CREATING SPACE(S) FOR VOICE IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING THROUGH
MEMOIR WRITING: A CASE STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT AN ODL
UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

Sydney Fetsie Maluleke

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND

LITERATURE

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
SUPERVISOR: PROF. M.M.K. LEPHALALA
CO-SUPERVISOR: PROF. D.C. BYRNE

November 2024

DECLARATION

Name: Sydney Fetsie Maluleke

Student number: 48890464

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Languages, Linguistics and Literature

I, Sydney Fetsie Maluleke, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled CREATING SPACE(S) FOR VOICE IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC WRITING THROUGH MEMOIR WRITING: A CASE STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS AT AN ODL UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA, is my own original work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality. I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

Signature: **Date:** 16 November 2024

Acknowledgements and Dedications

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this work from its commencement. The journey was a long and tough one, but it was through the unwavering support of my two supervisors, Professor MMK Lephalala and Professor DC Byrne, that I pulled through until triumph.

I further appreciate everyone who contributed to my growth and development throughout the years. My parents, Mr Yingwani John Maluleke and Mrs Thembi Maluleke, my two brothers Keat and Dempsey and my sister, Mapule, thank you.

I dedicate this masterpiece to my two children, Tsatsawani and Omphile. It is at this fountain that they will absorb wisdom.

Khanimambo!

Abstract

Expressing and developing their own voice in academic writing remains a challenge for first-year university students, particularly in Open Distance e-Learning (ODeL) contexts. Students' limited linguistic repertoires and the gap between their prior writing skills and lecturers' expectations tend to result in limited self-efficacy, frustrations and withdrawal from developing their voice which is considered an important component of proficiency in writing and the measurement of academic success.

To this end, my study examines how memoir writing can enhance first-year students' development of voice in academic writing, and the extent to which the written pedagogies in a first-year English module affords them the opportunity to do so. The Sociocultural Theory of writing and the Interactionist Model of academic voice underpin my perceptions of voice in academic writing. Data was collected for this qualitative case study through in-depth interviews, documents and observations, and analysed thematically. The population comprised first-year students registered for an English module at an ODeL university, and the sample was purposively selected. The students participated in a Memoir Writing Project and their work from that, as well as their written assignments from the module, were analysed to gain insight into how their various tasks and memoirs were structured to create space for and develop their academic writing voice.

The findings revealed that students lacked exposure to a wide enough variety of writing genres, particularly those belonging to life writing such as memoir. The individual and collaborative writing activities adopted in the Memoir Writing Project enhanced the students' understanding of what voice and writing as social constructs entail, and showed that voice is a fundamental component which gives writers ownership and authority over the meaning of a text.

In addition, the findings revealed that collaborations among students during memoir writing boosted their self-confidence and enhanced critical thinking. An analysis of the memoirs also showed that memoir writing can be useful for therapeutic purposes, as some of the students disclosed past traumas. In the process of writing, they found closure and gained a better understanding of why certain events had taken place.

In addition, the findings showed that certain questions in the written assignments in the module adopted prescriptive approaches to writing that demanded only lower-order thinking skills associated with a regurgitation of information. Such questions encourage students to provide

fragmented sentences that tend to hinder their development of voice in academic writing. As a result, students are inclined to view the primary purpose of writing as a way of attaining marks rather than a means of developing their voice and their higher-order thinking skills.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction and Background

The expression of voice in academic writing has been key aspects of research on students' writing over the years (Oshchepkova and Alkhaldi, 2018; Motlhaka, 2020; Nikolenko et al., 2021; Alfaruqy et al., 2022). As Matsuda and Jeffrey (2012: 151) argue, "voice in written language – . . . a metaphorical concept capturing the sense of author identity that comes through when readers interact with texts – has intrigued many writing teachers and researchers". Traditional positivists discouraged the expression of voice in academic writing, arguing that it is distractive, amateurish and unprofessional (Bi Ambe, 2020). Writers in the academic domain were expected to be detached, faceless, objective and distant and make use of a passive voice (Elbow, 1994; Tang and John, 1999; Hewett, 2004; Matsuda and Jeffrey, 2012; Rahimivand and Kuhi, 2014). In contrast, current discourse argues that writing cannot be devoid of the author's presence as it provides an important dimension of the person with the pen. It helps authors negotiate their identity within a discourse community, proclaims their presence in a text and serves as a weapon of self-empowerment. Similarly, Ivanič and Camps (2001: 5), who are not proponents of traditional conceptions of writing, state that "there is no such thing as 'impersonal' writing because writers convey messages about themselves by such acts as using the word 'they', 'she', or 'he' to refer to people in general". In its nature, academic writing is "an act of identity: it not only conveys ideational content but also carries a representation of the writer" (Hyland, 2002: 1092). Therefore, in this study I argue that voice in academic writing cannot be placed at the periphery as it is not optional but an important aspect of expression and positioning within a discourse community (Hyland, 2008). In addition, it is a fundamental component that determines successful academic writing, and its significance cannot be overlooked as it enables authors to reclaim their authority and ownership of a text (Allison, 2018; Morton and Storch, 2019; Sun et al., 2022).

