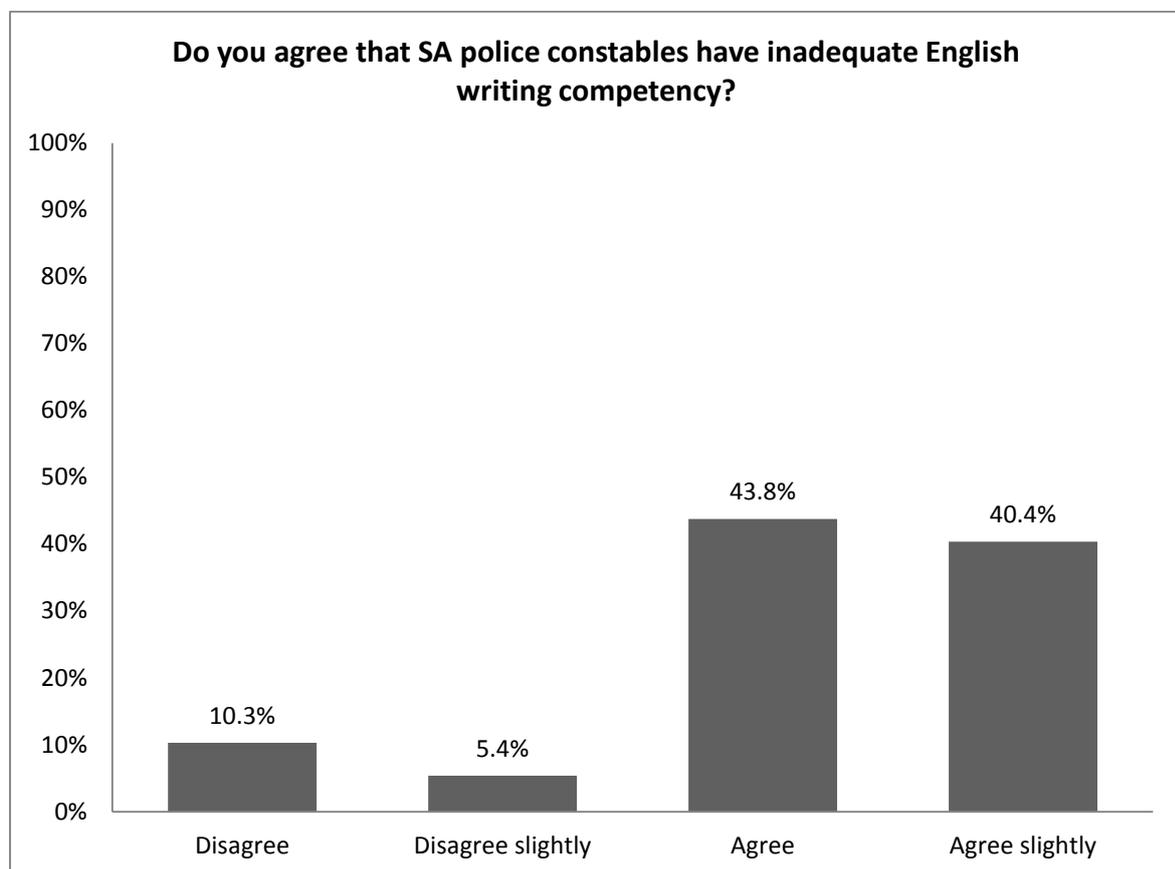


Figure 4.3 shows that 89 (43.8%) research participants responded positively when asked 'Do you agree that SA police constables have inadequate English writing competency?'. This is an indication that police constables are aware of their English writing predicament. However only 82 (40.4%) of them answered by saying that they slightly agreed. In addition, 11 (5.4%) opined that they slightly disagree while 21 (10.3%) responded by saying that they disagree. The research participants seem to be aware of their English writing limitations even though not all of them agree. It is interesting to note that only a few (10.3%) of them disagreed.

The findings from the above discussion are shown in Figure 4.3 below.

**Figure 4.3 English writing competency of SA police constables.**

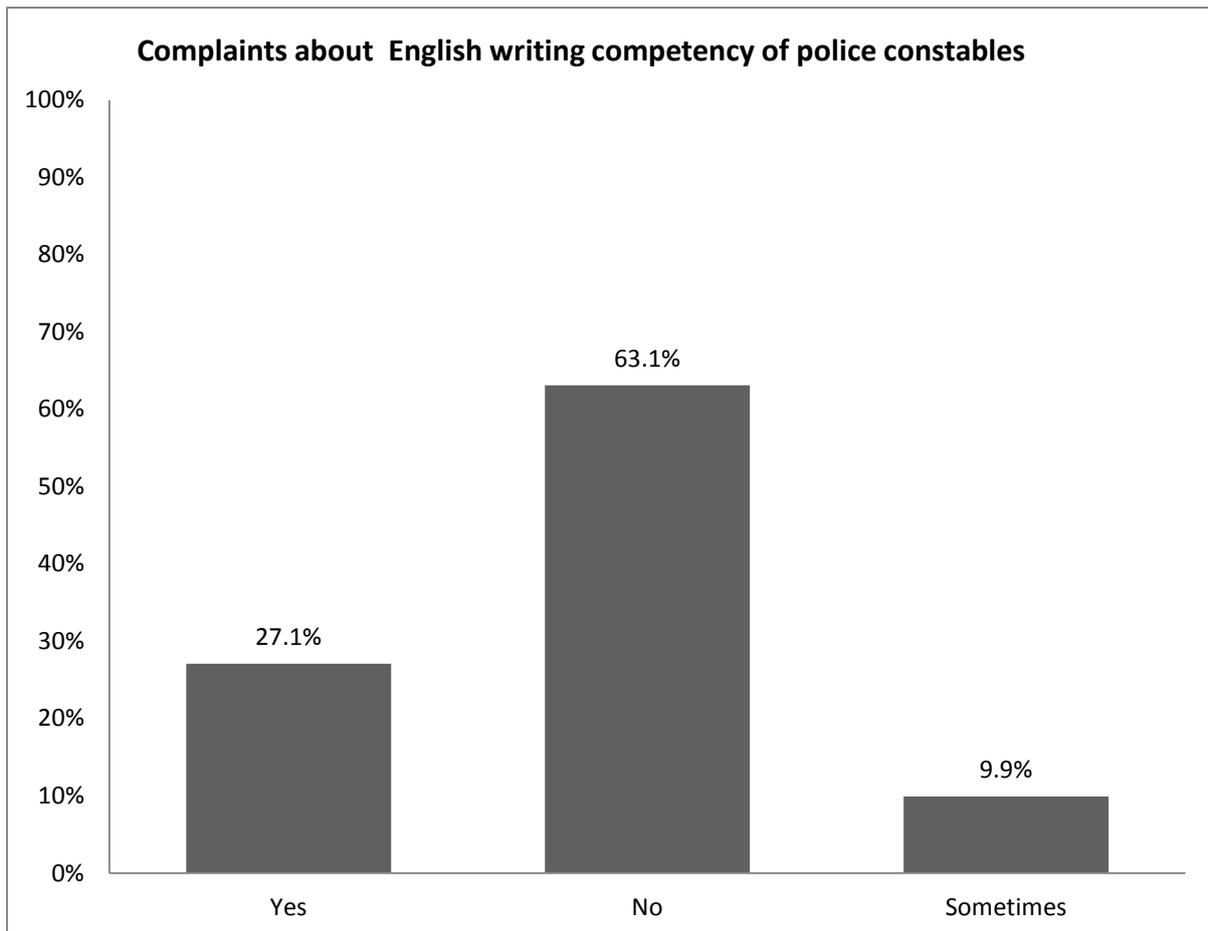


### (B) English writing complaints

In response to the question, ‘during your time as a police officer have you ever received a complaint that deals with your English writing ability?’, 55 (27.1%) participants responded by saying yes. A whopping 128 (63.1%) of the participants said that they had never. The researcher contends that this is probably the reason why research participants in this study were so confident about their English writing competency as it is shown in Figure 4.1. Furthermore, only 20 (9.9%) of the research participant indicated that they sometimes had this kind of complaints.

The findings in the above discussion are shown in Figure 4.4 below.

**Figure 4.4 Perceptions about complaints on English writing ability.**



### **(C) English writing sub-skills**

The research participants were asked to rate their English writing ability based on the specific English writing sub-skills. The responses in Table 4.1 show that the respondents' perceptions regarding the nine writing sub-skills were highly divided. According to Table 4.1 below, a total of 81 (39.9%) research participants indicated that they were competent with regard to sentence structure and 100 (49.3%) indicated that they were not competent enough. Furthermore 18 (8.9%) of them indicated that they were more than competent enough. It is only 4 (2.0%) of the research participants who indicated that they were not competent.

In addition, 41 (20.2%) of the research participants indicated that they were competent with respect to cohesion as a writing sub-skill. The data also showed that 130 (64.0%) of the participants indicated that they were not competent enough with respect to cohesion (flow of ideas) and only 12 (5.9%) of indicated that they were more than competent enough. Only 20 of the research participants (9.9%) indicated that they were not competent.

A total of 45 (22.2%) of the participants indicated that they were competent in spelling while 137 (67.5%) indicated that they were not competent enough and only 18 (8.9%) of indicated that they were more competent enough. Furthermore, 3 (1.5%) of the research participants indicated that they were not competent.

The findings reported in Table 4.1 also indicates that 54 (26.6%) of the 203 research participants indicated that they were competent in vocabulary and 91 (48.3%) of them indicated that they were not competent enough. Seven (3.4%) of the research participants indicated that they were more than competent enough. Only 44 (21.7%) indicated that they were not competent.

The data again revealed that 54 (26.6%) of the participants indicated that they were competent with respect to expression (clarity and ambiguity) while 91 (44.8%) indicated that they were not competent enough and only 10 (4.9%) indicated that they were more than competent enough. In addition, 48 (23.6%) indicated that they were not competent.

The use of the correct tense as a writing sub-skill also formed part of this investigation. The findings also showed that 54 (26.6%) of the research participants indicated that they were competent with regards to tense 136 (67.0%) indicated that they were not competent enough. It is only 11 of the research participants (5.4%) who indicated that they were more than competent enough. Only two (1.0%) of the research participants indicated that they were not competent.

Another interesting result relates to punctuation. The data revealed that 84 (41.4%) of the research participants indicated that they were competent with respect to punctuation, only 64 (31.5%) of the research participants indicated that they were not competent enough and only nine (4.4%) indicated that they were more than competent enough. Again 46 (22.7%) indicated that they were not competent.

Word classification as a writing skill was generally considered as a skill that the respondents did not have. Only 49 (24.1%) of the research participants indicated that they were competent in that writing sub-skill while 56 (27.6%) indicated that they were not competent enough and only eight (3.9%) indicated that they were competent more than enough. A further 90 (44.3%) indicated that they were not competent.

The last category of the writing sub-skills investigated in this study was capitalisation. The data showed that 83 (40.9%) of the research participants indicated that they were competent while a slightly higher number (94 or 46.3%) of them indicated that they were not competent enough. From this sample, only eight (3.9%) of the research respondents indicated that they were more than competent enough while 18 (8.9%) indicated that they were not competent.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Rating of English writing competency: English writing sub-skills.**

	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%
	Competent		Not competent enough		Competent more than enough		Not competent	
<b>Correct sentence structure</b>	81	<b>39.9%</b>	100	<b>49.3%</b>	18	<b>8.9%</b>	4	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>Cohesion (flow of ideas)</b>	41	<b>20.2%</b>	130	<b>64.0%</b>	12	<b>5.9%</b>	20	<b>9.9%</b>
<b>Correct spelling of words</b>	45	<b>22.2%</b>	137	<b>67.5%</b>	18	<b>8.9%</b>	3	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Correct words for context (vocabulary)</b>	54	<b>26.6%</b>	98	<b>48.3%</b>	7	<b>3.4%</b>	44	<b>21.7%</b>
<b>Expression (clear and unambiguous)</b>	54	<b>26.6%</b>	91	<b>44.8%</b>	10	<b>4.9%</b>	48	<b>23.6%</b>
<b>Tenses</b>	54	<b>26.6%</b>	136	<b>67.0%</b>	11	<b>5.4%</b>	2	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Punctuation</b>	84	<b>41.4%</b>	64	<b>31.5%</b>	9	<b>4.4%</b>	46	<b>22.7%</b>
<b>Word classification (e.g. noun, adverb)</b>	49	<b>24.1%</b>	56	<b>27.6%</b>	8	<b>3.9%</b>	90	<b>44.3%</b>
<b>Correct capitalisation</b>	83	<b>40.9%</b>	94	<b>46.3%</b>	8	<b>3.9%</b>	18	<b>8.9%</b>

**(D) English writing limitations.**

The responses in Table 4.2 below indicate that the research participants' perceptions on the writing sub-skills were highly divided. According to Table 4.2 below, 55 (27.1%) research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their present writing ability with respect to sentence structure and 71 (35.0%) indicated that they were satisfied with their sentence structure writing sub-skill. It is only 49 (24.1%) who indicated that they had a fair competency with regard to sentence structure. Only 28 (13.8%) of the research participants indicated that they had an excellent ability with respect to the sentence structure sub-skill.

In addition, 63 (31.0%) of the research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their ability as far as cohesion is concerned. The data also showed that 72 (35.5%) of the research participants indicated that they were satisfied with their cohesion (flow of ideas) writing sub-skill and only 51 (25.1%) indicated that they possessed a fair competency with respect to cohesion. Only 17 (8.4%) indicated that they possessed excellent competence with regard to cohesion as a writing sub-skill.

The research participants' spelling ability revealed that 28 (13.8%) of the research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their competency while 61 (30.0%) indicated that they were satisfied with their skill. It is only 87 (42.9%) who opined that they had a fair competence. Secondly, 27 (13.3%) of the research participants indicated that they had an excellent competence with spelling. According to Table 4.2, 19 (9.4%) of the 203 research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their vocabulary competence and 39 (19.2%) research participants indicated that they were satisfied with their vocabulary writing sub-skill. Thirdly, 125 (61.6%) indicated that they had a fair competency. It is only 20 (9.9%) that indicated that their vocabulary skill was excellent.

Furthermore, 54 (26.6%) of the research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their knowledge regarding tenses while 29 (4.3%) indicated that they were satisfied with their writing skill regarding tenses. In addition, 91 (44.8%) indicated that their level of skill in this variable was fair. Furthermore, 28 (13.8%) were so confident that they indicated that their level of skill in this variable was excellent.

Another interesting result relates to punctuation. Data revealed that 14 (6.9%) of the research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their skill with respect to punctuation while 40 (19.7%) of the research participants indicated that they were satisfied with their skill. Again, 62 (30.5%) indicated that they had a fair skill in that regard. It is only 87 (42.9%) who indicated that they were excellent with regard to punctuation. This is why in Figure 4.7 it is revealed that punctuation was not chosen as one of the writing skills that research participants consider to be a challenge.

According to Table 4.2 37 (18.2%) of the research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their word classification skill with respect to writing while 33 (16.3%) indicated that they were satisfied with their skills. It is only 111 (54.7%) who indicated that they had a fair level of skill. In addition, 22 (10.8%) indicated that they were excellent.

The last category of the writing sub-skills investigated in this question was capitalisation. The analysis showed that nine (4.4%) of the research participants indicated that they were not satisfied with their skill while 42 (20.7%) of them indicated that they were satisfied with their skill. It is only 70 (34.5%) who indicated that their level of skill in that respect was fair. Furthermore, 82 (40.4%) of the research participants indicated that they were excellent.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Perceptions on English writing competency.**

	<b>Not satisfactory</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Correct sentence structure</b>	55	<b>27.1%</b>	71	<b>35.0%</b>	49	<b>24.1%</b>	28	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Cohesion (flow of ideas)</b>	63	<b>31.0%</b>	72	<b>35.5%</b>	51	<b>25.1%</b>	17	<b>8.4%</b>
<b>Correct spelling of words</b>	28	<b>13.8%</b>	61	<b>30.0%</b>	87	<b>42.9%</b>	27	<b>13.3%</b>
<b>Correct words for context (vocabulary)</b>	19	<b>9.4%</b>	39	<b>19.2%</b>	125	<b>61.6%</b>	20	<b>9.9%</b>
<b>Tenses</b>	54	<b>26.6%</b>	29	<b>14.3%</b>	91	<b>44.8%</b>	28	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Expression</b>	54	<b>26.6%</b>	28	<b>13.8%</b>	63	<b>31.0%</b>	58	<b>28.5%</b>
<b>Punctuation</b>	14	<b>6.9%</b>	40	<b>19.7%</b>	62	<b>30.5%</b>	87	<b>42.9%</b>
<b>Word classification (e.g. noun, adverb)</b>	37	<b>18.2%</b>	33	<b>16.3%</b>	111	<b>54.7%</b>	22	<b>10.8%</b>
<b>Correct capitalisation</b>	9	<b>4.4%</b>	42	<b>20.7%</b>	70	<b>34.5%</b>	82	<b>40.4%</b>

In addition to perceptions about their English writing competency discussed above, research participants were also asked to indicate what they would like to be helped with as far as the selected writing sub-skills are concerned. This was done so that further information about their English writing limitations could be investigated. The responses in Table 4.4 indicate that the research participants' perceptions about their English writing competency, based on the selected writing sub-skills, were divided. This is reflected by the fact that a total of 132 (65.0%) research participants indicated that they wanted to be helped with sentence structure while 36 (17.7%) indicated that they wanted to be helped a little bit with sentence structure as it is shown in Table 4.3. A further 35 (17.2%) indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all.

Along similar lines, cohesion like the above writing sub-skill, was also rated differently. It is indicated that 117 (57.6%) of the research participants indicated that they want to be helped with cohesion while 58 (28.6%) indicated that they want to be helped a little with cohesion. In addition, 28 (13.8%) indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all. Furthermore, an overwhelming 122 (60.1%) of the research participants indicated that they wanted to be helped with spelling while 50 (24.6%) indicated that they want to be helped a little with this writing sub-skill. In addition, 30 (14.8%) indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all.

The participants were also asked about vocabulary and 76 (37.4%) indicated that they wanted to be helped with vocabulary while 104 (51.2%) indicated that they want to be helped a little with vocabulary. A total of 23 (11.3%) indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all.

Expression is also one of the writing sub-skills investigated in this section and 19 (9.4%) of the research participants indicated that they want to be helped with expression while a staggering 162 (79.8%) indicated that they want to be helped a little with this writing sub-skill. In addition, 22(10.8%) indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all.

Furthermore, 114 (56.2%) of the research participants indicated that they wanted to be helped with tense while 43 (21.2%) indicated that they wanted to be helped a little with tense. It is only 46 (22.7%) who indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all.

In addition, 36 (17.7%) of the research participants indicated that they wanted to be helped with punctuation while 72 (35.5%) indicated that they wanted to be helped a little with it. A further 95 (46.8%) indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all. A closer look at the data also revealed that word classification as a writing sub-skill was also rated differently. A total of 48 (23.6%) research participants indicated that they want to be helped with word classification while 86 (42.4%) indicated that they want to be helped a little with it. It is only 69 (34.0%) who indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all.

