

**THE INTERDEPENDENCE HYPOTHESIS:
EXPLORING THE EFFECTS ON ENGLISH WRITING FOLLOWING AN
EXPOSITORY WRITING COURSE IN ZULU**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores Cummins' interdependence hypothesis in the South African context. The design is experimental, involving Zulu primary language writing instruction to explore whether skills taught in Zulu composition classes transfer into English expository writing. The intervention and control groups were drawn from two ex-Model C high schools and the focus was on measuring use of coherence and cohesion in English essays. Quantitative findings showed, although the intervention group's writing skills did not improve significantly, they did not decline. By contrast, the control group's writing skills declined significantly. A more qualitative investigation of the corpus supports the statistical findings. However, because of the limitations of this study, more research is required into Cummins' hypothesis, bilingual programmes and teaching academic writing skills in African languages. It is hoped that this research design will benefit future researchers investigate the current debate about the efficacy of bilingual and multilingual approaches to education.

Key terms

Interdependence hypothesis; Transference of writing skills; Expository writing; Coherence; Cohesion; Bilingualism and Multilingualism; Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP); Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS); Home Language Project.

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