The concept of 'voice' alludes to the writer's expressive ability, a sense of presence and a marker of identity in academic writing (Peng, 2019). According to Blommaert (2008), it is the ability to talk and express things in relation to one's personal views, judgement, feelings, emotions, and experiences. In addition, the writer's expression is aligned to societal and cultural needs. While voice and identity tend to overlap in writing, identity mainly refers to a sense of self as an individual or a member of a social category (De Fina, 2019). However, both identity and voice are social constructs that are regarded as aspects of a discourse community (Hyland, 2002). To this end, in this study I argue that voice is constructed within a sociocultural

context and aligned to social interactions in a disciplinary community. In academic writing, an authorial voice comprises two components, that is, stance-taking and engagement (Hyland, 2008): stance encompasses the author's attitude, opinion, judgement and position towards an idea, whereas engagement entails the way in which the author uses language to engage with the readers (audience) and other members within the discourse community. In this study, I adopt Hyland's (2008) conceptualisation of voice as stance-taking and engagement to explore first-year students' development of an academic writing voice.

It is noteworthy that in multilingual writing contexts, students bring and recreate multiple ways of constructing their voices. Thus, the teaching of academic writing should be open to plural possibilities of self-representation.

The development of an academic writing voice remains a challenge for students at South African universities as the language policies continue to adopt monoglossic approaches of teaching that uphold hegemony of English at the expense of the practices and knowledge systems of students speaking African languages (Angu, 2018; Angu, Boakye, and Eybers, 2020). Despite the upsurge of diversity at universities, English remains the medium of instruction and, as much as this perpetuates monolithic beliefs that it is the only medium of expression, it also draws on students' unique voices, identities, languages, cultures, knowledge systems, and ways of knowing and doing (Angu, 2018). As a result, students speaking other African languages are forced to assimilate into their institutions' dominant culture to gain epistemic access (De Kadt and Mathonsi, 2003). In this case, the development of an academic voice depends on students' abilities to acquire new modes of meaning-making, while neglecting their unique ways of expression. In this study, I propose that academic writing pedagogies at universities should be centred on students' needs and should build on what *they* know: their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as their identities. Moreover, pedagogies should create adequate space for students to take ownership over their writing through giving them the control over their own voices in their own way.

Between 2015 and 2016, South Africa – and the watching world – witnessed an uprising as students demanded universities to decolonise. Apart from destroying what they deemed to be monuments to colonisation, students demanded that learning and teaching decolonise. Postma (2019: 7) argues that "the process of decoloniality is characterized by an openness to pedagogies, epistemologies and forms of governance that promote a plurality of becoming". It adopts a humanistic approach that places students' needs at the centre of learning and teaching as a way of maximising epistemic access (Zembylas, 2018). In addition, Angu, Boakye, and

Eybers (2020) assert that it is responsive to students' unique linguistic and cultural contexts and encourages students to draw from their own histories, identities, and experiences in generating their voice. I am a proponent of restorative ways of teaching academic writing. I argue that students should be encouraged to employ their own modes drawn from their own linguistic repertoires to construct their academic voice.

To this end, I propose memoir writing as a model for developing students' academic voices where it functions as a foundation for helping students understand the nature of voice in writing and the need for self-confidence in expressing themselves. I also examine how first-year students registered for an English module engage with their voice as members of different disciplinary communities.

Memoir writing falls into the category of life writing, which Pennebaker and Beall (1986) allude to as expressive writing, although it is related to personal account that focuses on a specific event in one's life, based on memory, with the self being the subject. Hampl (1999) and Whitlock (2004) conceive of memoir writing as an act of self-reinvention through the process of recounting and reflection. Opposing the view that the conventions of memoir writing and academic writing are rigid and unrelated, Mendelowitz and Ferreira (2007: 487) assert that personal narratives, such as memoir, can benefit the development of an academic voice in "[facilitating students'] critical engagement with their own . . . identities [and] that personal narratives are a powerful educational tool, generating the opportunity for students to engage with multiple voices and to (re-)position themselves in relation to a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences". According to them, memoir writing provides students with opportunities and the freedom to experiment with their own voices by drawing on their personal modes of communication, linguistic resources, cultures and knowledge systems.

My hypothesis is that memoir writing can benefit students in their development of an understanding of what a writing voice entails, while making links with academic writing. Academic writing and memoir are discrete, but this study uses them holistically to help harness students' development of voice in academic states. Memoir writing introduces the concept of voice and allows students to gain confidence of expression. Their learning in memoir writing is scaffolded into voice in academic writing. To this end, I aim to gain insight into how students can develop an academic writing voice by writing memoirs.