Lastly, the participants were asked about capitalisation as a writing sub-skill. According to Table 4.4 below, 22 (10.8%) of the research participants indicated that they wanted to be helped with capitalisation while 50 (24.6%) indicated that they wanted to be helped a little with it. Again, a staggering 131 (64.5%) indicated that they did not want to be helped with this writing sub-skill at all.

The above responses contradict the research participants' indication that they were competent in English writing as shown in Figure 4.1. These findings provide further evidence that police constables should be taught with these writing sub-skills. The data from Table 4.2, Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 corroborate the above statement.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Perceptions regarding English writing help: Writing sub-skills

	I want to be helped a lot	%	I want to be helped a little	%	I do not want to be helped at all	%
<b>Correct sentence structure</b>	132	<b>65.0%</b>	36	<b>17.7%</b>	35	<b>17.2%</b>
<b>Cohesion (flow of ideas)</b>	117	<b>57.6%</b>	58	<b>28.6%</b>	28	<b>13.8%</b>
<b>Correct spelling of words</b>	122	<b>60.1%</b>	50	<b>24.6%</b>	30	<b>14.8%</b>
<b>Correct words for context (vocabulary)</b>	76	<b>37.4%</b>	104	<b>51.2%</b>	23	<b>11.3%</b>
<b>Expression (clear and unambiguous)</b>	19	<b>9.4%</b>	162	<b>79.8%</b>	22	<b>10.8%</b>
<b>Tenses</b>	114	<b>56.2%</b>	43	<b>21.2%</b>	46	<b>22.7%</b>
<b>Punctuation</b>	36	<b>17.7%</b>	72	<b>35.5%</b>	95	<b>46.8%</b>
<b>Word classification</b>	48	<b>23.6%</b>	86	<b>42.4%</b>	69	<b>34.0%</b>
<b>Correct capitalisation</b>	22	<b>10.8%</b>	50	<b>24.6%</b>	131	<b>64.5%</b>

### **(E) Importance of the English writing sub-skills.**

The research participants were also asked to rate the selected writing sub-skills in terms of their importance in helping one improve his/her English writing competency as it is shown in Table 4.4 below. Four (2.0%) of the research participants indicated that sentence structure as a writing sub-skill was definitely unimportant in helping one improve his/her their English writing competency and seven (3.4%) of them indicated that it was probably unimportant. A total of 65 (32.0%) of the research participants said that it was definitely important. An overwhelming 127 (62.6%) of the research participants opined that it was probably important. Research participants indicated that cohesion was important in helping one improve his/her English writing competency. This is reflected by the fact that the majority of the research participants (123 or 60.6%) indicated that this writing sub-skill was definitely important in helping them improve their English writing ability. Furthermore, two (1.0%) of the research participants indicated that this writing sub-skill was definitely unimportant. The data also showed that 47 (23.2%) of the research participants indicated that they were of the opinion that this writing sub-skill was probably unimportant. It was only 31(15.3%) of the research participants who were doubtful about the importance of this writing sub-skill and that was why they thought it is probably important.

Four (2.0%) of the research participants indicated that spelling was definitely unimportant and three (1.5%) of them showed their doubts by indicating that they thought it was probably unimportant. Furthermore 67 (33.0%) opined that it was definitely important. In addition, 129 (63.5%) indicated that this skill was probably important in helping one improve his/her English writing competency. Three (1.5%) of the 203 participants indicated that vocabulary was definitely unimportant in helping one improve his/her English writing competency while 54 (26.6%) indicated that this writing sub-skill was probably unimportant. A positive result came from 99 (48.8%) participants who indicated that vocabulary was definitely important. Furthermore, 47 (23.2%) indicated that it was probably important.

Two (1.0%) of the research participants indicated that expression was definitely unimportant while 77 (37.9%) indicated that this skill was probably unimportant. In addition, 87 (42.9%) indicated that this writing sub-skill was definitely important. It is only 37 (18.2%) who indicated that this writing sub-skill was probably important. The data revealed that 144 (70.9%) of the research participants indicated that tense as a writing sub-skill was probably important. Two (1.0%) of the research participants indicated that tense was definitely unimportant and four (2.0%) participants expressed that this writing sub-skill was probably unimportant. It was only 52 (25.6%) who opined that this writing sub-skill was definitely important.

Research participants rated punctuation differently. A total of 30 (14.8%) out of 203 participants indicated that this writing sub-skill was probably important. Two (1.0%) of the research participants indicated that it was definitely unimportant in terms of helping one improve his/her English writing competency. In addition, 92 (45.3%) of the research participants indicated that this writing sub-skill was probably unimportant. Furthermore, 79 (38.9%) indicated that this writing sub-skill was definitely important.

In addition research participants also rated word classification as a sub-writing skill differently. The data showed that 49 (24.1%) of the research participants indicated that this writing sub-skill was definitely unimportant while 46 (22.7%) indicated that it was probably unimportant. It is only 82 (40.4%) who indicated that this writing sub-skill was definitely important. In addition, 26 (12.8%) indicated that it was probably important. Furthermore, the focus was on capitalisation as a writing sub-skill and 32 (15.8%) of the research participants indicated that it was definitely unimportant in terms of helping one improve his/her English writing competency. In addition, 61 (30.0%) of the research participants indicated that this writing sub-skill was probably unimportant. Furthermore, 81 (39.9%) indicated that this writing sub-skill was definitely important. Again, 29 (14.3%) indicated that this writing sub-skill was probably important.

According to Table 4.4, the majority of the research participants (127 or 62.6%) reported that they thought sentence structure was probably important. The majority (123 or 60.6%) of them indicated that cohesion as a writing sub-skill was definitely important. An overwhelming 129 (63.5%) indicated that spelling was also probably important. A further 99 (48.8%) indicated that they thought vocabulary was definitely important.

Furthermore, 77 (37.9%) of the research participants indicated that expression was probably unimportant. A staggering 144 (70.9%) of the participants indicated that tense was probably important while 92 (45.3%) indicated that punctuation was probably unimportant. In addition, 82 (40.4%) indicated that word classification was definitely important. Again, 81 (39.9%) indicated that capitalisation was definitely important. From the findings above, it is evident that research participants were aware of the importance of these writing sub-skills even though they prioritised them differently.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Perceptions on the importance of the English writing sub-skills

Sub-skill	Definitely unimportant	%	Probably unimportant	%	Definitely important	%	Probably important	%
Correct sentence structure	4	2.0%	7	3.4%	65	32.0%	127	62.6%
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	2	1.0%	47	23.2%	123	60.6%	31	15.3%
Correct spelling of words	4	2.0%	3	1.5%	67	33.0%	129	63.5%
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	3	1.5%	54	26.6%	99	48.8%	47	23.2%
Expression (clear and unambiguous)	2	1.0%	77	37.9%	87	42.9%	37	18.2%
Tenses	2	1.0%	4	2.0%	52	25.6%	144	70.9%
Punctuation	2	1.0%	92	45.3%	79	38.9%	30	14.8%
Word classifications	49	24.1%	46	22.7%	82	40.4%	26	12.8%
Correct capitalisation	32	15.8%	61	30.0%	81	39.9%	29	14.3%

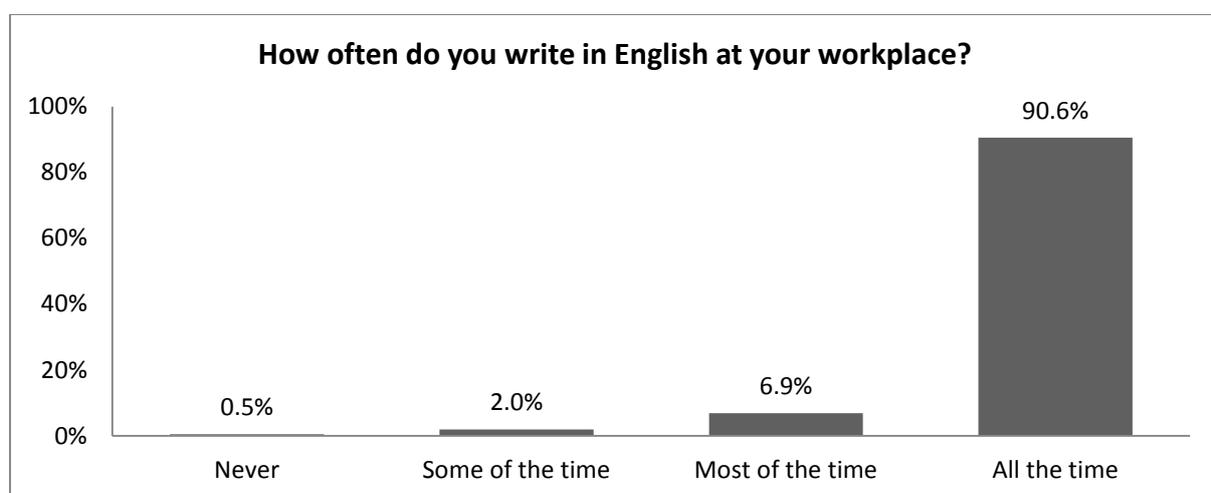
**(F) English and SA police workplace.**

Participants were also asked about the frequency of English writing activities they performed at their workplace as it shown in Figure 4.5. The purpose of this question was to establish the amount of writing the research participants did write in English at their workplace. This question also sought information about their experience about English writing at their workplace. The researcher is of the opinion that, if the frequency of English writing activities at a police workplace is high, it has the potential of enhancing the English writing competency of police officers including the police constables and this will help them carry out their functions successfully and effectively. However if not, it will perpetuate the inadequate English writing challenge within SAPS.

The data in Figure 4.5 show that a staggering 184 (90.6%) of the research participants indicated that they wrote in English frequently at their workplace. This further emphasises the need for police constables to be able to write well in English. This is further corroborated by the fact that the majority (196 or 96.6%) of the research participants in Figure 4.6 indicated that English is an important component of their police work.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Figure 4.5 below.

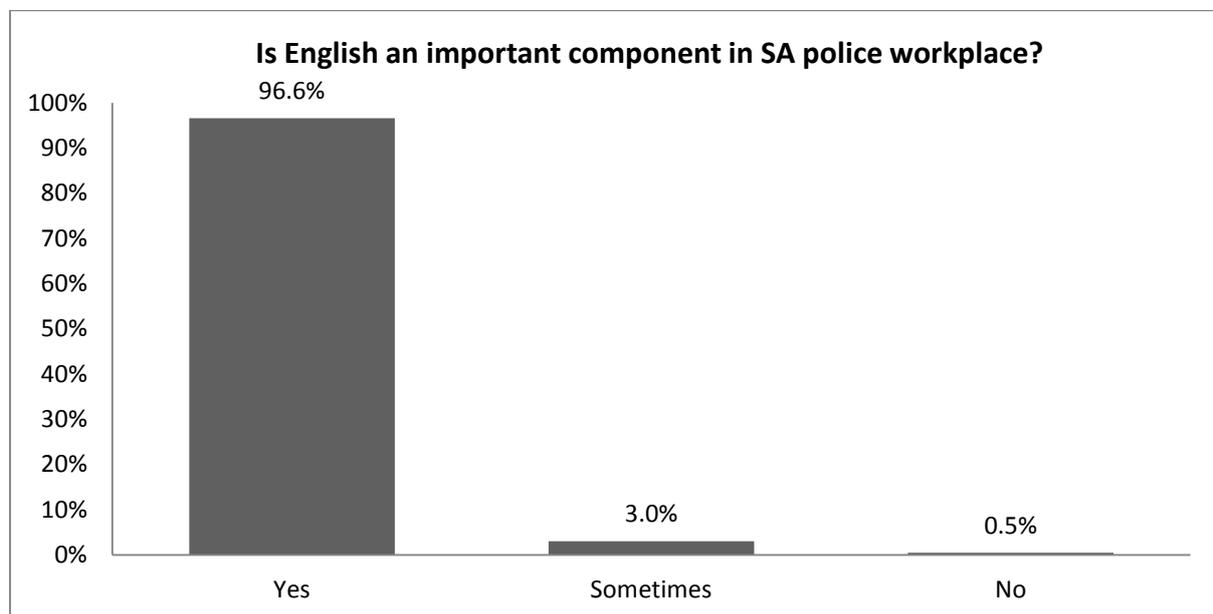
**Figure 4.5 Perceptions about English writing activities at SAPS workplace.**



In addition to the above, a staggering 196 (96.6%) of the research participants indicated that English is an important component of their work while only six (3.0%) expressed that it is sometimes as it is shown in Figure 4.6. Only one (0.5%) of the research participant opined that it is not an important part of their police work. This question was important because it was intended to measure how the research participants view English language in relation to their work.

The findings discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Figure 4.6 below.

**Figure 4.6 Perceptions about English in a SA police workplace.**



Information to complement the above questionnaire findings was sought from the interviews so that a holistic picture of the perceptions and experiences of the research participants could be established. The interview findings are presented in the section below.

#### **4.2.1.2 Findings from the interviews.**

The findings in this section will be presented and discussed based on several but related themes. Some of these themes are the same themes covered by the questionnaire whereas others are, to some degree, an extension of some of the themes covered by the questionnaire.

This was done so that further information concerning the investigated variables can be obtained. It should be noted that these findings reported in this section are not an entire interview sessions but only common view points are reported. This is what Merriam (1998) and Guba and Lincoln (1990) called constant comparative or comparison method. It is important that the interview findings be read in conjunction with the questionnaire findings. It is also important to mention that the response from the participants are transcribed verbatim (they contain grammatical mistakes) and the words in brackets are not English words and their English equivalents are provided next to them. The interview findings are presented and discussed based on the following themes:

- (a) English writing competency
- (b) English writing complaints
- (c) English and SA police workplace

#### **(A) English writing competency**

The research participants were asked if they were competent, incompetent or limited as far as English writing was concerned. This question was intended to determine their perceptions about their English writing competency. Seven (70%) of the 10 interviewees indicated that they had limited English writing competence. Only three (30%) indicated that they were competent. Not one of the 10 interviewees indicated that they were incompetent. Some of the responses were vague and only became clear when the researcher probed further. One commented as follows: (1) *“My idea is that I have limited English language when it comes to writing because writing is dynamic and professional.”* The research participants’ verbatim responses are presented below.

#### **Respondent 2**

*“Grammar is very difficult where you write sentences in present and past tense. That thing is very difficult. This is very difficult in English and is very difficult for me but I am competent. I failed matric in two years and I think is because of grammar. If I know English grammar I will write good English.”*

**Respondent 3**

*"I am competent to that I would say yes and I am competent (ja)yes cause I can read and write and I think the other person can understand what I wrote."*

**Respondent 4**

*"I am okay (ja) yes I can say so. I am competent."*

**Respondent 5**

*"I can say limited, I think even though is not really really but the spelling sometimes."*

**Respondent 6**

*"I think am limited, I am lacking but not like always but (ja) yes sometimes I lack words and end up using the wrong word."*

**Respondent 7**

*"I am limited let's say spellings and vocabulary. English is not my mother's language so I am not sure of some of the words I can use whether they are correct or not."*

**Respondent 8**

*"I am competent because I can analyse between past tense and nouns and a verb."*

**Respondent 9**

*"I am limited because of spelling and vocabulary. Sometimes in a spelling you tend to forget to write for instance if I want to write telephone sometimes you must forget when you are busy these terms or these words sometimes get out from our head and then vocabulary we turn to forget for example instead of me saying her I would say him."*

**Respondent 10**

*"I'll say I am limited. In order for me to say I'm limited there are some spellings or pronunciations of words which I am not quite clear with."*

It also surfaced during the interviews that while majority of the research participants indicated that they were competent in English, yet they expressed themselves in poor spoken English. The researcher is of the opinion that this could be an indication that they also have a challenge with writing in English as well.

To further elaborate on their English writing competency, two (20%) of the 10 research participants indicated that they were not comfortable writing in English because it was not their mother tongue and that their English writing proficiency was not adequate. This was reflected in this response from one of the respondents: (1) *“I am not an English mother tongue speaker, therefore you cannot expect me to be highly comfortable when I write in English at work. Sometimes I am comfortable and sometimes I am not.”* Only eight (80%) of the research participants indicated that they are confident and comfortable writing in English at their workplace. The research participants’ verbatim responses are presented below:

**Respondent 2**

*“(Ja) Yes I am fine, because is the language that I understand than Afrikaans so to speak.”*

**Respondent 3**

*“That is what I feel is best for me cause is easy for me to for the other person to understand.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“I do not find anything difficulties.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“I am comfortable writing in English. I can be able to write efficiently, what can I say, I do not have a particular one that I can use but I am able to read and write.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“I am, mina (me) I’m comfortable because English is the only language that we can all communicate with we can use it all over and all of us.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“(Ja) yes English is the only language that we are using I am comfortable writing in English.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“(Ja) yes, yes I feel comfortable because I can easily communicate with anyone whatever a language I tried for information.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“Yes I am comfortable writing in English. No, I think English is the simplest language than Afrikaans.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“Sometimes I am comfortable and sometimes are I am not comfortable because sometimes you know English is not our mother tongue. I will just to write a short thing but long things are difficult to me.”*

**(B) English writing complaints**

Nine (90%) of the 10 interviewees indicated that they never had any any complaint about their English writing competency. It is only one (10%) research participant who indicated that he is not sure. This response was vague and it was never clear even after several attempts to probe further by the researcher. One of the research participants commented as follows: (1) *“People do not complain about my English because they do not know English themselves. So who is going to judge me?”* The research participants’ verbatim responses are presented below.