1.2. Rationale for the Study

My interest in the topic has been motivated by personal and professional interests. It resonates with my experiences of developing academic writing skills as a non-native English speaker at an English-medium university. Upon enrolling for my undergraduate degree, I encountered many challenges concerning academic writing, particularly voice. These challenges were related to poor proficiency in English and a lack of experience of academic writing conventions. The discourse patterns of my home language, Xitsonga, interfered with my development in writing in English. As Hunma (2011) argues, these challenges - hamper our academic fluency and reveal gaps between prior academic literacies and current discipline requirements. As much as I developed proficiency in English and academic writing, the suppression of the discourse patterns I knew from childhood impacted negatively on my construction of a unique academic voice. My experiences are shared by most students who do not come from first-language English backgrounds (De Silva, 2015).

My quest for my own voice in writing developed my passion for biography, and I am now the author of three biographies about legendary South African musicians: *Soul Brothers – The Life and Times* (2017); *Steve Kekana – The I in Me* (2019), and *Dr Thomas Chauke – Everything is Ximatsatsa* (2022). Each is a collation of voices, the musicians the subjects, band members, music producers, commentators, journalists, family members and their followers as well as my own. My decision not to take a traditional publishing route was inspired by the need to protect and retain my authentic voice and those of the other participants.

This study emerges from a similar compulsion when it comes to students' challenges with the development of voice in academic written discourse. I am a lecturer in English at an ODeL institution where the English module under scrutiny has been taught for the past six years. I have been part of the ENG1010 module for three years. During this period, I have interacted with students at various levels through livestream sessions and e-mails, in discussion forums and with their writing assignments. These interactions gave me insight into their experiences and the factors that impact their transition from secondary school to higher learning. Being involved in setting formative and summative assessment tasks gave me an understanding as to how students' linguistic proficiency and unique experiences of writing prior to commencing their academic journey affected their epistemic access. In addition, such experiences enabled me to reflect on how the pedagogies of writing employed in the module enable or constrain the students' academic writing proficiency.

As observed by Mdodana-Zide and Mukuna (2023: 206), "the transition from high school to university for first-year students is challenging in academia globally and locally". Mdodana-Zide and Mukuna go on to say that: "Students must continually provide quality content at university and possess organisational and coherent language skills in writing essays and assignments."

This is true even for students from non-native English-speaking backgrounds, lacking the linguistic proficiency necessary to deal with the demands of English academic writing. Given that such writing is highly complex and takes time to master (Alfaruqi, Setyawan, and Rohman, 2022), students from underprivileged backgrounds who experience it for the first time at university, often find it to be a foreign skill. Yet, they need to familiarise themselves with it to succeed academically and overcome tensions between their prior knowledge and writing competencies and lecturers' expectations of skills levels (Esambe et al., 2016). From a professional perspective, my study brings to light not only the challenges students encounter, but also an awareness of the need for interventions that will bridge students' writing proficiencies and the demands of academic writing discourses.

1.3. Problem Statement

Research has shown that voice development in academic writing is a challenge for first-year students. First, students have very limited experiences of academic writing and, as Esambe et al (2016) observe, this tends to cause tension between their prior experience of writing and the expectations set out by academic disciplines. Secondly, academic writing is not adequately nurtured at school level where rote learning is encouraged (Maluleke, 2015). Most writing activities at primary and secondary school are disconnected and even characterised as gap-filling exercises. This is problematic as students are under-prepared to generate their own academic writing. These problems raise important questions about how universities seek to bridge the gap and strategies requisite in the development of academic writing proficiency. Against this background, this study proposes a comprehensive, open distance and e-learning (CODeL) system that will afford students space(s) to construct their own voices and identities in academic writing.

In CODeL, the challenges discussed above are multiplied. CODeL universities often have huge numbers of students registered for one module and this makes it difficult for lecturers and

students to conduct face-to-face interactions. This problem is exacerbated by the distance between students and the university as tuition is online-based.

Research on the development of students' voice in academic writing tends to pay scant attention to CODeL multilingual contexts. For instance, Morton and Storch (2019) explore the readers' constructions of students' authorial voices in their writing at postgraduate level at a contact university. The study shows that readers conceptualise students' voices in relation to their own "language background, disciplinary conventions and personal history" (Morton and Storch, 2019: 15). Despite Morton and Storch's focus on a multilingual writing context, it cannot account for the writing of students at CODeL universities and particularly those at first-year level.

Attempts to explore first-year students' development of voice in academic writing in multilingual South African contexts tend to focus more on contact universities. For instance, Pfeiffer and Sivasubramaniam (2016) explore how creative texts, such as journals, autobiographies and other documents can function as a mainstay for developing a sense of self and can boost students' confidence as academic writers. Although the findings of this study reveal that students' writing improves within a continuum of writing tasks, Pfeiffer and Sivasubramaniam (2016) worked with a small sample of 14 students who are second-language speakers of English at a residential university. Another research study, Motlhaka (2018), explores how the integration of first-year students' home language, Sepedi, can contribute to their development of academic writing. While the results of Motlhaka's study reveal that the incorporation of home language into English academic writing creates positive experiences and enhances epistemic access, the study cannot account for how students from diverse linguistic backgrounds develop their skills in academic writing. For the reasons outlined above, I address the gaps in studies conducted on first-year students' development of voice in academic writing in a CODeL multilingual context. In addition, I examine the extent to which students' development of voice in memoir writing can enhance their confidence as academic writers.

1.4. Aims of the Study

In this study, my aim is to examine how memoir writing can enhance first-year students' development of voice in English academic writing.

Research Sub-Aims

Focusing on first-year university students in a multilingual CODeL context, this research study aims to investigate the following:

1. First-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project.
2. First-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module.
3. How the writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 module enhance or constrain students' development of voice in academic writing.
4. How students develop their voices through memoir writing.
5. Guidelines for developing a model that can be implemented in the CODeL context for memoir writing that can effectively enhance multilingual students' development of voice in English academic writing.

1.5. Research Questions

Focusing on first-year university students in a multilingual CODeL context, the Research Questions guiding this study are:

1.5.1. Main Research Question:

How does memoir writing enhance the development of voice in academic writing among students in a first-year English module in a CODeL university?

1.5.2. Research Sub-Questions:

1. What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?
2. What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?
3. In what ways do the writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 module enhance or constrain students' development of voice in academic writing?
4. In what ways do students develop their voices through memoir writing?
5. What guidelines can be adopted for developing a CODeL for memoir writing that can effectively enhance multilingual students' development of voice in English academic writing?

1.6. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

My study is underpinned by two theories of writing: the Sociocultural Theory of Writing and the Interactionist theory CODeL of voice and identity. The Sociocultural Theory perceives writing as a social construct that serves various purposes, and forms part of social practices and the development of a society (Storch, 2019). This theory further shows that learning to write is a collaborative and dialogic activity mediated by semiotic tools such as language. Collaboration in writing involves sharing responsibilities as writers who give each other feedback on each other's texts. On the other hand, the Interactionist CODeL model of voice and identity in academic writing, pioneered by researcher Ken Hyland, views voice and identity as inextricably connected to academic writing development. The development of voice and identity in academic writing is achieved through what Hyland (2002) calls stance and engagement. Stance refers to the position or judgment the writer makes with regard to a particular phenomenon, whereas engagement entails the author's interactions with other members of a disciplinary community.

The review of literature in this study pays attention to various issues that are pertinent to the topic. These include undergraduate students' perceptions of voice in academic writing, the impact of undergraduate students' under-preparedness on academic writing development, undergraduate students' citation practices, the expression of voice through life writing, the use of memoir writing as a political tool and the link between memoir writing and academic writing. The literature review will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.7. Definitions of Key Concepts

In this section, I will define key terms underpinning the overall conceptualisation of this study. In addition, I succinctly elucidate how these are widely defined and used by other scholars, and how these are used in this study. The terms to be defined are as follows: voice and identity; autobiography; writing biography, and memoir.

1.7.1. Voice

The study aims to examine how students develop an academic voice and identity following their participation in the Engaged Scholarship project called "Creating Space for Voice Through Autobiography Writing". The terms "academic voice" and "academic identity" are crucial to this study. While they may be defined in different ways, the terms are intertwined and function interchangeably (Flowerdew and Wang, 2015). "Academic voice" derives from

the term "voice". *The Oxford Dictionary* (1999: 1605) defines voice as "the sound produced in a person's larynx and uttered through the mouth, as speech or song". Lensmire (2000) further shows that "voice" refers to a person's expressive ability, that reflects their experiences, interests, beliefs, taste or knowledge. Likewise, Blommaert (2008: 17) conceives of voice as an expressive ability related to societal norms. On the other hand, Keskinen (2004) asserts that voice denotes the author or speaker's sense of presence and an expression of their identity as a member of a cultural society. Importantly, Mendelowitz and Ferreira (2007) shows that voice is dynamic in nature, and imbedded within social contexts. Therefore, in this study, voice is used as a metaphor for the writer's ability to express themselves, take control, ownership, agency and authority, and negotiate their position as a member of a disciplinary community. Hyland (2008: 8) locates voice within the context of disciplinary discourses to allude to stance-taking and engagement. Stance-taking refers to the writer's ability to express their opinions, whereas engagement, which is reader-oriented, involves the writer's use of language to interact and engage with readers and other members of a discourse community.