**Respondent 2**

*“People will always complain. They like complaining everyday. I just do my work and ignore them. I am not perfect in English but I can write in English. There are is no complain about me.”*

**Respondent 3**

*“I can write very well in English and I have never received any complain.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“English is not a problem to me. I can write proper sentences and people do not complain about my writing.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“No complain. I have never received that thing.”*

<p><b>Respondent 6</b></p> <p><i>“At school we used to do everything in English and I was good Eeven when I joined the police I was still good in English and I have no problem with it. I have never received any complain.”</i></p>
<p><b>Respondent 7</b></p> <p><i>“No, not me. No, I have never received it.”</i></p>
<p><b>Respondent 8</b></p> <p><i>“When I joined the SAPS I was not good in English but now I am okay because we speak English everyday here at work. There are no complains.”</i></p>
<p><b>Respondent 9</b></p> <p><i>“I am very careful when I write and that is why I do not have complains.”</i></p>
<p><b>Respondent 10</b></p> <p><i>“I do not know. Even if there are complains, nobody is telling us, so things are okay.”</i></p>

These responses corroborate the findings in Figure 4.4 which has shown that 63% of the research participants indicated that they have never received complaints about their English writing ability. This may be because police constables do not have access to the complaints boxes that are distributed in police stations or it could be that after the complaints are analysed, nothing is communicated to the police constables by those who analysed the complaints from the boxes. Respondent number ten (10) above seem to confirm this suspicion when he commented as follows:

*“I do not know. Even if there are complains, nobody is telling us, so things are okay.”*

**(C) English and SA police workplace.**

Interestingly, ten (100%) of the respondents opined that English writing ability was important to their workplace. They provided various different conceptions about this matter. The following responses were noted: (1) *“Obviously it is important but it must not be seen as the only important thing because there are many many things that police constables can do without English.”*

Another one said: (2) *“It is very much important because when these attorneys when reading these things they are checking the loopholes. The spellings can help the suspect to win the case so when writing the right spelling and putting our statement in order everything is fine we will be closing all the loopholes so this is gonna help us.”*

Below are the verbatim responses to the above aspect:

**Respondent 3**

*“Yes because English is an international language, it will help us with our police work.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“Is very very important cause in court your statement is gonna go far it gonna go to a lot of hands were somebody has to understand those sentences, so it is very very important for somebody to write the correct words and write proper English that somebody else can easily understand.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“Ja it is, can I take an example, someone might say something in Tswana or Zulu for me to know English and for me to understand how to translate those languages into English I must know English.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“Yes it is important because when I am writing I am not writing for myself there is still another person who is going to read what I have written down there so if I didn't efficiently what's so ever the next person is going to struggle with what I have tried to put on the paper.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“Yes I do, as I said is the simplest language to me compared to Afrikaans and I can communicate with.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“Yes it is important, is important in a way, first of all when I am writing this docket does not just end up here in the police station with me only it goes to the investigating officer who has to read and make sense of what I was trying to say of what happened, it goes to court and everything and the decision it is based on that on what I wrote so if I have got writing everything is good even other peoples work could be simple because of my statement that is written here.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“I feel that writing is important and understanding of the words is important because at the end of the day I might write something that the complainant or the victim didn't see, so is like I am putting the words in the mouth of that person so the writing skills is important because the docket is still going to court and the version of the person who is deciding on that side and this side is not the same.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“Yes most definitely, that is my answer to you.”*

**4.2.1.3 Summary**

Figure 4.1 presented the research participants' perceptions with respect to their English writing competency and it was revealed that their perception was that they were competent (67.5%) in English writing. Given this finding, it would seem that the research participants are oblivious or naïve. This could be due to them not receiving complaints (Table 4.4) about their inadequate English writing competency. Furthermore this finding (the research participants being competent) is also contradicted by the findings in Table 4.1, Table 4.2, Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 which indicates the areas within writing which are a challenge to the research participants. Figure 4.2 also contradicts their perspective that they are competent in English because it has been revealed that nearly half of them are not satisfied with their English writing competency.

The other finding that is linked with the one above is the one revealed by Figure 4.3 where 43.8 % of the research participants agree that police constables had inadequate English writing ability. It was also been revealed that English writing was viewed as a critical component of the police work as shown in Figure 4.6 and this could be because it was revealed that police constables wrote in English all the time at their workplace as it shown in Figure 4.5.

These findings gleaned from this narrative part also affirm that police constables workplace English writing competency is not adequate. The overall result that can be gleaned from this section is that the research participants in this study are quite aware of their inadequate English writing challenge and the data has successfully identified this challenge through their perceptions and experiences.

### **4.3 WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC AREAS WITHIN ENGLISH WRITING THAT POLICE CONSTABLES CONSIDER TO BE A CHALLENGE?**

#### **4.3.1. Findings from the questionnaire.**

The findings in this section will be presented and discussed based on the English writing limitations reflected by the participants' responses.

#### **(A) English writing limitations**

According to Table 4.5 below 91 (44.8%) research participants indicated that they are limited a great deal with respect to sentence structure while 70 (34.5%) indicated that they were so only a little. In addition, 42 (20.7%) indicated that they were not limited at all with respect to sentence structure. Furthermore, 34 (16.7%) indicated that they were limited a lot with regard to cohesion while 119 (58.6%) indicated that they were so only a little. It is only 50 (24.6%) who indicated that they are not limited at all in relation to cohesion.

In addition to the above findings, it was also revealed that 24 (11.8%) of the research participants indicated that they were limited a great deal with regards to spelling while 138 (68.0%) indicated that they were so only a little with regards to that writing sub-skill. Further 41 (20.2%) of the research participants indicated that they are not limited at all in relation to spelling.

However 37 (18.2%) indicated that they were limited a lot with regard to vocabulary while 125 (61.6%) indicated that they were a little limited in this language area. In addition, 41 (20.2%) indicated that they were not limited at all in relation to vocabulary.

Table 4.5 again also show that 57 (28.1%) of the participants indicated that they were limited a lot as far as expression was concerned while 109 (53.7%) indicated that they were only limited a little. Furthermore, 37 (18.2%) indicated that they were not limited at all in relation to expression.

The analysis regarding tense is interesting. Table 4.9 shows that 103 (50.7%) of the participants indicated that they were limited a great deal with respect to tense and 43 (21.2%) indicated that they were only limited a little. It is only 57 (28.1%), who indicated that they were not limited at all regarding tense as a writing sub-skill.

The analysis also revealed that 54 (26.6%) of the research participants indicated that they were limited a great deal with respect to punctuation while 69 (34.0%) indicated that they were only limited a little. Furthermore 80 (39.4%) indicated that they were not limited at all with respect to punctuation. In addition, the research participants were also asked about word classification and 56 (27.6%) participants indicated that they were limited a great deal with regard to that while 72 (35.5%) indicated that they were only limited a little. In addition, 75 (36.9%) indicated that they were not limited at all in terms of word classification.

The last item that the research participants were asked about in this regard was capitalisation. According to Table 4.5 below, 43 (21.2%) of the research participants indicated that they were limited a great deal with respect to capitalisation while 39 (19.2%) indicated that they were limited a little. A staggering 121 (59.6%) indicated that they were not limited at all in relation to capitalisation.

From the above responses, it is revealed that the areas within writing which police constables find to be a challenge centre on tense (50.7%), vocabulary (18.2%) and sentence structure (44.8%). The majority of them (103 or 50.7%) indicated that they were limited a great deal with regard to tense and 138 (68.0%) indicated that they were a limited a little as far as spelling is concerned. Therefore, it would seem that these writing skills are the ones which the research participants prioritised over the other ones.

Furthermore, 125 (61.6%) of the respondents indicated that they were only a little limited regarding vocabulary. Interestingly, 121 (59.6%) indicated that they were not limited at all with respect to capitalisation. This again seems to confirm the researcher's contention that capitalisation was considered to be a 'lesser' workplace English writing need for police constables in this study, and this also seems to be the case with word classification, punctuation and expression. The researcher is of the opinion that the reason for these categories not to be considered a challenge by these police constables could be that they (the police constables) were not aware of the importance of these writing sub-skills in a written text.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 English writing competency: selected English writing sub-skills.**

	Limited a lot	Percentage	Limited a little	Percentage	Not limited at all	Percentage
<b>Correct sentence structure</b>	91	<b>44.8%</b>	70	<b>34.5%</b>	42	<b>20.7%</b>
<b>Cohesion (flow of ideas)</b>	34	<b>16.7%</b>	119	<b>58.6%</b>	50	<b>24.6%</b>
<b>Correct spelling of words</b>	24	<b>11.8%</b>	138	<b>68.0%</b>	41	<b>20.2%</b>
<b>Correct words for context (vocabulary)</b>	37	<b>18.2%</b>	125	<b>61.6%</b>	41	<b>20.2%</b>
<b>Expression (clear and unambiguous)</b>	57	<b>28.1%</b>	109	<b>53.7%</b>	37	<b>18.2%</b>
<b>Tenses</b>	103	<b>50.7%</b>	43	<b>21.2%</b>	57	<b>28.1%</b>
<b>Punctuation</b>	54	<b>26.6%</b>	69	<b>34.0%</b>	80	<b>39.4%</b>
<b>Word classifications</b>	56	<b>27.6%</b>	72	<b>35.5%</b>	75	<b>36.9%</b>
<b>Correct capitalisation</b>	43	<b>21.2%</b>	39	<b>19.2%</b>	121	<b>59.6%</b>

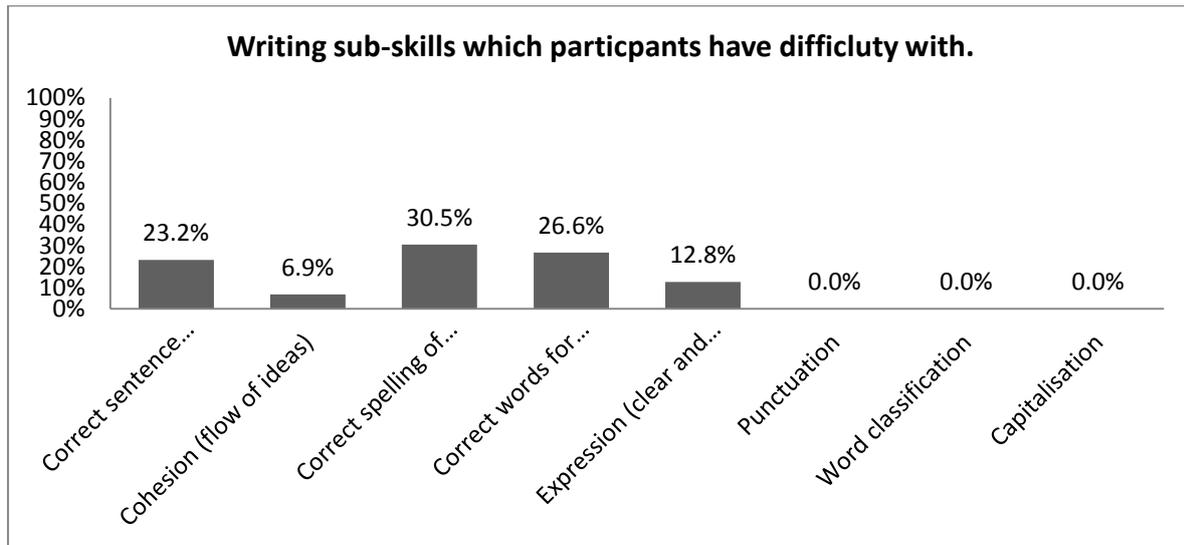
Figure 4.7 below, 62 (30.5%) of the research participants indicated that they had difficulty with spelling while 54 (26.6%) indicated that they had difficulty with vocabulary. There seems to be a correlation between these two findings because the two writing sub-skills (spelling and vocabulary) seem to be embedded within each other. The assumption is that, if one know a word, one would probably also know its spelling (form).

Furthermore, 47 (23.2%) of the 203 of the participants indicated that they had difficulty with sentence structure while 26 (12.8%) indicated that they had difficulty with expression as a writing sub-skill. In addition, 14 (6.9%) indicated that they had difficulty with cohesion. Not one of the research participants indicated punctuation, word classification and capitalisation as one of the areas within writing that they have difficulty with as far as writing in English is concerned.

Again the data shows that vocabulary and spelling are the areas within English writing that the police constables highly prioritise, followed by sentence structure and expression. The fact that cohesion was not considered by many as a writing sub-skill with which they had difficulty could be because they had considered it to be a less important skill. This finding should be a worrying factor given that police officers including police constables are expected to write statements and reports that are at times used as evidence in the court of law.

Furthermore, the research participants seemed to be unaware of the importance of cohesion as a writing sub-skill as well as word classification, punctuation and capitalisation. The findings from this data confirms the researchers' intuition that part of the problem with regards to poor English writing skills of SAPS police officers is lack of awareness of the importance of some of the English writing sub-skills involved in writing. It is important that instructors/trainers that are involved in teaching English at various SAPS police training academies make their police trainees aware of the importance of these writing sub-skills as far as writing is concerned.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Figure 4.7.

**Figure 4.7 Challenges on the English writing sub-skills**

### 4.3.2. Findings from the interviews.

The findings in this section are from the interview responses on the English writing limitations indicated by the participants.

#### (A) English writing limitations

Four (40%) of the 10 interviewees indicated that they struggled with tense. Two (20%) indicated that they struggle with spelling while four (40%) of indicated that they struggle with word classification. For example, one responded as follows: (1) “*I am not sure even if I know what something like adverb means.*” Not one of the ten interviewees chose vocabulary, cohesion, sentence structure, punctuation or capitalisation as one of their areas of difficulty within writing in English. The fact that punctuation, word classification and capitalisation are not chosen as aspects that police consider to be a challenge seem to suggest that police constables are not aware of the importance of these English writing sub-skills in a written text.

Below are the verbatim responses to the above aspect:

**Respondent 2**

*“The word structuring (le re ke eng?) what do you call it? sentence structuring. I need to know how to say sentences correctly because we usually write.”*

**Respondent 3**

*“I do not think I’ve got difficulty in any of that unless if I was writing in Afrikaans then that would be a problem.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“When you refer word classification you mean what? So far I do not know I won’t say I wouldn’t recommend one of those to change but I do not know.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“No, for now I am never experiencing problem with anything.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“Not necessarily to say it gives me hard time or whatever but the spelling is my concern actually is spelling even though I don’t say out of let’s say ten words maybe I can spell one or two wrongly I can say the spelling is a concern and also how to use the commas and asterisks I mean punctuation. You can just write a long sentence without comma or full stop.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“The vocabulary, the answer is still the same, if the vocabulary is wrong it won’t make sense, whatever I wrote it won’t make sense but if is right even if you were not there at the scene or you were not with there the narrator tells the story you will understand, you will even make a picture.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“The spelling and the cohesion I think is the most important because like I said I can write something that I think is the right thing but to you what I wrote there it doesn’t make sense unless you did the first language of English maybe you will understand what I was trying to write.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“Vocabulary, I need improvement here so that my statement can be clear when referring to something I must be clear what exactly am referring to a woman or a woman, so if I can improve in that I think everything is going to be (tjovitjo) fine.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“As a culture they says we have got what we call a police language, I’ll say all of them because in the workplace I am only using what I have been taught so I’m limiting myself not using more complicated or complex words so that is why I am saying to you for me I’ll not say I am hundred percent competent in the workplace and I cannot say I am not yet competent.”*

**4.3.3 Summary**

The findings from the questionnaire (Figure 4.7) revealed that police have a challenge with specific English writing sub-skills in this study. These findings are further corroborated by the interview findings which showed that some of the research participants are limited a great deal with respect to the specifically selected English writing sub-skills in this study. It has also been found that the participants consider the above mentioned English writing sub-skills to be areas of writing that are a challenge to them even though this challenge occurs in varying degrees per each English writing sub-skill. They (participants) seem to prioritise spelling and vocabulary highly followed by sentence structures, cohesion and expression. Word classification, punctuation and capitalization are not considered to be areas of challenge in English writing. This is a worrying finding since these English writing sub-skills are important in writing skills.

#### **4.4 TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE SAPS TRAINING PROGRAMME ADDRESS POLICE OFFICERS WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING NEEDS?**

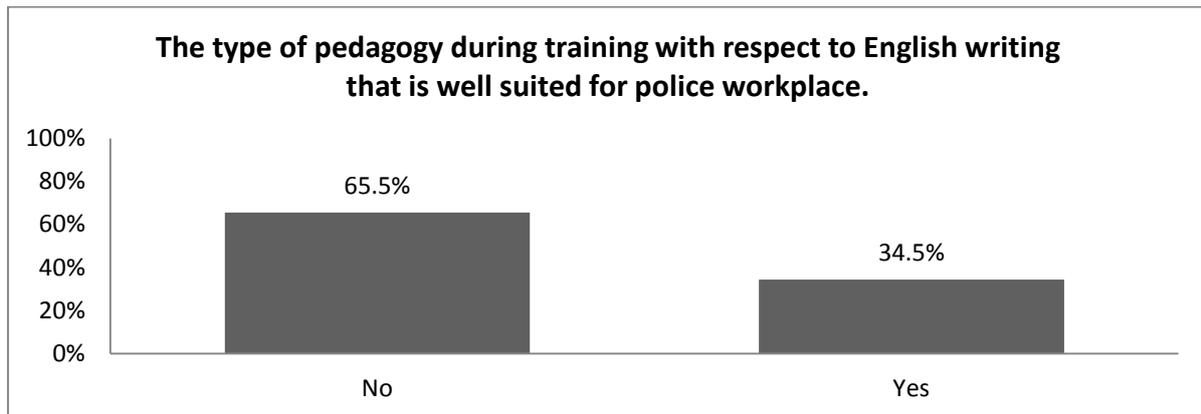
##### **4.4.1. Findings from the questionnaire.**

The discussion in the subsequent paragraphs provides the findings from both the questionnaire and the interviews. The findings in this section will be presented and discussed based on the following two themes:

- (a) English writing training in the SAPS training academies.
- (b) English writing training in the SAPS workplace.

##### **(A) English writing pedagogy in the SAPS training academies.**

Research participants were also asked to provide information about the type of pedagogy they received with respect to English writing during their police basic training as it is shown in Figure 4.9. In response to the question, 133 (65.5%) responded by saying that the classroom teaching that they went through during their police basic training did not help them develop an English writing competency that is well suited for a police workplace. Only 70 (34.5%) of the research participants opined that the classroom teaching that they went through during their basic police training helped them develop an English writing ability that is well suited for a police workplace. It is evident that the police constables in this study are not satisfied with the type of basic training they received at SAPS with regard to English writing.

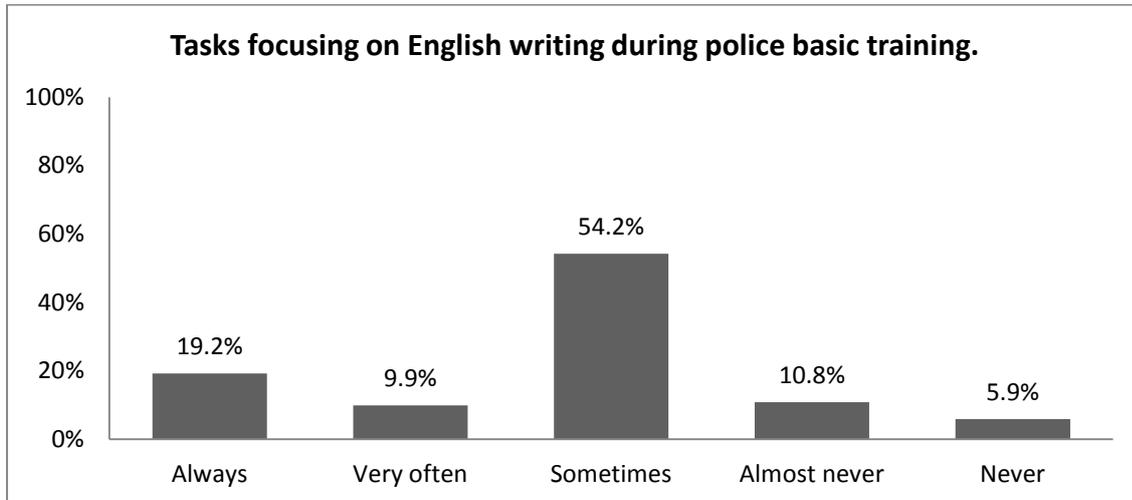
**Figure 4.8 English writing in SAPS training academies**

The research participants were further asked to provide information on the frequency of English writing tasks or activities that they were provided with during their police basic police training (if any) as it is shown in Figure 4.11. Thirty nine (19.2%) of the research participants responded by saying 'always'. Twenty (9.9%) of them responded by saying that they did English writing tasks very often and one hundred and ten (54.2%) of them indicated that they sometimes did English writing tasks during their police basic training. Only twelve (5.9%) of the research participants said that they never did English writing tasks during their police basic training. This variable also relate to the question about whether there was a course or module that was specifically dealing with English writing in a police workplace.