The concept of identity is problematic in the South African context given the history of colonial disempowerment and the construction of artificial identity categorisations, such as ethnicity, tribe, race and geographical location. These social groups were institutionalised and imposed by those in power, used as a basis for discrimination and marginalisation (Cornelissen and Horstmeier, 2002). Such categorisations, as pointed out by Wilmsen et al., (1994) have been internalised by the less powerful, and they continue to shape people's political and economic livelihoods.

In this study, the concept of identity transcends political categorisations. Instead, it alludes to the sense of self and of belonging to a discourse community where participants negotiate their position through their voices. Identity is a dynamic aspect of being that is malleable and plural in nature. Given its fluidity, Ivanič (1998) shows that it encompasses four strands: the autobiographical self; the discoursal self; the authorial self and possibilities for self-hood in the sociocultural and institutional context. Unlike in the South African political context where identity is imposed, this study conceives of identity as a tool of empowerment where participants have control and ownership.

1.7.2 Academic Writing

Academic writing is the most salient term in this study. While Rahimivand and Kuhi (2014: 1494) define academic writing as "a complex social act that requires the use of various discourses that meet academic expectations", they further stipulate that having voice and showing academic authority are prerequisites. In their definition of academic writing, Hyland and Salager-Meyer (2008: 7) state that "academic writers not only negotiate community knowledge, individual contributions and personal credibility, they produce and sustain status relationships, exercise authority and reproduce interests which help distribute influence and resources". These definitions locate academic writing within social contexts. This opposes the traditional conceptualisations that rendered academic writing as formal and professional and removed from the writer's sense of self. Using a social perspective, I construe academic writing as a genre that is highly specialised and discipline-specific; it employs different linguistic resources to express the writer's stance and articulate their positions within a discourse community. Its functions include writing research reports and essays, communicating knowledge, and contributing to research publications.

1.7.3. Autobiography

Autobiography generally refers to a life story where the author is also the subject. Autobiography can be classified as life-writing as the author provides detailed personal accounts of their own life through their voice. Bruner (1995) and Ruma (2016) state that autobiography is a complex process that involves the reconstruction, reshaping and reinterpretation of one's past life events, drawn from one's own memories. This type of writing allows the writer to set the tone about their conception of themselves, and also claim authority and control over their own life stories.

1.7.4. Memoir

Memoir and autobiography are written from the subject's perspective and express the subject's personal experiences and memories. While autobiography provides a long and detailed account of one's life story, memoirs tend to focus on specific phases or events in someone's life. Hampl (1999) defines memoir as "a written intersection of narration and reflection of storytelling and essay writing". Writing a memoir involves what Rubin and Umanath (2015) refer to as "event memory" or mental reconstructions of scenes and events where the author revisits the past and connects with the future.

1.7.5. Space

The term space is a metaphor for opportunities and room for students to explore their own voices in academic writing. It is premised on the need to incorporate students' personal experiences and interests as well as recognise their linguistic resources in their development of academic writing.

1.8. Significance of the Study
1.8.1. Benefits to Students

The study hopes to establish a broader understanding of various factors affecting students' development of academic writing skills. Using an amalgamative approach where autobiography writing and academic writing approaches are merged, the study will develop a model to harness students' understanding of a writing voice and how to develop an academic voice and identity. The study will help students interrogate how their language and cultural backgrounds inform their conceptions of writing in an academic context. The students will also learn strategies to use different linguistic resources to project their own academic writing voices. The students' participation in the project will help them transfer skills into their future academic writing.

1.8.2. Benefits to Research

The findings of this study will contribute to future research and literature around the topic of academic writing, particularly in multilingual ODeL contexts. As the world witnesses the effects of changes in teaching and learning due to Covid-19, during which a "new normal" was established around virtual and online platforms, the findings from the study will help understand how writing pedagogies can be adapted to respond to this context. The integration of autobiography writing into academic writing will further create a synergy between the genres and show how they can draw from each other for the development of students' writing.

1.8.3. Benefits to the Institution

The study is of utmost importance to Star University[1] as a CODeL institution. The findings of the study will provide insight into challenges students encounter as they adapt to expectations towards an academic identity. In addition, this will help us reconsider policies related to tuition and how these can be designed to meet students' learning needs. Not only will Star University benefit from the findings of this study, but also other contact universities driving towards the incorporation of online learning since the advent of Covid-19 in 2020. It will provide a broader picture of challenges in online learning that academics should anticipate as they embark on this journey of transformation.

1.8.4. Benefits to the Broader Education Sector

This study acts as a bridge for students as they transit from basic education to higher education and training. It highlights the gap that exists between students' prior knowledge about writing and the expectations of universities regarding academic writing. Given its findings, the study will talk directly to the English curriculum at basic education level. It will inform curriculum reforms to help prepare and equip students with knowledge about the demands of academic development.