According to the data in Figure 4.9 below, it is evident that police constables did not receive adequate English writing teaching, since they indicated that they sometimes did English writing tasks (110 or 54.2%) during their training. Twenty two (10.8%) of them in Figure 4.11 indicated that they 'almost never' received any training focused on English writing. Furthermore 12 (5.9%) of them in the same Figure 4.9 indicated that they 'never' did any English writing tasks during their police basic training. The researcher is of the opinion that police constables' workplace English writing ability will continue to be inadequate unless an English writing module is included in the SA police basic training curriculum.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Figure 4.9 below.

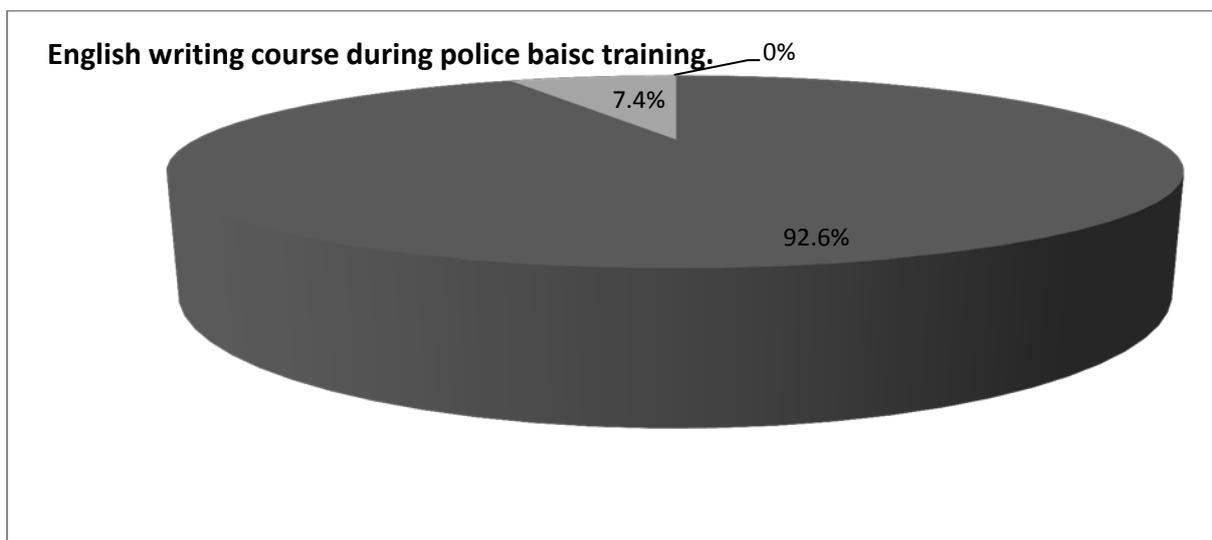
**Figure 4.9 Frequency of English writing tasks during police basic training.**



According to Figure 4.10 below, the research participants were also asked if they had a module which was specifically meant to teach English writing in a police workplace. The majority of them (188 or 92.6%) indicated that they had never had a course during their police basic training that was meant to focus on English writing that is meant for police workplace. Fifteen (15 or 7.4%) of them indicated that they had such a course. Not one (0 or 0%) of them indicated that they were not sure.

The findings discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Figure 4.10 below.

**Figure 4.10 English writing course during police basic training.**



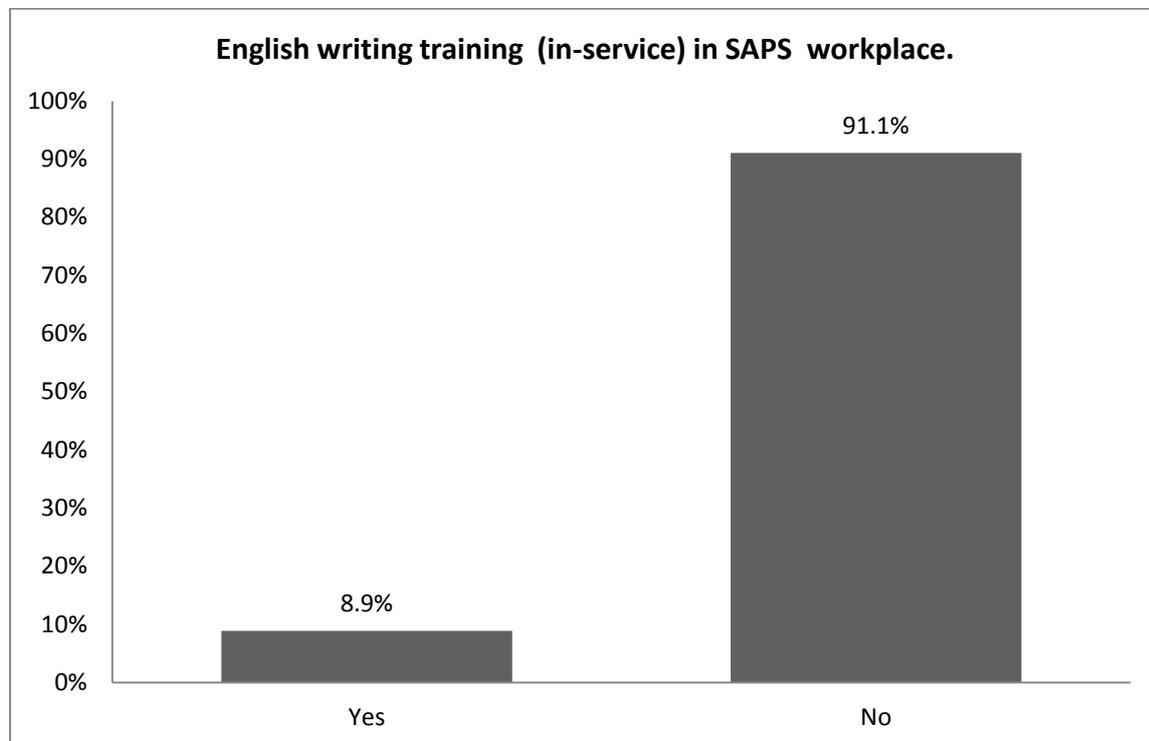
**(B) English writing training in the SAPS workplace.**

One of the training opportunities that SAPS offers for its employees is in-service training. In response to the question, ‘during your years as a police constable, have you ever had any English writing training provided by SAPS?’, 18 (8.9%) of the participants responded by saying yes. A whopping 185 (91.1%) responded by saying that they never had any type of English writing training that was focused on a police workplace as it is shown in Figure 4.11 below.

According to this finding it would seem that there was a general lack of training that focused on English writing at the SAPS workplaces. This is a serious gap which needs to be addressed if they (SAPS) want to improve the workplace English writing ability of SAPS police constables and police officers in general.

The findings discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Figure 4.11 below.

**Figure 4.11 Perceptions about English writing training in the SAPS workplace.**



#### 4.4.2. Findings from the interviews.

##### (A) English writing training in the SAPS training academies.

Interestingly and to corroborate the result discussed above, all the ten (100%) interviewees indicated that the training they had received at SAPS training academies was lacking as far as English writing is concerned. In terms of relevance, surprisingly, all ten respondents (100%) indicated again that the police basic training they received in SAPS training academies was relevant even though it lacked an English writing course. The researcher believes that this is probably because of what Stevens (2005:148) alludes to when he argues that police recruits/trainees consider the training a natural course of events and generally accepted it as absolutely the way things are with no room for challenge or question. Furthermore Stevens (2005:151) also states the following:

*The key issue then becomes, are the training programs or subjects taught in training correct?*

The following two responses from the respondents were also noted: (1) *“The training I received is not enough when it comes to English writing.”* In addition to this, another one respondent responded as follows: (2) *“It was not enough cause they don’t teach us how to put the words they just teach us how to write the statement. If I remember very well there was no a subject were specifically for these things.”*

From the response it is evident that police constables in the SAPS recognise the importance of a training programme which also includes a course which specifically focuses on English writing that is relevant to police work. Furthermore, in general the respondents were positive about the training they had received.

The following are the verbatim responses to the above question:

**Respondent 3**

*“Yes, I did that with my English diploma, police diploma. I did it with TUT and completed this year. I did not do it at the police academy. In that way I think we are limited at the training”. I do not remember doing a writing course during training.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“It has done so much for me actually, it has done so much and I am applying what I have done at school. The training has prepared me very well cause where we were in the police academy we were only talking and writing in English only so there was no any other language we gonna use and that has assisted a lot, a whole lot of us including myself. There was no Xitsonga teaching while teaching in English.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“(Nna) I am not sure but I have problems with English. In police training they do not teach English.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“The training was fine even though we learned most of the things that we were going to do here, how to take the statement, how the paragraph should follow each other, those kind of things but at the end of the day the writing is up to us. How to put it in English actually is up to us. Based on the duties that we are performing here I think that one is fine.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“To me is not enough, at the college we were only told how to structure and start the statement. You just memorise how to do these things but how to put words how to do if you are referring to his, how do you put words if you are referring to these I don’t think is enough. They just tell you how to write a statement then the rest you will learn by yourself.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“According to me it was not enough because if you can take the period that we were taught was too little, it was only six months and beside they didn’t teach us how to write the spellings they were only focusing on the work that we will be doing outside, so I think they should have this course of spelling and all the stuff that we need.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“Personally for my side yes because I usually do the eight triple ones like the colonel says on the computer. These are the comments when the person is busy writing on the computer. I could them but sometimes I could not understand what this person was trying to say, then I’ll have to use my own understanding.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“For me basic training it wasn’t a mere fact of teaching me how to write and other things, it was teaching me about how the police officer operates. Basic training for me for writing. I did not do English as a subject or course at police basic training.”*

Furthermore, ten (100%) of the research participants also indicated that during their police basic training, they did not have any English writing course or module which focused on English writing. This is reflected in this response from one of the respondents: (1) *“No there was no such a thing. It was just some other subjects that taught us about police work.”*

The research participants’ verbatim responses are presented below.

**Respondent 2**

*“We did not have a course which was teaching us English.”*

**Respondent 3**

*“I think it will be a good thing for future for the SAPS to have a course which can teach police officers English writing because most of us are not good in writing.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“At the college they did not teach us English but they were teaching us things like how to write a statement. We did not have it.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“They did not teach us English writing but they did teach us the things we should know when we do things like writing a statement.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“I think most of us can write well in English and it was not necessary for them to teach us such a course. Personally I am okay in English I do not need to be taught how to write in English.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“We were never taught English writing during our basic training.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“English is a problem. I know myself that sometimes I am not good in it but I try and were I do not understand I ask my colleague for help. In the college they did not teach us that.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“No, it was not there but I think they will do that in the future because it is important.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“For me, no. We didn’t do that during training. It was just other important courses for our job as policemen.”*

**(B) English writing training in the SAPS workplace.**

It is important to mention that since all the ten (100%) interviewees indicated that they had never received any English writing training during their police basic training, therefore, it was futile for the researcher to ask them about the frequency of the English writing tasks they did during their police basic training. Furthermore, research participants were not asked to provide information about the type of pedagogy they received with respect to English writing because they indicated that they have never received English writing training during their police basic training.

**4.4.3 Summary**

The focus in this section was on the extent to which the SAPS training programme addresses police officers workplace English writing needs. The findings revealed that the type of training the research participants received during their police basic training did not help them improve their English writing competency and this could be due to the fact that SAPS training curricula in their academies does not have a course specifically meant to address the English writing challenge faced by police officers including the police constables.

This finding is shown by Figure 4.9 were the majority (65.5%) of the research participants indicated that the type of training they got during their police basic training did not help them improve their English writing competency. This is also corroborated by the interview findings and it is noted in this respond:

*“To me is not enough, at the college we were only told how to structure and start the statement. You just memorise how to do these things but how to put words how to do if you are referring to his, how do you put words if you are referring to these I don’t think is enough. They just tell you how to write a statement then the rest you will learn by yourself.”*

The above finding is further corroborated by the fact revealed by Figure 4.10 which has shown that the majority of the research participants (91.1%) since joining SAPS have never received English writing training that specifically focuses on police workplace provided by SAPS. This seems to suggest that English writing as a skill is marginalised by SAPS or it is too minimal. When the research participants were pressed further to provide information about the frequency of the tasks or activities that focused on English writing, Figure 4.11 shows that 54% of them revealed that they sometimes had English writing tasks as opposed to those who said ‘never’ (5.9%), ‘always’ (19.2%) and those who said ‘very often’ (9.9%). The interview result also corroborated the findings presented in Figure 4.10. These findings are also complimented by one of the research participants who echoed the following:

*“The training I received is not enough when it comes to English writing.”*

## **4.5 WHAT TYPE OF A TRAINING PROGRAMME CAN ENHANCE THE WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING COMPETENCIES OF SA POLICE CONSTABLES?**

### **4.5.1. Findings from the questionnaire.**

The findings in this section will be presented and discussed based on the following themes:

- (a) English writing course in the SAPS training curricular
- (b) English grammar aspects to be included in the English writing course.
- (c) English writing support programme in the SAPS

#### **(A) English writing course in the SAPS training curricular**

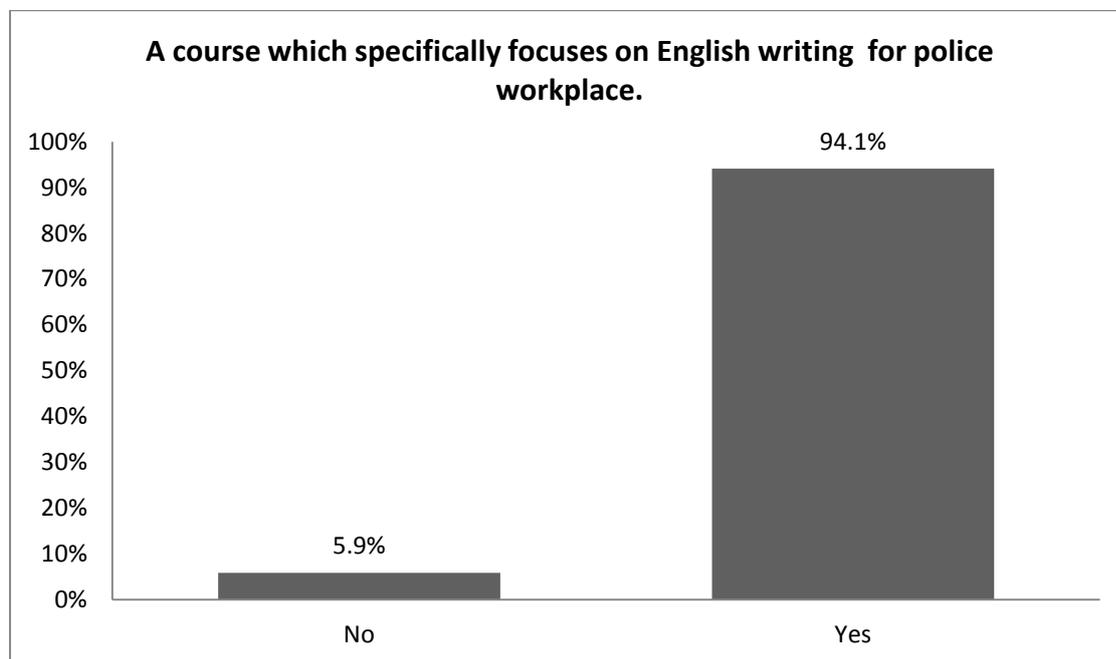
Research participants were asked if they thought the curriculum in police training academies in SA should have a course which focused specifically on English writing for police workplace as it is shown in Figure 4.12. In response to the above question, one hundred and ninety one (94.1%) responded in the affirmation. Only 12 (5.9%) of the research participants indicated that they were not in favour of the inclusion of an English writing course in the curriculum of police basic training.

Furthermore, Figure 4.12 indicated that 5.9% of the research participants were not in favour of the inclusion of an English writing course in the police basic training curriculum. This could probably be because of the fact that some of the research participants attended private schools which are generally believed to be teaching English language better than the public schools in South Africa. The probability is that those who are not in favour of this English writing course could be coming from private schools (§ Figure 3.5). The other possibility could be that these research participants were among those who passed English well at grade 12 or Matric. Figure 3.8 indicates that 4.4 % of the research participants obtained a pass percentage of between 70-79 % in English and 2.5% obtained a pass percentage of between 80-89% in English.

It is quite evident that from the above responses that these research participants knew well the importance of adequate English writing competency as far as their work was concerned, however, because of the absence of an English writing module within their basic training curriculum, they were not taught English writing that was specifically tailored for police work. The researcher's contention is that this is one of the factors that led to inadequate workplace English writing ability in SAPS.

The findings discussed in the above paragraphs are shown in Figure 4.12 below.

**Figure 4.12 English writing course in the SAPS training curricula.**



**(B) English grammar aspects to be included in the English writing course.**

Table 4.6 indicates research participants' preferences regarding the specifically selected English writing sub-skills. These preferences are taken from Table 4.1, Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 where research participants indicated the English writing sub-skills which they found to be a challenge. According to the table above, it is evident that cohesion, sentence structure, tense, expression, word classification, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation and capitalisation are prioritised in varying degrees.

English writing sub-skills with higher percentages (above 60%) are spelling, tense, sentence structure, cohesion and the ones with middle percentages (below 50% and above 35%) are vocabulary, capitalisation and expression. The English writing sub-skills with lower percentages (below 35%) are punctuation and word classification. This comparison is important in understanding the participants' preferences with regards to the specifically selected English writing sub-skills in this study. The implication from the fact that the research participants indicated that they lacked these English writing sub-skills is that they would like these English writing sub-skills to be included in the police basic training curriculum.

The findings discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6 Preferences regarding the selected English writing sub-skills.**

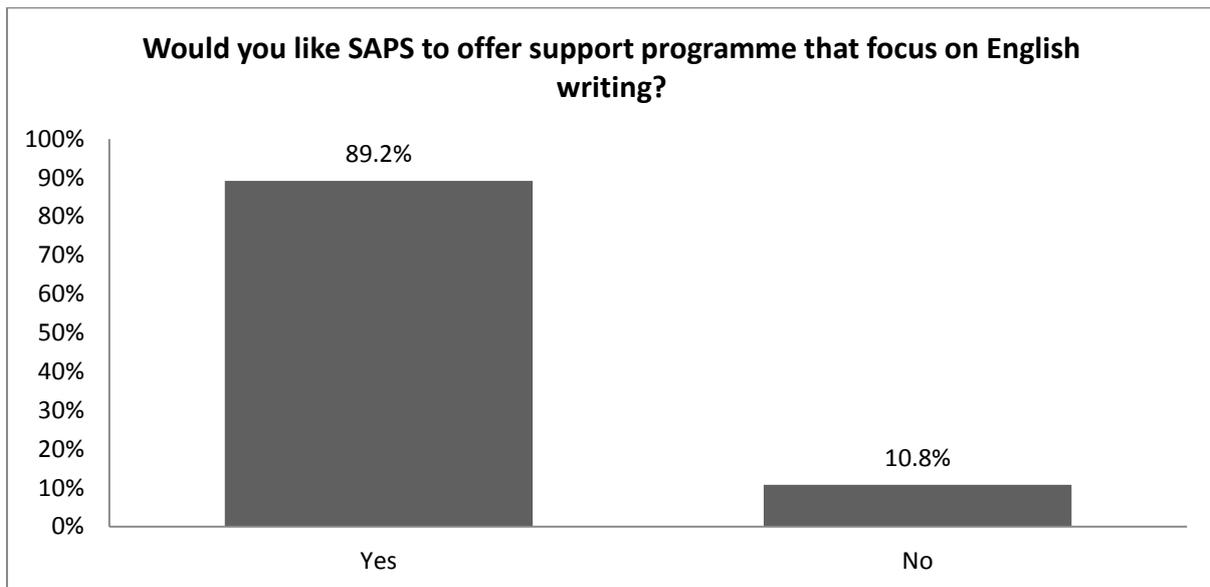
English writing sub-skills participants lack					
Writing sub-skill: Taken from Table 2		Writing sub-skill: Taken from Table 4.3		Writing sub-skill: Taken from Table 4.1	
Cohesion	31.0%	Sentence structure	65.0%	Spelling	67.5%
Sentence structure	27.1%	Spelling	60.1%	Tense	67.0%
Tense	26.6%	Cohesion	57.6%	Cohesion	64.0%
Expression	26.6%	Tense	56.2%	Sentence structure	49.3%
Word classification	18.2%	Vocabulary	37.4%	Vocabulary	48.3%
Spelling	13.8%	Word classification	23.6%	Capitalisation	46.3%
Vocabulary	9.4%	Punctuation	17.7%	Expression	44.8%
Punctuation	6.9%	Capitalisation	10.8%	Punctuation	31.5%
Capitalisation	4.4%	Expression	9.4%	Word classification	27.6%

**(C) English writing support programme in the SAPS.**

In addition to the question in the previous paragraph, research participants were further asked if they would like the SAPS to offer them a support programme specifically focusing on workplace English writing and in response to this question, 181 (89.2%) of the research participants responded by saying 'yes'. Only 22 (10.8%) of the research participants said that they did not want SAPS to offer them a support programme that would focus on English writing that is suitable for police work as it is shown in Figure 4.14. Again, the probability is that those who were not in favour of the proposed support programme could have been the ones who passed English very well at grade 12 or Matric.

The findings discussed in the above paragraph are shown in Figure 4.13 below.

**Figure 4.13 English writing support programme in the SAPS.**



#### 4.5.2. Findings from the interviews.

The findings in this section will be presented and discussed based on the following themes:

- (a) English writing course in the SAPS training curricular
- (b) English grammar aspects to be included in the English writing course.
- (c) English writing trainers/instructors in the SAPS
- (d) English writing support programme in the SAPS
- (e) English writing training in the SAPS workplace

##### **(A) English writing course in the SAPS training curricular.**

All ten (100%) interviewees indicated that the SAPS basic police training programme should include a learning area that focuses on workplace English writing tailored for police work. They all responded in the affirmative to the question ‘Do you think the module that teaches English writing should be part of police basic training curriculum?’ For example, one said: (1) *“If SAPS wants to have police officers who can write good English, then they must start teaching it even at the police training academies.”* The following responses are verbatim samples of such responses:

##### **Respondent 2**

*“Yes, I think so, I think it will help. Because it teaches you how to structures, write sentence structures, vocabulary all those things are mentioned.”*

##### **Respondent 3**

*“Yes there should be, cause really some people need to go to some ja (yes) presentence, those vocabulary and what what what are still a problem to some people.”*

##### **Respondent 4**

*“For me so far I do not think so due to the fact that when I matriculated I know how to write, I know how to spell, I know how read and so forth, I do not know maybe other colleagues of mine would need some help there and there but I do not consider myself to have a problem with that.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“No cause all the module are teaching English writing but the module that teaches English writing is necessary I cannot say is not necessary.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“Yes I think so, it will bring much improvement to statement taking and understanding because we are helping different kind of people so I come with my story the other one comes with his and then but we won’t put the same story like you. It will help us a lot actually, the module.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“Definitely it must be introduced. I would just generalise, if you read the police statements you can see that we are lacking, so it will improve our work, our writing skills, writing style. I think it is necessary.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“(Ja) Yes I think it is important to include that as a subject or a course for writing and the how to pronounce words because some of our colleagues they can’t even write English they only use Afrikaans, so I think it must be included.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“Definitely, definitely this must be included because after we passed from training, lots of things we are learning them here at the station and there are two different people who are teaching us these things, some are teaching their way which is wrong is not right but because I do not know I’ll think maybe because this is my senior if they want me do things this way I’ll do but this course or this module if they can include it there when we come back from there we will be super fine.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“Most definitely because we do what we call statement taking. Statement taking is all about writing the contents, how you prepare and present your content so that when you take this statement put it in writing after in writing taking it to the court so that he person who is going to read it can clearly understand what are you saying.”*

**(B) English grammar aspects to be included in the English writing course.**

According to Table 4.14 below, three (30%) of the ten interviewees indicated that they would like tense to be included in the proposed English writing course because they would like to improve their competence in tenses so that they could write well in English. For example, one said: (1) *“These things called past tense, present and future tense are very difficult. When you study them you must understand them. The message in the sentence is controlled by this thing.”*

Two respondents (20%) again indicated that they would like to have spelling included because they would like to improve on their spelling competence. Three (30%) respondents indicated that they would like to improve their English language vocabulary. For example, one said: (2) *“Vocabulary and spelling cause the vocabulary must be something that the other party can be able to understand cause the things that you wrote there must make sense not only to me it mustn't be something that would be understood by me only and the spelling as well we have got different ways to spell words but at the end it is different the way you see it.”* The other one said (3) *“I want to know more terms so that I can improve my understanding.”*

Two of the interviewees (20%) indicated that they would like to have sentence structure included because they would like to improve their knowledge of sentence structure. Two (20%) of the ten interviewees chose sentence structure and only one of them (10%) chose cohesion. Not one of the ten interviewees chose punctuation or capitalisation as one of the writing sub-skills they would like to be included in the proposed English writing course.

From the responses to this question, it is evident that police constables recognise the importance of knowledge about tenses, vocabulary and sentence structure in writing. It is also interesting again to note that the research participants showed a willingness to learn these writing sub-skills so that they could improve their English writing competency.

The following are the verbatim responses to the above question:

<b>Respondent 4</b> <i>"I think the most important will be sentence structure."</i>
<b>Respondent 5</b> <i>"I think sentencing, sentence structure, that we use so much at work cause when you are busy writing statement for somebody your statement must be having paragraphs, must be in sentences where it must have a little bit of breathing space so that somebody else or what your statement is all about."</i>
<b>Respondent 6</b> <i>"Which one it can help me to improve? I never considered myself to have a problem to writing or making a sentence on issues like related things."</i>
<b>Respondent 7</b> <i>"From the one I was answering about, I think cohesion is the one. As I said, with the spelling and the writing I do not have a problem so I can elaborate my sentence better when I am writing."</i>
<b>Respondent 8</b> <i>"I think vocabulary and spelling is very important."</i>
<b>Respondent 9</b> <i>"Word classification and vocabulary cause whatever I wrote if the vocabulary is right it will make sense but if the vocabulary is wrong it won't make sense."</i>
<b>Respondent 10</b> <i>"Let's say vocabulary and then another one I could use what is it spelling."</i>

**(C) English writing instructors/trainers in the SAPS.**

To get some more opinions and further information from each individual regarding suggestions regarding training in the SAPS with respect to English writing with special emphasis on police workplace, the researcher asked the research participants about what they thought police instructors/trainers should do to improve the English writing competency of police constables in SAPS.

In response to the question above, respondents suggested various ways in which trainers/instructors in police training academies can help improve the English writing competence of SAPS police constables. For example, one participant said the following: (1) *“Police training academies should get people who have the knowledge of English to come and teach at the police training academies. This type of people can just teach there on part-time basis but the management must be strict in controlling them because outsiders should not know what is happening in police training academy.”* In contrast to the suggestion above, one respondent responded as follows: (2) *“SAPS should send the current instructors in police training academies to workshops that will teach them on things such as good English writing. Writing that will help when we do our police work.”*

The following verbatim responses are samples of suggestions provided:

**Respondent 3**

*“To improve English I think they should do it as a subject at the college. Like English practice.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“They should go for workshop. I think that should be implemented, they should do researches, they should be equipped with I do not know universities or they should actually continue studying cause each and every day there is a new thing coming. I would say a new vocabulary and because vocabulary changes.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“In a sense of writing I would say they must install computers. Maybe there is something that must be done to figure out if this particular person can read and write or what.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“If they can add on statement taking cause most of the police can find that statement is not on a proper way.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“It must be like the way we said earlier, it must be like a module that we do learn at the college. English must be added to all those modules and subjects that we learn at the college. I think if we learn it from there our improvement will be much better because some of us we never had an opportunity to go to this multiracial school and stuff we went to government school were they teach you English in Sepedi. The trainers should attend more workshops.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“They should receive proper workshop before they come to us and I think I do not know if they will say it is too expensive like people from Unisa from any other institution specialising in this subject can be introduced in the college.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“I think what they can do is to attend the workshops if they can’t SAPS must get someone who deals with this subject only. I do not know if they will be able to pay the person or we should attend that workshop as one.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“The trainers are qualified. When they take them to college, they check their qualification, they can’t just take this guy, so those guys they know how to they just need to be told or to be reminded or sort of reassessment.”*

**(D) English writing support programme in the SAPS.**

To garner further and in-depth information from each individual about the possibility of the SAPS offering an English writing support programme to SA police officers, the following question was asked:

*Would you like SAPS to offer you a support programme specifically focusing on workplace English writing?*

In response to the question, all the ten respondents agreed that provision of an English writing support programme to SAPS police officers would be a positive move by the department. For example, one participant said the following: (1) *“It will be a very good thing because, honestly we are not good at English. We do not write okay in English, so it will help us a lot.”* In affirmation to the response above, one respondent responded as follows: (2) *“This programme will be a good thing and they must provide it to all not to some.”*

The following verbatim responses below are samples of the responses provided:

**Respondent 3**

*“(Ja) Yes it will be a good idea because English is very important in the world. Police should write in good English.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“I personally think it will be a good move, you know. We use English every single working day. Our documents go to court and they should be clear and understandable. I’ll be very if they can do that cause most of my colleagues will be helped.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“You mean that they must give us a chance to go and learn English and I think that programme definitely will be a good thing.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“If they can provide us with that programme it will be very much appreciated.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“I do not know, but should they provide it I will support the idea. If you look in South Africa now, everyone speaks English. The whole world is going to be speaking in the near future I am telling you. Therefore it is important that such programmes be provided and not only to SAPS department only but to all the government departments.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“I think is okay even though some of us do not need it that much. I think I can write well in English.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“It is okay but there are courses that we sometimes attend and maybe that will also help.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“The programme you are talking about will be very important. We need policemen who can write good English in this department because at the moment I think they are not too many.”*

**(E) English writing training in the SAPS workplace**

To further gain information related to the above question, the researcher asked the question below to get some further opinions and information on each individual’s suggestions about what SAPS in general should do to improve the English writing competence of police constables. The following question was asked:

*What do you think SAPS in general should do to improve the English language writing of police constables?*

In answering this question, all ten (100%) respondents suggested various strategies that SAPS could employ. One research participant responded as follows: (1) *“SAPS should keep giving police officers opportunities to attend courses relevant to English writing.”* Another respondent also said the following: (2) *“If SAPS want to improve English language writing of police officers, it should provide in-service training where police officers attend courses like what is happening in Hammanskraal training academy. Hammanskraal training academy now provide a lot of courses for police officers.”*

The verbatim responses below are examples of suggestions provided.

**Respondent 3**

*“That thing of including it at the college as a subject and us they should give us the courses.”*

**Respondent 4**

*“They should introduce courses. Courses should be done so that we can look at who has done what. They should actually do it for all of us” Not to check you are white or black they should just do courses.”*

**Respondent 5**

*“So far I won’t say I know much about what can be installed but what can I say maybe maybe courses like courses that are not involve SAPS as a whole, like courses like literature whatever so forth, those courses it can help.”*

**Respondent 6**

*“If they can help us with skills development in relation to writing and relation to our work cause some things we don’t know we must learn from maybe let’s say you learn from others so when sharing ideas then it will help. I think it will help.”*

**Respondent 7**

*“I think, like as I said earlier the subject must be added there at the college but some of us who have already finished with the training it must come in the format of the courses, what do we call this, course were we take one week and go and attend like those one of sexual assault and stuff like that. It must be in that manner.”*

**Respondent 8**

*“I think they should introduce English as a subject or module at the college and then cause we are already outside we cannot go back to college they should not forget us. They should give us workshops maybe once or twice a year to remind us how to do this how to revise how to write properly.”*

**Respondent 9**

*“(Ja) Yes, I think English must be introduced as a subject there. If they cannot do that they can start as an intro then they will do the basic at the station.”*

**Respondent 10**

*“Generally speaking, I’ll definitely say courses in order for you to understand more clearly when coming to other words. I’ll definitely say courses.”*

### 4.5.3 Summary

Table 4.12 revealed that the research participants want the SAPS to introduce a course in their police basic training that will specifically focus on writing in English. It is interesting to note that 94.1 % in of the research participants agree that this course is necessary. This result is also corroborated by result of Figure 4.13 which revealed that 89.2% of the research participants are in favour of the idea that the SAPS should offer them a support programme that will focus specifically on writing in English.

Furthermore, the findings in this section revealed that research participants rated themselves highly with respect to their competency in English writing and low with respect to their limitations in English writing. This is a surprising result given that data in Tables and Figures such as Table 4.1, Table 4.2, Table, 4.3 and Figure 4.8 indicate the opposite. This could be owing to the research participants' naivety about their inadequate English writing competency. The findings in this section show that the English writing skills selected in this study could help if included in the training programme of the SAPS. The findings from the interviews also corroborate the above idea. This is reflected in one of the research participant who said:

*"I think sentencing, sentence structure, that we use so much at work cause when you are busy writing statement for somebody your statement must be having paragraphs, must be in sentences where it must have a little bit of breathing space so that somebody else or what your statement is all about."*

### 4.6 CONCLUSION

Adequate English writing ability is essential in SAPS workplaces and yet responses obtained using the data collection instruments (questionnaire and interview) in this study revealed that in general police constables have inadequate English writing ability. This study confirms what has been found by other studies such as Miller and Pomerence (1989), Payam (2006) and Sezer (2004).

The other thing that also emerged from the police constables' responses is that they struggled to express themselves fluently in (spoken) English. This emerged during the interview sessions. This finding is in line with K-Romya's (2006) study about 'deficiency of communication in English was a major Hindrance for Tourist Police in Thailand. This seems to support the researcher's contention that inadequate English language proficiency also contributes to a lack of adequate English writing ability at the workplace.

In addition, the result of Table 4.1 indicates that police constables are not satisfied with their knowledge of English vocabulary knowledge. Genre theory articulates to vocabulary. According to Bhatia (2004:23), genre refers to language use in a conventionalised communicative setting, therefore it is imperative that the police constables are made aware of police vocabulary (terminology) during their academy and workplace training. Furthermore, the police constables' responses showed that the participants' perceptions with regard to the importance of the nine writing sub-skills were much divided and were emphasised with varying degrees of seriousness. However the general finding is that they were all important and should be included in the proposed English writing course for police workplace.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that police constables were not satisfied with the absence of an English writing course within their basic training curriculum. The Needs Analysis framework (NA) enabled the researcher to identify the police constables workplace English writing needs in this study because this framework can tell us a lot about the nature and content of learners' target language needs (Hutchinson, 1988:71). The overall findings obtained from the questionnaire and the interviews showed that police constables experienced difficulties with English writing as well as with the selected writing sub-skills because their in-service training was inadequate and did not focus on English writing skills.

The integration of knowledge and skills gained in the tertiary education institution and in the workplace are very important (Coll et al.,2009). This WIL (Work-Integrated Learning theory) philosophy is worth considering if the SAPS want to improve the English writing competency of police officers. The study revealed that what is needed was a training course designed to enhance the research participants' workplace English writing competency within the context of police workplace.

In the next chapter (Chapter 5), the researcher provides a summary of the key findings. This chapter also examines the extent to which the aims of the research study were achieved. In this chapter, conclusions are drawn from the interpretations discussed in Chapter 4. Lastly, this chapter serves to delineate the recommendations and suggestions for further research based on the findings of this study.

## **Chapter Five**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the research results. This chapter provides a summary and analysis of the key findings. Furthermore, evidence-based conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further research are also outlined in this chapter. The key findings are discussed in line with the research aims.

The primary research aim:

- To determine the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs.

The secondary research aims:

- To identify police constables' perceptions of their English writing competencies.
- To identify the specific areas within English writing that police constables consider to be a challenge.
- To investigate the extent to which the SAPS training programme address police officers' workplace English writing needs.
- To suggest a training programme that can enhance the workplace English writing competencies of SA police constables.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS**

The findings presented below are from two sources, the questionnaire and interviews. The key findings are first discussed in line with the four secondary research aims and the primary question is addressed in the conclusion.

### **5.1.1 WHAT ARE THE POLICE CONSTABLES' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ENGLISH WRITING COMPETENCIES?**

#### **5.1.1.1 Key findings from the questionnaire**

The perception of the majority of the research participants (67.5%) in this study is that they are competent in English as it is shown in Figure 4.1. Yet, the same police constables (40.4%) in this study are of the opinion that police constables (including them) in SA have inadequate English writing ability as it is shown in Figure 4.6. This contradiction could be owing to the fact police constables are unaware of their inadequate English writing competency. The other key finding is that half of the research participants (50.2%) in this study are not satisfied with their current English writing knowledge as it is shown in Figure 4.4. This finding seems to manifest itself in the specifically selected English writing sub-skills in this study. The key findings with respect to these specifically selected English writing sub-skills are presented below.

Although it is evident that police constables in this study are confident about their English language competency as it is shown in Figure 4.1, the study revealed that they are not competent with respect to specifically selected English writing sub-skills. Indeed, it is shown that nearly half of them (49.3%) cannot structure sentences well as shown in Table 4.1. This finding is also corroborated by the finding which shows that 65.0% of them want to be helped with sentence structure as evident in Table 4.4.

This is a concern because the majority (76.3%) of these research participants were taught through the medium of English (Figure 3.10 and Figure 3.11) many of their school years, from grade three (3) up to grade twelfth (12), and it is expected that they would be proficient writers in English. This seems to indicate a problem as far as their school education in relation to English writing is concerned.