1.9. Chapter Outlines
Chapter 1: Introduction:

This chapter introduces the central topic of this research and elucidates its contextual background. It further outlines the rationale for the statement of the research problem. I further provide the Research Sub-Questions and the Sub-Questions drawn from the main Research Sub-Question. In addition, I also provide the aims and objectives which this study intends to achieve.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review:

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks underlying this study, namely, the Sociocultural Theory of writing and the Interactionist Model of academic writing. In

---

[1] Star University – is a leading comprehensive open distance and e-learning university in South Africa. The university provides different qualifications from certificate to doctorate degrees. It is a champion of decolonisation of African knowledge systems as well as teaching and learning.

illustrating these theories, I show how they interlink instead of construing them as dichotomies. In addition, the chapter discusses how the development of voice in academic writing has been conceptualised by different scholars in diverse learning and teaching contexts. In addition, it elucidates the nature of life writing and how it is used for different reasons in society. Most importantly, I indicate how memoir writing links with academic writing.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology:

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology. It elucidates the context in which the study will be conducted, the sampling of research participants and the type of methods used to collect and analyse the data. It further discusses the quality measures and ethical considerations observed upon collection of data.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings:

This chapter will present the findings of the study. It will first provide the social, educational, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the participants. The participants' written texts and interview responses will be presented according to recurrent themes.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Synthesis of Findings:

This chapter will present a detailed analysis of the findings of the research against the background of previous research conducted in this field. Differences and similarities will also be discussed. In addition, there will be an explication of new knowledge that emerged.

Chapter 6: Conclusions:

In this chapter, I will provide a summary of the themes that emerged from the findings. I will further discuss the significance of the study and the contribution it will make to literature on the topic. I will further provide the limitations of the study, as well as the implications it will have for teaching and learning on the subject of writing academically.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter critically discusses the theoretical framework underpinning this study and it reviews the literature pertaining to the topic: *Creating Space(s) for Voice in English Academic Writing Through Memoir Writing: A Case Study of First-Year Students at an ODL University in South Africa.*

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The following theories undergird the study:

- The Sociocultural Theory of Writing
- The Interactionist Model of Voice in Academic Writing.

2.2.1. The Sociocultural Theory:

The Sociocultural Theory was developed by Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, in response to behaviourist theories that viewed learning as a cognitive activity independent of learners' contexts. Inspired by German philosophers, Karl Marx, Fredrick Engels and Friedrich Hegel, Vygotsky rejected "the notion that human action is governed by some Neoplatonic realm of rules, whether linguistic rules of English, the communicative norms of some discourse community or cognitive scripts for acting in a particular situation" (Prior, 2006: 55). The Sociocultural Theory is premised on the idea that learning and high cognitive development are situated within the cultural, social, biological and historical circumstances surrounding an individual (Scott and Palincsar, 2013; Slavkov, 2015; Shabani, 2016). As further elaborated by Lantolf and Thorne (2000: 197), it construes development as "processes [that] take place through participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings such as family life and peer group interaction, and in institutional contexts like schooling, organised sport activities, and workplaces, to name only a few". This theory suggests that learning and development are mediated by cultural artefacts such as machines and objects, activities, concepts and semiotic tools, such as language and writing, that are available within the surrounding environment of an individual (Prior, 2006; Simeon, 2016; Mohammadzadeh et al., 2020; Alkhudiry, 2022). According to Smythe and Klein (2009), writing, like language, is a cultural tool developed to serve different social purposes, and its development, in turn, impacts on how society develops and operates.

2.2.1.1. The Fundamental Principles Underpinning the Sociocultural Theory

Allman (2020) outlines three fundamental principles underlying the Sociocultural Theory. First, the theory argues that learning and development are shaped by social interactions and collaboration among learners and between the learner and a knowledgeable other, such as a teacher or mentor. This argument echoes Slavkov's (2015: 18) argument that the Sociocultural Theory "capitalises on the idea that learning is situated and best achieved through collaboration with the dialogic feedback from peers and teachers". The second principle indicates that learning is mediated by semiotic tools, such as language, signs and writing, that impact on the way we think and connect us to the world (Smythe and Klein, 2009). The third principle states that learning and development occur within what Vygotsky (1978: 86) termed ZPD, the Zone of Proximal Development, or "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". Against this background, this study construes the development of voice in academic writing as a social process facilitated by collaborations and interactions among students and between students and their lecturers.