Furthermore, the majority of the research participants (64.0%) also indicated that they encounter problems with cohesion (flow of ideas) as it is shown in Table 4.1. This is not a surprising finding given the fact that they indicated that they are not competent with sentence structure (Table 4.1). This finding is also corroborated by the finding that 57.6% of them wants to be helped with cohesion as it is shown in Table 4.4. The other finding that seem to compound their English writing challenge further is that the majority of them (67.5%) consider themselves to be limited with respect to spelling as indicated in Table 4.1. This finding is also corroborated by the finding that 60.1% of them wants to be helped with spelling as it is shown in Table 4.4.

Vocabulary as a writing sub-skill also adds to the research participants' English writing problem. Nearly half of them (48.3%) indicated that they were not competent enough in terms of vocabulary as shown in Table 4.1. This finding is also corroborated by the finding that 37.4% of them wants to be helped with vocabulary as shown in Table 4.4.

Equally important is expression (clarity and unambiguousness). It is found that 91 (44.8%) of the research participants indicated that they had a problem with expressing ideas as shown in Table 4.1. This finding is also corroborated by the finding that 79.8% of them wanted to be helped a little with expression as shown in Table 4.4.

In addition, the majority of the research participants (67.0%) indicated that they were not competent enough with respect to tenses as shown in Table 4.1. This finding is also corroborated by the finding that 56.2% of them wanted to be helped with tenses as shown in Table 4.4.

Ninety (44.3%) of the research participants indicated that they were not competent with respect to word classification as shown in Table 4.1. This key finding is also corroborated by the finding that 34.0% of them wanted to be helped with word classification as shown in Table 4.4.

It is worrying to note that only a few of the research participants (31.5%) indicated that they had a problem with punctuation as shown in Table 4.1. In addition, ninety four (46.3%) of them in this study revealed that they had a problem with capitalization as it is shown in Table 4.1. The other important key finding is that the majority of the police constables (128 or 63.1%) in this study indicated that they have never received any complaint about their English writing competency (§. Figure 4.2) This is despite the fact that there is a substantial amount of international and few sizeable local research which found that police officers have inadequate English writing competency (§ 1.1.1, 1.1.2). Furthermore, the study found that the majority of the police constables (196 or 96.6%) considered English to be an important component of their job (§ Figure 4.3). This seems to support the study by Alqurashi (2011:848) which also found that police officers perceived English as a useful language in their professional lives. In addition, the study also found that 90.6% indicated that they wrote in English frequently at their workplace (§ Figure 4.5%).

The study also found that the majority of the research participants (114 or 56.2%) did not have a post-secondary school qualification as it is shown in Figure 3.6. This finding seems to corroborate Paterson (2011:288) when he argues that part of the reason for the lack of reform in police workplace environments is the resistance of police officers to undertake academic study.

#### **5.1.1.2 Key findings from the interviews**

As noted before during the questionnaire key findings, the interview results also revealed that the police constables in this study were comfortable writing in English and this is despite the fact that they expressed themselves poorly in English during the interviews.

For example, one of the respondents responded as follows: (1) *I am limited because of spelling and vocabulary. Sometimes in a spelling you tend to forget to write for instance if when you are busy these terms or these words sometimes get out from our head and then vocabulary we turn to forget for example instead of me saying her I would say him*". This is worrying because if someone expresses himself using poor grammar like the one used in the above response, one can imagine what will happen it comes to writing. This is one of the findings this study did not intend to investigate.

One of the reasons provided for the perception that they (police constables) were comfortable writing in English is that English is the easier to learn than Afrikaans language. This is reflected in one of the respondents' response when he said (2) *"Yes I am comfortable writing in English. No, I think English is the simplest language than Afrikaans."* However when they were asked about their competency regarding English writing, 70% indicated that they were ineffective. This finding confirms the finding revealed by the questionnaire data (§ Figure 4.1) that police constables had inadequate English writing competency.

It is also found that some research respondents were in doubt about whether they were comfortable writing in English or not. This is reflected in this response from one of the respondents: (3) *"Sometimes I am comfortable and sometimes are I am not comfortable because sometimes you know English is not our mother tongue. I will just to write a short thing but long things are difficult to me."* This further indicates that police constables are not confident about their English writing competency and that is why they are doubtful.

Furthermore, the interview data also revealed that police constables had never received a complaint about their English writing competency. This is reflected in this response from one of the respondents: (4) *"English is not a problem to me. I can write proper sentences and people do not complain about my writing."* This may be because police constables did not have access to the complaints boxes that were distributed in police stations or it could be that after the complaints were analysed, the constables were not told what the results of the analysis of the complaints were.

Furthermore, the interview data revealed that all the interviewees indicated that adequate English writing ability is important to their workplace.

### **5.1.1.3 Summary of the key findings**

In summary, it is worrying that the participants mentioned the various limitations they experience with English writing despite that the majority had obtained a pass percentage of between 50-59% in English during their matric/grade 12 year as it was shown in Figure 3.8. The participants' unawareness about their inadequate English writing competency is also worrying as it is shown in Table 4.5 and Figure 4.1. This result confirmed the importance of Needs Analysis (NA) subcategory suggested by Nation (2002:2) which articulates to the wants of learners.

Nearly half of the respondents (48.3%) indicated that they were not competent enough in vocabulary usage as shown in Table 4.1. These police constables faced a double burden, of general English language in terms of terminology and of police genre. If these police constables had insufficient 'general vocabulary' one can imagine what the situation will be with the specific vocabulary. This result confirms the study conducted by K-Romya (2006:26) in which he found that police officers encounter problems with vocabulary and in particular legal terminology. This result further affirms the importance of the genre knowledge, in particular policing-related knowledge.

In addition, this finding confirms Bhatia's idea (2004:53) who propounded the importance of domain-specificity when it comes to writing. It is imperative that police constables are made aware of police genre and this police genre should also be addressed by SAPS training academies. In addition, Work Integrated Learning theory (WIL) articulates to Workplace Learning (Holliday & Retalick, 1995). It is important that police constables' vocabulary be relevant to their workplace because if it is not, their language cognitive ability will be inadequate when they are confronted with legal terms in their writings.

Similarly, the English writing limitations indicated by the police constables through the English writing sub-skills need to be addressed if SAPS want to enhance the English writing competency of police constables. When these police constables are confronted with complex sentences containing too many embedded clauses, they will struggle to deduce the overall meaning of a particular sentence.

This seems to support the study by Miller and Pomerence (1989) where they found that officers submit reports that are hastily written, poorly developed and badly composed and that these reports often include incorrect verb, incorrect tense, wrong pronoun usage, spelling mistakes and poorly structured sentences and paragraphs. For this reason police constables should be taught adequately about all the selected English writing sub-skills in this study. On the whole, the evidence from this section suggests that these police constables in SAPS do indeed experience difficulties with workplace English writing competency.

## **5.1.2 WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC AREAS WITHIN ENGLISH WRITING THAT POLICE CONSTABLES CONSIDER TO BE A CHALLENGE?**

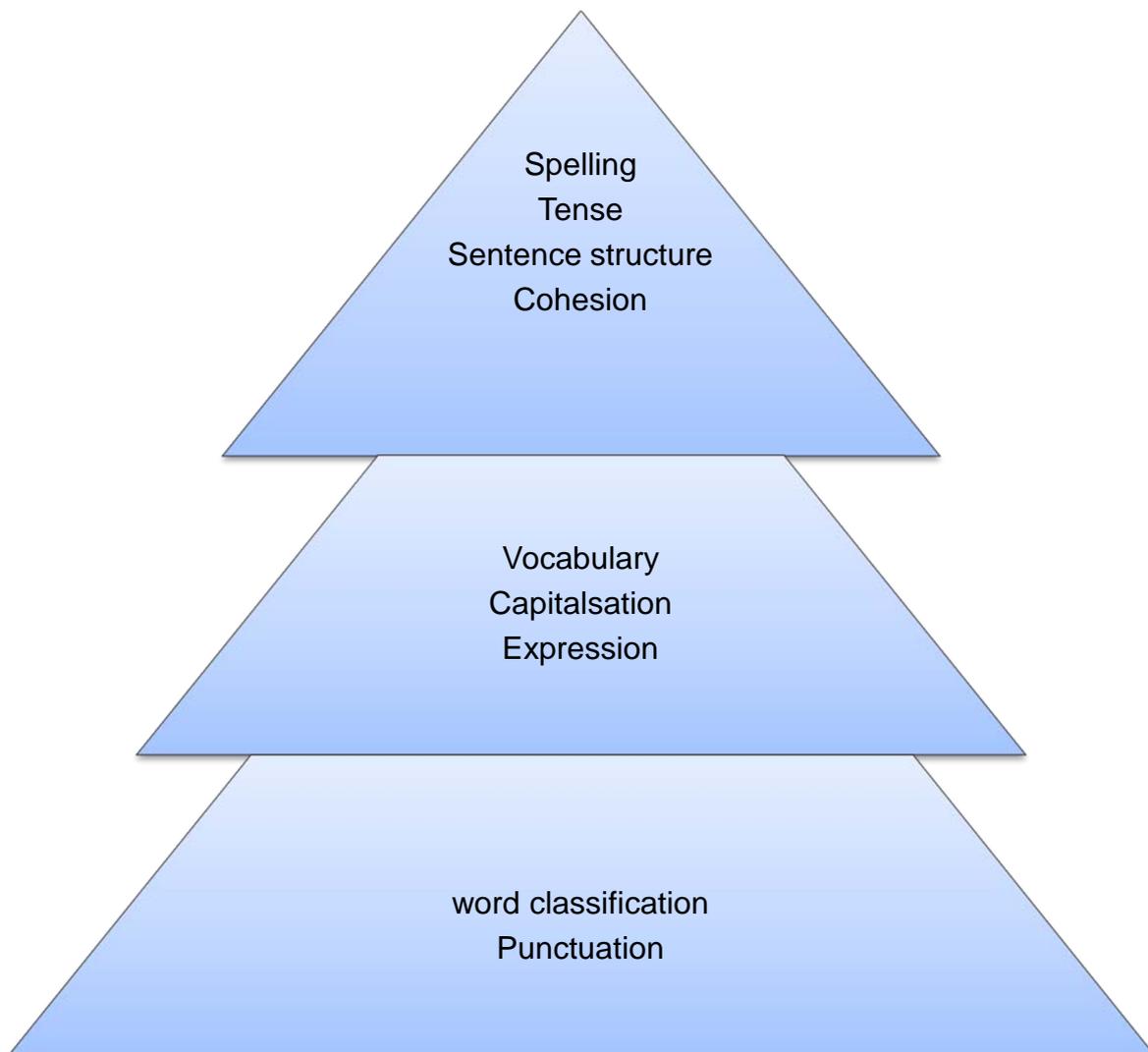
### **5.1.2.1 Key findings from the questionnaire.**

Sixty two of the research participants (30.5%) indicated spelling to be a challenge as it is shown in Figure 4.7. In addition a few (48.3%) of the research participants indicated that vocabulary was a challenge as shown in Table 4.1. Furthermore, only a handful (23.2%) of the research participants indicated that they had difficulty with sentence structure as shown in Figure 4.7. The research participants (12.8%) again indicated that they had difficulty with expression (clarity and unambiguousness) as shown in Figure 4.7.

In addition, few research participants (6.9%) indicated cohesion was a challenge as shown in Figure 4.7. One interesting finding and contrary to the findings to the question, 'What are the police constables' perceptions of their English writing competencies?' is that not one of the participants indicated punctuation, word classification and capitalisation to be a challenge. This is shown in Figure 4.7.

Furthermore, the findings discussed above reveal that the police constables' opinions on the hierarchy of the nine writing sub-skills are divided. However, the nine writing skills were considered equally important by the participants (§ Table 4.6). Diagrammatically (pyramid) this scenario can be represented as follows:

Figure 5.1 Diagrammatical representation of the writing skills



On the basis of the findings presented above, it seems fair to suggest that police constables indeed have a challenge with certain specific English writing sub-skills. Therefore it is crucial that the SAPS police training academies address these English writing sub-skills challenge if they want to improve the English writing ability of police constables.

### 5.1.2.2 Key findings from the interviews

Information from the interviews revealed that there are some areas within English writing which are considered to be a challenge. One example of this was found in this response from one of the interviewees: (1) *“Not necessarily to say it gives me hard time or whatever but the spelling is my concern actually is spelling even though I don’t say out of let’s say ten words maybe I can spell one or two wrongly I can say the spelling is a concern and also how to use the commas and asterisks I mean punctuation. You can just write a long sentence without comma or full stop.”*

It is interesting to note that some responses to this question were definite and some of these could be summarized as (2) *The vocabulary, the answer is still the same, if the vocabulary is wrong it won’t make sense, whatever I wrote it won’t make sense but if it is right even if you were not there at the scene or you were not with there the narrator tells the story you will understand, you will even make a picture.* (3) *“The spelling and the cohesion I think is the most important because like I said I can write something that I think is the right thing but to you what I wrote there it doesn’t make sense unless you did the first language of English maybe you will understand what I was trying to write.”* (4) *“When you refer word classification you mean what? So far I do not know I won’t say I wouldn’t recommend one of those to change but I do not know.”* It is fair to conclude that these responses indicate that the police constables are aware of the English writing sub-skills which they consider to be a challenge.

### 5.1.2.3 Summary of the key findings

The research question in this section is concerned with establishing which areas within English writing are regarded as difficult to master by the police constables. The interview data, together with the questionnaire data has highlighted a number of areas of difficulty. There is overwhelming evidence corroborating the notion that police officers (including police constables) have inadequate English writing competency as it has been shown by Sulzer (1986) and Schönteich (1999).

In general, the workplace English writing needs expressed through the responses in this interview data seems to corroborate the assertion by Bhatia (2004:204). Talking about the importance of genre, he argues that 'we still have little understanding of the relationship between language as communication and language as vehicle for the expression of disciplinary knowledge as part of linguistic training'. This finding further confirms the idea propounded by the proponent of NA framework, Bercow (2008:09), who maintained that assessing and understanding the needs of individuals as well as of the population as whole is integral to helping them achieve good outcomes. Assessing the workplace English writing needs of SA police constables was indeed important.

Furthermore, the finding from this secondary research question highlights the importance of WIL because it is argued that competent writing at one point in a person's education or in one position may be radically different from competent writing at some other point in the professional network (Russell,1997:231). This emphasizes more the need to assess the police constables workplace English writing needs when they are already working rather than to assess them only during their basic training.

### **5.1.3 TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE SAPS TRAINING PROGRAMME ADDRESS POLICE OFFICERS' WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING NEEDS?**

#### **5.1.3.1 Key findings from the questionnaire.**

The majority of the research respondent (65.5%), indicated that the classroom teaching that they went through during their police basic training did not help them develop an English writing ability that is well suited for a police workplace as shown in Figure 4.9. This is one of the problems because police constables in this study also indicated that they wrote in English frequently at their workplace (90.6%) as it is shown in Figure 3.12. The argument is that if the classroom teaching at SAPS training academies is not helping even though the police constables write in English regularly their workplace, this will create problems with their English writing competency.

In addition, the study found that only 34.5% of the research participants indicated that the classroom teaching that they went through during their basic police training helped them to develop an English writing ability that is well suited for a police workplace as shown in Figure 4.9. It has also been found that 91.1% of the research participants indicated that they never had any type of English writing training that focused on a police workplace provided by SAPS as shown in Figure 4.10. It is also interesting to note that the study found that 54.2% of the participants indicated that they sometimes did English writing tasks during their police basic training as shown in Figure 4.11.

The study also found that 5.9% of the research participants had never done any English writing task during their SAPS police basic training as shown in Figure 4.11. The other key finding is that the majority (91.1 %) of the police indicated that during their many years (§ Figure 4.10) with SAPS, they have never received training that deals with English writing is surprising as shown in Figure 3.9. Ninety eight (48.3%) of the research participants indicated that they had been employed by SAPS for nearly ten (10) years while 95 (46.8%) of them indicated that they had been with SAPS for nearly five (5) years as it shown in Figure 3.9. This finding articulates to inadequate SAPS in-service training.

The other finding that is closely associated with the finding above is that the research participants did not receive English writing training both during basic training nor during their time as police officers. The study further found that thirty five (17.2%) of the research participants possess a national certificate, forty three (21.2%) possess a national diploma and eleven (5.4%) of them have a bachelor's degree. The majority of them (114 or 56.2%) did not have a post-secondary school qualification as shown in Figure 3.6. The researcher is of the opinion that this is also one of the probable factors influencing inadequate English writing ability of police constables because the assumption is that people who study further after secondary school have the potential to become better writers in English.

Furthermore, the research participants were also asked if they had a module which was specifically meant to teach English writing in a police workplace. In relation to this question, it was found that the majority of them (188 or 92.6%) indicated that they had never had a course during their basic police training that was meant to focus on English writing that was meant for police workplace as shown in Figure 4.12.

To return to the above finding, a closer look at the questionnaire data also shows a few conflicting issues. It is found that some research participants indicated that they have never received training that specifically focused on English writing for police workplace but when asked about the frequency of writing (in English) tasks/activities during their basic training, their answers ranged from 'always' to 'never'. This seems to suggest five possible scenarios depending on how one looks at it:

- There was once a course in the basic police training programme focusing specifically on English writing for police workplace which was probably discontinued (§ 5.3.1.1).
- The course was not compulsory to the police recruits.
- SAPS training academies offers different curricula.
- Some police trainers/instructors who had a passion for English writing offered extra lessons to those who were interested.
- Some research participants were not honest or did not understand the question.

### **5.1.3.2 Key findings from the interviews.**

It is found that all ten interviewees indicated that the training they received at SAPS training academies was inadequate as far as English writing is concerned. They were all of the opinion that this was due to a lack of an English writing course within the Basic Police Training Programme. This is reflected in the following responses: (1) *"Yes, I did that with my English diploma, police diploma. I did it with TUT and completed this year. I did not do it at the police academy. In that way I think we are limited at the training." I do not remember doing a writing course during training."*

(2) *“Nna (Me) I am not sure but I have problems with English. In police training they do not teach English.”*(3) *“For me basic training it wasn’t a mere fact of teaching me how to write and other things, it was teaching me about how the police officer operates. Basic training for me for writing. I did not do English as a subject or course at police basic training.”*

It is interesting to note that one police constable in addition to the lack of an English writing course, also mentioned the issue of a lack of time allocated for writing lessons during police basic training and this is reflected in this response: *“According to me it was not enough because if you can take the period that we were taught was too little, it was only six months and beside they didn’t teach us how to write the spellings they were only focusing on the work that we will be doing outside, so I think they should have this course of spelling and all the stuff that we need.”*

Based on the interviews findings above it is fair to conclude that these findings indicate that English in the SAPS training programme meant to address the police constables workplace English writing needs is insufficient.

### **5.1.3.3 Summary of the key findings**

The findings in this research question strongly support the principle of providing adequate police training programme which should include an English writing course. Furthermore this course should predominantly comprise vocabulary that is related to genre (§ 2.2.1). This further confirms Kay and Dudley-Evans’ (1998:310) finding that genre-based teaching programme are important because scaffolding built into genre-based teaching programmes and the model texts used give learners confidence. It is therefore important that police constables be taught the knowledge about police genre during their English writing lessons when they are doing their basic police training.