2.1.1.2. The Sociocultural Theory in Relation to Writing Development

The Sociocultural Theory has had an influence on how writing is conceptualised and taught. Rather than viewing writing as a product, this theory construes it as a social act that is deeply rooted within social contexts. According to Slavkov (2015), the Sociocultural Theory of writing is underpinned by four basic tenets. First, writing is a social act shaped by the discourses of a disciplinary community which, in turn, shape the writer, the content of a text, and how the writer expresses themselves in a text. In essence, this shows that writing involves identity formation according to the cultural and social practices and discourses of a disciplinary community. These practices influence the ways in which writers express their voice and construct their sense of self in a text. Second, writing is a meaning-oriented activity that involves collaborations among writers who share ideas, give each other peer feedback, and provide suggestions and comments to improve a text. Third, writing is multimodal. That is, the writer employs a wide variety of tools to develop meaning. Lastly, writing is intertextual. In this sense, authors interact and critically engage with the ideas of other authors and position themselves around the discourses of disciplinary community. In so doing, authors take part in debates around different topics and ideologies that hold sway in a discipline within a particular

historical context. In essence, writing as an act of stance-taking gives authors an identity as the basis of their world view. To this end, I argue that academic writing pedagogies should recognise students' sociohistorical contexts as these play an important role in their development of voice. A student-centered writing pedagogy recognises the important role played by unique experiences, identities, ways of knowing, modes of expression, languages and cultures in voice and identity construction. It is worth noting that this theory was initially developed to understand children's cognitive development. However, it can also be applied at different levels of development.

This study aims to explore how memoir writing can enhance first-year students' development of voice in academic writing. Using a sociocultural lens, the incorporation of memoir writing in this study aims to provide first-year students with a free and safe space for self-expression. It also aims to help them experiment and engage with their own writing voices using their cultural and linguistic resources. Through memoir writing, students are able to recognise their own backgrounds as resources.

2.2.2. The Interactionist Model of Writing:

The Interactionist Model of writing forms the basis on which academic writing, voice and identity are conceptualised in this study. Like the Sociocultural Theory, the Interactionist Model posits that academic writing is a social practice that involves interactions between the writer and the audience as members of a discipline, and the construction of voice as a consequence of stance-taking and engagement (Hyland, 2008). This model argues that an academic writing voice is constructed within disciplinary communities. The strategies of voice construction entail forming relationships between the writer and the audience, as well as taking a position on a phenomenon while displaying competence as a disciplinary insider (Hyland, 2005). In addition, Bassiouney (2012) asserts that this model argues that language is not an independent system but forms part of the social practices from which writers as actors draw linguistic resources to articulate their disciplinary voice and identity. Thus, the writer's proficiency in a language plays an important role in their ability to articulate their position on a phenomenon, as well as interacting with the reader. This model perceives the construction of voice and identity in academic writing as a process guided by the discourses of a disciplinary community.

Stance-taking as a way of articulating voice alludes to the way in which interactants use linguistic resources, discourse resources, cultural resources and structural resources to create a

relationship with a phenomenon and other people who may hold similar or different opinions on the phenomenon (Hyland, 2005; Johnstone, 2009; Bassiouney, 2012). As Du Bois (2007: 140) puts it, "stance can be approached as a linguistically articulated form of social action whose meaning is to be construed within the broader scope of language, interaction, and sociocultural value". According to Hyland (2008: 9), stance is writer oriented and comprised of three components, namely: "evidentiality, effect, and presence". Evidentiality refers to the expression of one's position towards a phenomenon by providing substantial evidence as reasons to justify it, whereas effect is the personal attitude, opinion or subjective view of an idea based on emotions or beliefs. On the other hand, the author's presence refers to the writer's self-projection and the expression of the self in a text. In addition, taking a stance is a conscious process marked by hedges, boosters, attitude makers and self-mention. In academic writing, hedges and boosters enable the writer to express their certainty or uncertainty regarding a proposition. While hedges enable authors to take a polite and uncertain position towards a phenomenon, boosters involve taking a much stronger position, while attitude makers play an important role in conveying the author's emotions towards a proposition. Self-mention is the way an author projects their presence and sense of self in a text using the first-person pronoun, "I". It is noteworthy that stance can take a form of style, that is, a pattern of stance-taking strategies associated with a particular social identity (Johnstone, 2009).

On the other hand, engagement relates to ways in which a writer engages or interacts with the reader and members of their discourse community in a text (Hyland, 2008). It also signifies the writer's audience-awareness and can be explicitly expressed through making use of reader-pronouns. Engagement is marked by those as well as personal asides, references to sharedness, directives and questions (Hyland, 2008). While stance and engagement relate to different dimensions of disciplinary voice and identity construction, it is important to note that these two strategies operate interdependently. Like the Sociocultural Theory, the Interactionist Model places the development of voice and identity within a social context.

As much as this study adopts the Interactionist approach to voice and identity in academic writing, it questions the extent to which academic writing pedagogies are open to multiple ways of taking stance and engagement in a multilingual writing context. The study therefore argues that a monolithic approach to academic writing does not allow room for students from multilingual contexts to express themselves and attain their own disciplinary voice. Memoir writing will enable students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to use their unique modes of expression to construct identities and voice.