In addition, the principles behind the Needs analysis (NA) framework as proposed by researchers such as Hutchison and Waters (1987) can also be important when this suggested English writing course is compiled and developed (§ 2.2.3). In addition, to providing adequate academy training, the in-service training should also be sufficient and relevant in terms of the principles behind Work-Integrated Learning theory (§ 2.2.2).

#### **5.1.4 WHAT TYPE OF A TRAINING PROGRAMME CAN ENHANCE THE WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING COMPETENCIES OF SA POLICE CONSTABLES?**

##### **5.1.4.1 Key findings from the questionnaire.**

It has been found that 191 (94.1%) of the research participants would like the SAPS curriculum in SAPS police training academies to have a module that specifically focuses on English writing as shown in Figure 4.13. In addition, the study has also found that 89.2% of the research respondent wanted SAPS to offer them a support programme that would focus on English writing that is suitable for police work as shown in Figure 4.13.

Contrary to the above findings, the study further found that 10.8% of the research participants indicated that they did not want SAPS to offer them a support programme that would focus on English writing that is suitable for police work as shown in Figure 4.13. The probability is that these research participants could be the ones who attended private schools because of the assumption that the English of private schools' learners is better than the English of public schools' learners. This is indicated by Figure 3.5 which revealed that 7.4% of the research participants attended private school. In general, the study also found that the results in this study point to the in-service training provided by SAPS which has a lack with respect to English writing training that is tailored for police workplace.

#### 5.1.4.2 Key findings from the interviews.

The study found that all the ten interviewees indicated that they had never received any English writing training during their police basic training. This finding seems to validate the view that a training programme in SAPS training academies should have an English writing course which focuses specifically on workplace English writing ability.

The other important key finding that is linked to the one above is that ten of the research participants further indicated that during their police basic training, they did not have any English writing course or module which focused on English writing. This is further evidence that an English writing course within the SAPS training programme is essential if we want to improve the workplace English writing competency of SA police constables.

It is further found that all ten interviewees indicated that the SAPS basic police training programme should include an English writing course that focuses on workplace English writing tailored for police work. This sentiment is reflected in these responses: (1) *“If SAPS wants to have police officers who can write good English, then they must start teaching it even at the police training academies.”* (2) *“Definitely, definitely this must be included because after we passed from training, lots of things we are learning them here at the station and there are two different people who are teaching us these things, some are teaching their way which is wrong is not right but because I do not know I’ll think maybe because this is my senior if they want me do things this way I’ll do but this course or this module if they can include it there when we come back from there we will be super fine.”* (3) *“Most definitely because we do what we call statement taking. Statement taking is all about writing the contents, how you prepare and present your content so that when you take this statement put it in writing after in writing taking it to the court so that he person who is going to read it can clearly understand what are you saying.”*

In addition to the above finding, it has also found that the interviewees would like tense to be included in the proposed English writing course. This sentiment is captured in the following response: (4) *“These things called past tense, present and future tense are very difficult. When you study them you must understand them. The message in the sentence is controlled by this thing.”*

Furthermore on the question of the type of training programme that would enhance the police constables' workplace English writing competency, the participants' views were divided however equally important as can be expected. Some of their responses include:

(5) *“I think the most important will be sentence structure.”*

(6) *“I think sentencing, sentence structure, that we use so much at work cause when you are busy writing statement for somebody your statement must be having paragraphs, must be in sentences where it must have a little bit of breathing space so that somebody else or what your statement is all about.”*

(7) *“From the one I was answering about, I think cohesion is the one. As I said, with the spelling and the writing I do not have a problem so I can elaborate my sentence better when I am writing.”*

(8) *“Word classification and vocabulary cause whatever I wrote if the vocabulary is right it will make sense but if the vocabulary is wrong it won't make sense.”*

The study further found that there is a need for external English language specialists to come and offer lessons on English writing at SAPS police training academies and this is reflected in this response from one of the research participants: (9) *“Police training academies should get people who have the knowledge of English to come and teach at the police training academies. This type of people can just teach there on part-time basis but the management must be strict in controlling them because outsiders should not know what is happening in police training academy.”*

The study also found that police constables would appreciate it if SAPS in-service training could offer them opportunities to attend courses that deal with English writing. This is reflected in these responses: (10) *“SAPS should keep giving police officers opportunities to attend courses relevant to English writing.”* Another respondent also said the following: (11) *“If SAPS want to improve English language writing of police officers, it should provide in-service training where police officers attend courses like what is happening in Hammanskraal training academy. Hammanskraal training academy now provide a lot of courses for police officers.”*

#### **5.1.4.3 Summary of the key findings**

Furthermore, the key findings seem to validate the view that to enhance the English writing competency of police constables in the SAPS, a training programme which comprise the English writing course is required. In addition, this course should focus on the nine English writing sub-skills discussed in this study. Furthermore, there should be continuity between this suggested English writing course and the courses offered during police in-service training because this will be in-line with the principles of WIL theory.

Furthermore, a training that devotes ‘adequate’ time to workplace English writing during the police basic training should be prioritised by the SAPS. It should be noted that in-service training in the SAPS is part of the training. Therefore the in-service training that provides feedback to police officers (including police constables) about their English writing competency so that they are aware of their lacks regarding work English writing will be necessary. Data to provide this feedback can be provided using the NA framework.

The type of workplace English writing training should be delivered by either English writing experts or by police trainers/instructors who are well trained in the teaching of English writing is courses. The type of English writing training in the SAPS should be continuous and not only stop after basic training. Furthermore, training should comprise police work related to English writing activities so that it complies with the philosophy behind the genre and WIL theories.

In addition, the findings seem to indicate that the SAPS in its pursuit of improving the English writing ability of police constables, should introduce an English writing component within its in-service training programme. Alternatively, it should provide opportunities within its in-service training programme where police constables can learn English writing that is suitable for police workplace.

On the whole, the key findings in this research contribute directly or indirectly to the caveats in attaining adequate workplace English writing competence by the SAPS police constables. These encumbering factors need to be addressed soon if SAPS is serious about lessening the occurrence of the problem investigated in this study. The findings in this study culminate in the specific workplace English writing needs of police constables in South Africa in the sampled geographical region.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section presents the recommendations based on the caveats raised by the key findings of this study. These recommendations will address the following themes:

- Workplace English writing course for SA police officers
- Training in the SAPS workplace (Workplace learning phase)
- Training in the SAPS training academies (Academy phase)
- Curricular in the SAPS training academies
- Trainers/Instructors in the SAPS training academies

It is important to mention that these recommendations must be read in conjunction with the entire results, key findings and literature review of this investigation. The recommendations in this study are presented below.

#### **5.3.1 Training in the SAPS workplace.**

- 5.3.1.1 It is recommended that the English writing training programme in the SAPS should not be stopped after basic training in the police training academy, but should be a continuous and systematic process that also overlaps into the workplace as this has the potential of improving the workplace English writing competence of police constables and police officers at large. This recommendation is also supported by the findings of the study by Vergie (2006) who found that there is a lack of language training in basic police training as well as in-service training.
- 5.3.1.2 It is recommended that SAPS should devise and develop a comprehensive approach or strategy that can be used to determine a departmental in-service course that articulates to English writing that would be beneficial to their respective employees including police constables. The current process of determining the in-service training needs for members of SAPS in relation to writing does not seem to be effective or the in-service training itself programme itself is not effective with regards to English writing. Therefore the researcher recommends that the process of determining the in-service training needs for members of SAPS in relation to English writing be reviewed so that an effective and relevant one can be developed and implemented.
- 5.3.1.3 Furthermore, it is also recommended that the SAPS develops an annual skills audit programme with special emphasis on English language writing.

### 5.3.2 Training in the SAPS training academies.

- 5.3.2.1 It is recommended that a balance between the time allocated for academic learning (classroom learning) and physical training should be a priority at SAPS police training academies. This recommendation is suggested because this study found that there is lack of time devoted to English writing during the BPDLP training.
- 5.3.2.2 It is further recommended that SAPS training academies should introduce a continuous curriculum review process. This process will help in determining the type of courses (including an English writing course) to be included in their curricula at SAPS training academies.
- 5.3.2.3 It is recommended that people tasked with the development of BPDLP in SAPS should be encouraged to investigate and recognise aspects of the police work environment which seem to foster better writing among police officers and try to duplicate them in the SAPS BPDLP. In other words, the SAPS training curriculum (BPDLP) should be needs-based and comprise simulated work activities which some focus on English writing. This is imperative because a needs-based curriculum will have consequences for the teacher, the curriculum designer as well as for policy making at a broader societal level (Cooper, 1989).
- 5.3.2.4 It is further recommended that the SAPS training academies should develop an English writing course which would help create an awareness of metacognitive learning strategies (§ 5.3.4.2) in relation to English writing skills in learners (police recruits) because studies have shown that such awareness in learners increase their chance of being good writers (for example, Berthold, Nückles & Renkl, 2007; Nückles, Hübner & Renkl, 2009).

- 5.3.2.5 In addition to the above recommendations, it is also recommended that improved, relevant and sophisticated screening procedures in SAPS recruitment processes that focus on English writing should be developed. This should be done because potential police recruits come with varying degrees of English writing knowledge. Institutions of higher learning in the world employ different measures to guide them when taking decisions such as placement and admission decisions (for example, standardised test scores such as NBTs (National Benchmarking Tests) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)). It is recommended that SAPS police training academies under the guidance of selected institutions of higher learning in South Africa, should opt for a similar approach.
- 5.3.2.6 To improve the overall police English literacy of SAPS personnel including police constables and frontline police officers in general, a continuous needs assessment programme tailored to police English literacy needs should be designed and implemented. This could be in the form of an annual training needs analysis based on workplace needs information.
- 5.3.2.7 In addition to the recommendations above, and since the police instructors/trainers in police training academies are not language specialists, it is recommended that language specialists be hired specifically to teach English language writing in SAPS training academies in conjunction with police instructors/trainers or alternatively, trainers/instructors who are involved with the teaching of English writing in SAPS training academies should be taken for training on how to teach English writing.
- 5.3.2.8 Paterson (2011:288) argues that part of the reason for the lack of reform is the resistance from police officers to study in what is regarded as a practice-focused vocation. It is therefore recommended that the SAPS provide opportunities for SA police constables to study further as this has the potential to improve their English writing competency.

- 5.3.2.9 It is also recommended that the SAPS improve their English writing screening measures or processes so that English writing challenges of potential police recruits could be determined before they start with their police basic training (§ 5.3.2.5).
- 5.3.2.9 Furthermore, it is recommended that police instructors/trainers should be given opportunities to attend English writing workshops so that they can improve their 'teacher language awareness' (Andrews, 2003:81).
- 5.3.2.10 It is recommended that the SAPS training academies should ensure that there is a suitable teacher-learner ratio in their classrooms so that they can improve their training.

### **5.3.3 Curricula in the SAPS training academies.**

- 5.3.3.1 It is recommended that the SAPS training curriculum should include an English writing course. It is further recommended that this English writing course should run for the entire police basic training course (Academy phase) with two classroom periods of 45 minutes each per day. This English writing course should contain activities that should address the following English writing sub-skills (§3.4.1), among others:

- Sentence structure
- Spelling
- Tense
- Cohesion
- Expression
- Capitalisation
- Word classification
- Vocabulary
- Punctuation

- 5.3.3.2 Over and above the suggested English writing course, the researcher also recommends that teaching and learning in SAPS training academies should consider Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as an approach to their training as this will also help police recruits/trainees improve their English writing as it has been evidenced by studies such as the one by Coyle (2008) and Sherris (2008).
- 5.3.3.3 In addition, the researcher also recommends a hybrid syllabus (i.e. a situational and skill-based syllabus) for an English writing course in an SAPS training academy. This syllabus should be a skill-based syllabus which is situational in nature. In other words, the tasks in this syllabus should mimic real or imaginary police work where language occurs or is used. In addition, the content of these tasks should focus specifically on specific linguistic abilities (vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and tenses).
- 5.3.3.4 Furthermore, it is recommended in developing the suggested English writing course, SAPS training academies should try as much as possible to make police recruits/trainees aware of police genre because writing is socially situated in nature (Dias, Freedman, Medway & Paré, 1999). This is likely to improve their content and vocabulary knowledge as well as their workplace English writing ability
- 5.3.3.5 The researcher recommends that subject specialists (this should include curriculum design specialists) be either included or consulted during the development of the English writing module in the SAPS training academies (§5.3.2.7).
- 5.3.3.6 It is recommended that assessment of police recruits/trainees of English writing at SA police training academies should be improved. For example, this can be done by adapting previous English language examination question papers from institutions of higher learning (§ 5.3.2.9).

### **5.3.4 Trainers/Instructors in the SAPS training academies.**

5.3.4.1 Measures should be put in place to ensure that workplace mentors and academy English writing instructors/trainers are encouraged to work together to ensure that what is being taught at academies is correctly transferred into practice. Workplace mentors should, from time to time, communicate with police instructors/trainers at the academies and identify knowledge gaps and areas that need improving. This will also clarify the type of WIL approach that is required in a specific police context (§ 5.3.3.3).

5.3.4.2 It is recommended that police trainers/instructors in SA police training academies be encouraged to create an awareness of metacognitive learning strategies in relation to writing skills among learners (police recruits/trainees) during training. Studies have shown that such awareness in learners increases their chance of being good writers (for example, Berthold, Nückles & Renkl, 2009; Nückles, Hübner & Renkl, 2009) (§ 5.3.2.4).

In a nutshell, the recommendations above are based on the question, 'What type of a training programme can enhance the workplace English writing competencies of SA police constables?'

## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section presents suggestions for further research based on the findings in this study. During this study, the researcher discovered that there are areas of research with regard to the problem investigated in this study that require further inquiry. The researcher is of the view that further research on issues investigated in this study will be essential if it can perhaps be approached from different perspectives.

5.4.1 Research should be conducted to investigate the impact of the absence of an English writing module in the BPDLP on the inadequate English writing competence of police officers (including police constables).

5.4.2 Research should be conducted to investigate the impact on the administration of the SAPS in-service training on the inadequate English writing competence of police constables.

5.4.3 Further research on the actual writing of police constables instead of their perceptions regarding their inadequate English writing competence is required. This will help researchers to investigate correlations between the police constables' voices (perspective) and their actual writing.

5.4.4 Further research is needed on the pre-police academy writing experience of police constables. This will help in determining the type of English experiences they bring to the SAPS before they became police constables. This information will also be beneficial to the SAPS training academies.

5.4.5 The United Nations Development Program Bangladesh (2007:39) states the following:

*In many police training institutions assessment and evaluation are poorly handled ... assessment is often based on a test of rote learning ability and evaluation ... Encouraging rote learning, often linked with surface learning, is not considered appropriate for a police service...*

In view of this proposition, further research on the impact of poor English writing assessment in South African police training academies on the workplace English writing competence of police constables should be conducted.

Finally, this study further revealed that there are few studies about the inadequate English writing ability of police constables in South Africa. Yet a deep understanding of this problem is essential if they are to be understood and addressed. It is therefore recommended that further studies be conducted on the challenges of inadequate English writing competency within police workforce.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

The thrust of this study was to determine the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs in the Gauteng province, in South Africa and displayed the police constables' workplace English writing needs by focusing on specifically selected themes and English writing sub-skills. In the process of doing so, factors that encumber adequate workplace English writing ability surfaced. It is concluded among other things, that the cause of police constables' inadequate English writing competency results from many intertwined and interrelated factors starting from the police training programmes to individual preferences.

This study was founded on the assumption that police constables' inadequate workplace English writing ability is influenced by, among other things, their lack of English proficiency and lack of sufficient and relevant English writing training in SAPS police training academies and this has been proven to be the case.

On the whole, the key findings in this study project a complete and holistic (based on the questionnaire and interview data) picture of the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs, thus the primary question 'what are the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs' is successfully answered. In the same breath, the primary research aim which is 'to determine the perceptions and experiences of South African police constables' workplace English writing needs' is also successfully achieved.

It is evident from the findings in this study that unless the police recruits (future police constables) in SA are offered a specially designed workplace English writing course with special emphasis on specially selected writing sub-skills, there would be very little improvement of the SA police officers English writing competency. Of equal importance is that police trainers/instructors in SA police training academies be trained in teaching English writing so that they can teach English writing well in the SA police training academies. Furthermore, SAPS in-service programme should, among other skills, focus more on English writing skills in the workplace environment to enhance the English writing competency of police officers including the police constables.

This study has contributed to the literature on workplace English writing needs of police officers, in particular SA police constables by identifying the factors that hamper adequate English writing ability of police constables, strategies that can be employed to address the challenges in the areas within writing which police constables should improve on and lastly by proposing initiatives that the SAPS as a department could embark upon to improve the English writing skills of police constables and police officers in general.

Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of research on workplace English writing competence in police discourse – not only focusing on police constables, but on police officers in general. The study has thus contributed to the existing body of knowledge regarding English language writing in police discourse. The researcher hopes that this study has helped illuminate possible constraints in the attainment of adequate workplace English writing ability by police constables. The researcher further trusts that the findings of this study will serve as a basis for other research projects on workplace English writing in police discourse.

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## APPENDIX A:

### APPLICATION LETTER TO DO RESEARCH IN THE SAPS

G.P.S 002-0222

SAPS 21

SUID-AFRIKAANSE POLISIEDIENS



SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

Private Bag X57 Braamfontein 2017

Verwysing	: 3/34/2 (201400011)
Reference	
Navrae	: Lt Col J Moolman / SAC Linda Ladzani
Enquiries	
Telefoon	: 011 274 7324
Telephone	
Sel nommer	: 076 499 8661
Cell number	
Epos	: ladzanim@saps.gov.za
E-mail	

THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER  
GAUTENG PROVINCE  
PARKTOWN  
2017

2014-04-14

- A. The Deputy Provincial Commissioner: Operations Officer  
S A Police Service  
**GAUTENG**
- B. The Provincial Head: Human Resource Development  
S A Police Service  
**GAUTENG**
- C. The Provincial Head: Legal Services  
S A Police Service  
**GAUTENG**

**APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH: MR KEKANA: WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING NEEDS: A CASE STUDY OF PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCES OF POLICE CONSTABLES AT SELECTED POLICE STATIONS IN GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

A: For your approval  
B & C: For your recommendation

1. Attached herewith is an application from the above mentioned person to conduct research within the SAPS.
2. The application has been evaluated by the Provincial Research Centre (Strategic Management) as per the attached Annexure and found to be in compliance with National Instruction 1 of 2006: Research.
3. In the opinion of the Research Centre, the research will be to the advantage of the SAPS as it will contribute towards addressing workplace English writing challenges experienced by constables in their daily work. It will constitute a basis upon which some interventions can be made in order to address the identified challenges. It also has potential to help improve the SAPS training curriculum as far as English is concerned.

**APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH: MR KEKANA: WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING NEEDS: A CASE STUDY OF PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCES OF POLICE CONSTABLES AT SELECTED POLICE STATIONS IN GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

4. In line with National Instruction 1 of 2006, you are afforded the opportunity to comment on the relevance and feasibility of the proposed research within your area of responsibility. Any objections against the research will be noted and you will be requested to clarify and motivate those with the Provincial Head: Organisational Development & Strategic Management.
5. In order to ensure the effective and efficient finalisation of this application you are requested to forward your comments back to the Provincial Project Centre within the allocated timeframe for attention (SAC Linda Ladzani at 011 274 7324).
6. Your cooperation and assistance is appreciated.



PROVINCIAL HEAD: ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGIC  
MANAGEMENT

SJ PHETO

Date: 2014/04/16

BRIGADIER

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE SAPS**



#### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SAPS**

**RESEARCH TOPIC:** MR KEKANA: WORKPLACE ENGLISH WRITING NEEDS: A CASE STUDY OF PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCES OF POLICE CONSTABLES AT SELECTED POLICE STATIONS IN GAUTENG PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

**RESEARCHER:** MR KEKANA

Permission is hereby granted to the researcher above to conduct research in the SAPS based on the conditions of National Instruction 1 of 2006 (as handed to the researcher) and within the limitations as set out below and in the approved research proposal.

This permission must be accompanied with the signed Indemnity, Undertaking & Declaration and presented to the commander present when the researcher is conducting research.

This permission is valid for a period of six months after signing.

Any enquiries with regard to this permission must be directed to Lt Col Moolman at [moolmani@saps.gov.za](mailto:moolmani@saps.gov.za) or SAC Linda Ladzani at [Ladzanim@saps.org.za](mailto:Ladzanim@saps.org.za).

#### **RESEARCH LIMITATIONS / BOUNDARIES:**

Research Instruments:	Questionnaires Tests (written or other) Interviews (Semi-structured)
Target audience / subjects:	Constables from the Clusters and Police Stations.
Geographical target:	Pretoria (Mamelodi Cluster, PTA Central Cluster and Sunnyside Cluster)
Access to official documents:	None

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NP Masiye', is written over a circular stamp or seal.

MAJOR GENERAL  
DEPUTY PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER: OPERATIONS OFFICER  
NP MASIYE

**APPENDIX C:**

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER FROM UNISA**



**MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Prof FA Kalua  
Chair: Higher Degrees Committee,  
Department of English Studies

**To:** Mr TJ Kekana  
PhD, student no: 49112317

**Date:** 02 April 2014

**SUBJECT:** COMPLIANCE WITH RESEARCH ETHICS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

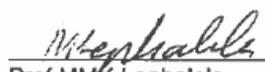
This letter confirms that Mr TJ Kekana has complied with the requirements of the Higher Degrees Committee in the Department of English Studies. His proposal has been approved and he is now working on the research study on *Workplace English writing needs: a case study of perspectives and experiences of police constables at selected police stations in Gauteng Province, South Africa.*

The department confirms the following:

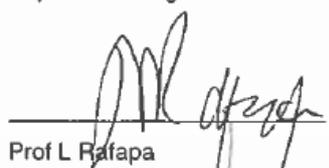
- Mr Kekana is a registered PhD student in the Department of English Studies at UNISA
- He is expected to work closely with his supervisor, Prof MMK Lephahala.
- He is aware of the Unisa Ethical Research policy and is expected to adhere to the policy requirements.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof FA Kalua  
Chair: Higher Degrees Committee

Date: 03/04/2014

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof MMK Lephahala  
Supervisor: English Studies

Date: 03/04/2014

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Prof L Rafapa  
Chair of Department: English Studies

Date: 04/04/14

## **APPENDIX D:**

### **CONSENT LETTER TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

02 May 2014

Dear Research Participant

I would like to kindly invite you to take part in my research project for my doctoral study in which I try to better understand the Workplace English Writing Needs of Police Constables in the Gauteng province, South Africa. This study is solely for the fulfilment of a PhD degree. You have been selected to take part in this research project due to you being a police constable in the Gauteng province, South Africa. This makes you the right candidate for this research because the researcher feels that during your time as a police constable in SAPS you have gained a lot of valuable experience that could be very helpful in this research as far as workplace English writing needs are concerned.

Through your insight, the researcher hopes to learn and perhaps improve SAPS training with regards to workplace English language writing. Your involvement in this research project will entail completing a questionnaire and taking part in an interview which will last between ten (10) and fifteen (15) minutes. The questionnaire takes approximately thirty (30) minutes to complete. Please note that the interviews will be recorded for transcription purposes only. However if you are not comfortable with this arrangement, you are free to let me know that you do not want to be recorded. This activity will be carried out at different times and days with different individuals (times and days that are convenient for you and your police station). Please note that you will not be paid for taking part in this research project.

Please note that your participation in this research project is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any question you may not want to. The researcher in this project is a lecturer at the University of South Africa (Unisa) in the English department.

The information gathered in this study will be strictly confidential. No reference to specific names (individuals) will be made while reporting on the study. The information provided will only be used for research purposes and, if required, the results of this study will be shared with participants and the department (SAPS).

Yours sincerely

Mr Kekana Tebogo Johannes

English Studies

UNISA

012 429 3806

kekanjt@unisa.ac.za



**APPENDIX E:**  
**POLICE CONSTABLES' QUESTIONNAIRE**

Serial (official use)

Dear participant

**Workplace English Writing Needs: A Case Study of Perceptions and Experiences of Police Constables at selected Police Stations in the Gauteng Province, South Africa**

The researcher would like to thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. Your honest opinion will be very important as this will help the SAPS department to improve the training of future police officers with regards to English writing which is relevant to police work. This research is conducted with the approval of the Provincial Commissioner of SAPS Gauteng Province. Please return the completed questionnaire to the management office of the police station on or before 08 August 2014. This questionnaire consists of thirty two (32). In addition, please fill in the consent form attached to this questionnaire.

Kekana TJ

(Researcher/Lecturer; Department of English Studies: UNISA)

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**Section A: Biographical information**

**Instructions:** Please indicate your answer by circling the number that applies to you in the box below

<b>1. Gender</b>		For official use
Male	1	<input type="text"/>
Female	2	

1

2. What is <b>your race</b> ?		For official use
African	1	<input type="text"/> 2
Coloured	2	
White	3	
Indian	4	

**Instruction:** Please indicate your answer by making a circle on the number that applies to you in the box below

3. Choose your <b>age group</b> below	For official use	
20-29	1	<input type="text"/> 3
30-39	2	
40-49	3	
50 -59	4	
60-65 and more	5	

4. At what grade did you <b>start to learn English</b> ?		For official use
Grade 1	1	<input type="text"/>
Grade 2	2	
Grade 3	3	
Grade 4	4	
Grade 5	5	
Grade 6	6	
Grade 7	7	
Grade 8	8	
Grade 9	9	
Grade 10	10	
Grade 11	11	
Grade 12	12	

5. What type of <b>school</b> did you attend (both primary and secondary/High)?		For official use
Public	1	<input type="text"/>
Private	2	
Independent (e.g. missionary school)	3	

6. What was the language of <b>instruction at your primary school?</b>	For official use	
English	1	<input data-bbox="1273 477 1505 528" type="text"/> 6
Afrikaans	2	
Both (English and Afrikaans)	3	
Other (specify) _____	4	

7. What was the language of <b>instruction at your high/secondary school?</b>	For official use	
English	1	<input data-bbox="1273 1169 1505 1220" type="text"/> 7
Afrikaans	2	
Both (English and Afrikaans)	3	
Other (specify) _____	4	

8. What is your <b>highest qualification</b> ?	For official use	
Grade 12/ Matric	1	<input type="text"/> 8
National Certificate (M+1)	2	
National Diploma	3	
Bachelor Degree/B Tech	4	
Honours degree	5	
Masters degree and above	6	

9. What is your <b>home language</b> ?		For official use
English	1	<input type="text"/> 9
Afrikaans	2	
Sepedi	3	
Setswana	4	
Xitsonga	5	
Zulu	6	
Venda	7	
Xhosa	8	
IsiNdebele	9	
Other (Specify) _____	10	

10. What percentage did you obtain for English on your National Senior Certificate/ Matric Certificate?	For official use	
0 – 29 %	1	<div data-bbox="1209 421 1453 479" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 153px; height: 26px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"></div> <div data-bbox="1417 479 1453 510" style="text-align: right;">10</div>
30 – 39 %	2	
40 – 49 %	3	
50 – 59 %	4	
60 – 69 %	5	
70 -79 %	6	
80 -89 %	7	

11. How many years have you been with SAPS?		For official use
1-3 years	1	<div data-bbox="1273 1167 1501 1225" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 143px; height: 26px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"></div> <div data-bbox="1469 1225 1506 1256" style="text-align: right;">11</div>
3-5 years	2	
5-10 years	3	

**Instruction:** If your answer to the below question is 2, indicate whether it is 2.1 or 2.2 (please)

12. <b>Prior to joining SAPS</b> , what were you involved in? Choose from the options below. If your answer is 2, please indicate if is 2.1 or 2.2		For official use	
Student/Pupil		1	<input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> 12
Labourer		2	
a)Skilled		2.1	
b)Semi skilled		2.2	
other		3	

**Section B: Perceptions and Experiences**

**1. English writing knowledge**

**Instruction:** Please indicate your answer by circling the number that applies to you (1,2or 3) in the box below

- Competent : able to write in English competently at all levels
- Limited : there are writing subskills that you feel you are still lacking in.
- Incompetent : inability to write well in English. You are really struggling at this level.

13. How do you rate <b>your writing ability in English?</b>			
Competent	1	<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> 13	
Limited	2		
Incompetent	3		

14. Please rate **your English writing ability** based on the below scale by circling the number (1,2,3 or 4) that applies to you in each activity:

- Competent : able to write in English competently at all levels
- Limited : there are writing subskills that you feel you are still lacking in.
- Incompetent : inability to write well in English. You are really struggling at this level.

1 = I am competent

2 = I am not competent enough / Limited

3 = I am competent more than enough / Highly competent

4 = I am not competent/ I am incompetent

	Please circle the number (1,2,3 or 4) which applies to you on each of the writing aspect.				
Correct sentence structure	1	2	3	4	<input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> 14
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	1	2	3	4	
Correct spelling of words	1	2	3	4	
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	1	2	3	4	
Expression (clear and unambiguous)	1	2	3	4	
Tenses	1	2	3	4	
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	
Word classifications (e.g. Noun, adverb)	1	2	3	4	
Correct capitalization	1	2	3	4	

15. How do you rate the importance of the following aspects in a **writing activity**?  
Please rate these activities by circling the number (1,2,3 or 4) that applies to you in each activity using the below scale:

- 1 = Definitely important
- 2 = Probably important
- 3 = Definitely unimportant
- 4 = Probably unimportant

	Please circle the number (1,2,3 or 4) which applies to you on each of the writing aspect.				
Correct sentence structure	1	2	3	4	<input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> 15
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	1	2	3	4	
Correct spelling of words	1	2	3	4	
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	1	2	3	4	
Expression (clear and unambiguous)	1	2	3	4	
Tenses	1	2	3	4	
Punctuation	1	2	3	4	
Word classifications (e.g. Noun, adverb)	1	2	3	4	
Correct capitalization	1	2	3	4	

16. What is your <b>area of difficulty with regards to writing in English?</b>	For official use	
Correct sentence structure	1	<div data-bbox="1273 443 1469 501" style="border: 1px solid black; width: 123px; height: 26px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"></div> <div data-bbox="1433 501 1469 533" style="text-align: right;">16</div>
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	2	
Correct spelling of words	3	
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	4	
Expression (clear and unambiguous)	5	
Punctuation	6	
Word classification	7	
Capitalisation	8	

17. Please rate **your present English writing ability on each** of the following activities by selecting a number (1,2,3,4,5 or 6) which applies to you.

**CODE**

1 = Not satisfactory

2 = Satisfactory

3 = Fair

4 = Excellent

For office use

17

Correct sentence structure	1	2	3	4
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	1	2	3	4
Correct spelling of words	1	2	3	4
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	1	2	3	4
Tenses	1	2	3	4
Expression	1	2	3	4
Punctuation	1	2	3	4
Word classifications (e.g. Noun, adverb)	1	2	3	4
Correct capitalization	1	2	3	4

18. Please rate the following writing subskills in terms of **their potential to improving your writing ability** by circling the number (1,2,3 or 4) that applies to you in the appropriate box below

**CODE**

1 = Definitely unimportant

2 = Probably unimportant

3 = Probably important

4 = Definitely important

For office use

18

Correct sentence structure	1	2	3	4
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	1	2	3	4
Correct spelling of words	1	2	3	4
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	1	2	3	4
Expression (clear and unambiguous)	1	2	3	4
Tenses	1	2	3	4
Punctuation	1	2	3	4
Word classifications	1	2	3	4
Correct capitalization	1	2	3	4

Source: Adapted from Flower, 2002

19. How often in week during your daily work do **you do these activities?** Rate the activities by circling the number (1,2,3 or 4) that applies to you in each activity using the below scale.

19

- 1 means that : I never or almost never do this.
- 2 means that : I do this only occasionally.
- 3 means that : I sometimes do this.
- 4 means that : I usually do this.
- 5 means that : I always or almost always do this

Report writing (e.g. accident report)	1	2	3	4	5
Letter writing	1	2	3	4	5
Requests	1	2	3	4	5
Notices	1	2	3	4	5
Communique	1	2	3	4	5
Statement writing	1	2	3	4	5

20. To what extent does your English writing ability limit **your performance in these crucial police activities**? Circle the number (1,2 or 3) that applies to you in each activity.

	Limited a Lot	Limited a Little	Not Limited at All	
Statement writing	1	2	3	<input style="width: 40px; height: 40px;" type="text"/> 20
Report writing (e.g. Accident)	1	2	3	
Dockets writing	1	2	3	
Transcribing	1	2	3	
Translations	1	2	3	
Writing down information from Interviews	1	2	3	
Letter writing	1	2	3	
Notice writing	1	2	3	

21. To what extent **do you have difficulties** in the following English writing aspects?  
 Indicate your answer by circling the number (1, 2 or 3) that applies to you in each activity.

	Limited a Lot	Limited a Little	Not Limited at All	
Correct sentence structure	1	2	3	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/> 21
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	1	2	3	
Correct spelling of words	1	2	3	
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	1	2	3	
Expression (clear and unambiguous)	1	2	3	
Tenses	1	2	3	
Punctuation	1	2	3	
Word classifications	1	2	3	
Correct capitalization	1	2	3	

22. Is English language an <b>important component</b> of your police work?	For official use	
Yes	1	<input style="width: 40px; height: 30px;" type="text"/> 22
Sometimes	2	
No	3	

23. Does your <b>current knowledge of English assist you to carry out your functions</b> as a police constable effectively?	For official use	
Yes	1	<input type="text"/> 23
It is okay but not satisfactorily	2	
No	3	

24. Do you think the police curriculum in police training academies in SA should <b>have a module which teaches English writing which focuses on police workplace?</b>	For official use	
No	1	<input type="text"/> 24
Yes	2	

25. Do you think the type of classroom teaching that you went through during your basic police training <b>helped you to improve your English writing ability that is well suited for police workplace?</b>	For official use	
No	1	<input type="text"/> 25
Yes	2	

26. <b>Do you think police constables in SA</b> have inadequate English writing ability?		<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> 26
Disagree	1	
Disagree slightly	2	
Agree	3	
Agree slightly	4	

27. Since you have been a police officer have you ever had any type of training that deals with <b>English writing ability which focuses on police workplace?</b>		<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> 27
Yes	1	
No	2	

28. During your time as a police officer <b>have you ever received a complaint</b> that deals with your English writing ability?		<input style="width: 100px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> 28
Yes	1	
No	2	
Sometimes	3	

29. How often during your police basic training at the police training academy <b>were you doing English writing tasks?</b>		<input type="text"/> 29
Always	1	
Very often	2	
Sometimes	3	
Almost never	4	
Never	5	

30. Would you like SAPS to offer you a <b>support programme</b> specifically focusing on workplace English writing?		
Yes	1	<input type="text"/> 30
No	2	

31. What do you want to be helped with regarding the selected writing subskills? Rate the type of help you need by circling the number (1, 2 or 3) that applies to you in each aspect.

**Code**

1=I want to be helped with this a lot

2= I want to be helped with this a little

3=do not want to be helped with this at all

Correct sentence structure	1	2	3	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> 31
Cohesion (flow of ideas)	1	2	3	
Correct spelling of words	1	2	3	
Correct words for context (vocabulary)	1	2	3	
Expression (clear and unambiguous)	1	2	3	
Tenses	1	2	3	
Punctuation	1	2	3	
Word classifications	1	2	3	
Correct capitalization	1	2	3	

32. Did your <b>police basic training</b> have a module which focused on English writing for <b>police work</b> ?		
Yes	1	<input type="text"/> 32
No	2	
Not sure	3	

**Thank you!**

**APPENDIX F:**

**POLICE CONSTABLES' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Serial (official use)

Dear participant

**Workplace English Writing Needs: A Case Study of Perceptions and Experiences of Police Constables at selected Police Stations in the Gauteng Province, South Africa**

The researcher will like to thank you for taking time to participate in this interview. Your honest opinion will be very important as this will help police trainers/instructors as well as the SAPS department to improve the training of future police officers with regards to workplace English writing. This research is conducted with the approval of the Provincial Commissioner of SAPS Gauteng Province.

Kekana TJ

(Researcher/Lecturer; Department of English Studies: UNISA)

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**Interviewer Introduction:** My name is Tebogo Johannes Kekana. With your permission, I would like to kindly ask you some few questions about your overall English writing competency and your background.

**A. Background information**

What is your birth year? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your race? \_\_\_\_\_

When did you join SAPS? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your mother tongue? \_\_\_\_\_

**B. English writing perceptions and experiences related questions**

1. Are you comfortable writing in English at your workplace?

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2. Are you competent, incompetent or limited with regards to your English writing ability?

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3. Between sentence structure, cohesion, spelling, vocabulary, tense, punctuation sentence structure, word classification and capitalization which one do you think is the most important in helping you improve your writing ability so that you can function effectively in your workplace?

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4. Have you ever received any complain about your English writing ability?

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5. Between sentence structure, cohesion, spelling, vocabulary, tense, punctuation, word classification and capitalization which one do you have difficulty in which makes it difficult for you to function effectively in your workplace?

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6. Do you think what you have been taught during your police basic training has prepared you enough with regards to English writing that is relevant for your workplace?

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7. Did your police basic training have a module which focused on English writing for police work?

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8. Do you think the module that teaches English writing should be part of police basic training curriculum?

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9. Do you think adequate writing ability in English is important to your workplace?

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10. Would you like SAPS to offer you a support programme specifically focusing on workplace English writing?

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11. What do you think trainers/instructors in SA police training academies should do to improve English language writing of future police constables?

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12. What do you think SAPS in general should do to improve English language writing of police constables?

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13. Do you like English language?

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**Thank you!**