2.3. Literature Review

This section provides a critical review of the literature that pertains to the topic of this study. This literature review is aligned with the Research Sub-Questions that this study purports to address. As derived from the Research Sub-Questions, the themes underpinning this literature review are as follows:

- Students' Perceptions of Voice in Academic Writing
- The Impact of Undergraduate Unpreparedness of Academic Writing
- Undergraduate Students' Citation Practices
- The Role of Collaborations in the Development of Students' Academic Writing Voice
- Harnessing the Development of a Multilingual Academic Writing Voice Through a Decolonial Pedagogy
- The Expression of Voice Through Life Writing
- The Use of Voice in Memoir Writing as a Political Tool
- The Use of Memoir Writing for Therapeutic Purposes
- The Link Between Memoir Writing and Academic Writing

2.3.1. Students' Perceptions of Academic Writing

Research on students' perceptions reveals that there is a correlation between students' perceptions of writing and their development and proficiency in academic writing. Most of the research conducted on students' perceptions focus on the English Foreign Language (EFL) writing context. For instance, Rohmah and Muslim's (2021) study investigates Indonesian undergraduate students' perception of academic writing in relation to their writing anxieties. Using qualitative data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews and students' written texts, the study reveals that "many students are still struggling to write academically in a proper way, especially at undergraduate level since they are novices to academic writing practices" (Rohmah and Muslim, 2021: 348). The findings of the study show that students' challenges in academic writing can be attributed to writing anxieties which stem from the fear of negative judgements, a lack of English writing practices and poor English grammar. It is further found that a high level of writing anxieties tends to impede the development of academic writing proficiency. Khelalfa (2018) investigated the correlation between students' self-efficacy and their ability to write effectively. The study explored the writing of 148 undergraduate students from first to fourth year and data was collected using self-reports.

Findings revealed that there is a positive correlation between students' self-efficacy and their writing achievements and showed that self-efficacy determines the amount of effort students put into their writing. In fact, self-efficacy may result in writing anxieties or may be affected by writing anxiety.

Ariyanti's (2017) study investigates how students' affective responses affect the quality of their writing, particularly in EFL contexts. Writing anxieties are linked to apprehension around receiving negative comments from their lecturers, a lack of confidence in the target language (which is caused by a poor linguistic proficiency), time constraints, lack of knowledge of lecturers' expectations and classroom environments, which are not conducive to lecturers paying attention to every student's individual needs. Writing anxieties are not unique to novice writers and EFL students, but are also found among students from different English-speaking backgrounds. Holt (2020) proposes four pedagogical approaches that writing teachers can adopt to overcome writing anxieties. He suggests teachers should commence writing courses with activities that allow self-expression. Secondly, they should allow students the freedom to choose their own topics that relate with their personal identities to enhance their sense of ownership. Thirdly, they should lessen the writing workload. Lastly, teachers should include mindfulness training techniques into the classroom to help students negotiate uncomfortable emotions that may arise during the writing process.

It can be argued that the students' writing anxieties can, to a certain degree, be linked to students' unpreparedness for academic writing. Their writing experiences do not equip them with skills that meet the expectations of academic writing. In their study, Esambe et al. (2016) argue there tend to be tension between the writing skills that students bring to university and assumptions lecturers make about what students should be capable of doing. In his study, Chokwe (2011) examines the extent to which first-year students' perceptions of writing influence how they write academically. He argues that, while students claim their writing courses improved their writing, they appear underprepared for engaging in academic writing. They struggle with technical aspects of writing such as grammar, spelling, structure of essays, coherence and cohesion. Similarly, Dacus (2022) argues that students at first-year level appear to be underprepared for academic writing, which requires them to shift from form-based writing to writing for rhetoric purposes. In addition, their transition from school-based writing to post-secondary school writing shows instabilities, ambiguous identities and a reconceptualisation of writing.

2.3.2. The Impact of Under-preparedness on Undergraduate Students' Development of Academic Writing Voice

An exploration of first-year students' writing in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) shows that students' readiness in the academic context is marked by writing errors. This refers to "a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong" (Songxaba and Sincuba, 2019: 2). In other words, an error indicates that a student has not learnt the correct form, and they cannot correct it even when given another chance of writing. Nuruzzaman et al. (2018) assert that errors should not be confused with mistakes because mistakes are inconsistent deviations that result from students' carelessness, and these can be corrected through careful review of a text.

Ayana (2020) asserts that, as much as writing errors can be linked to psychological, linguistic and cognitive factors, these sometimes reflect past writing experiences that did not motivate a student to write meaningfully or sensibly. Typical examples of students' writing errors appear through faulty sentences such as sentence fragments, run-on or fused sentences, concord errors, redundancy, and the ill-use of prepositions, tenses and vocabulary (Ayana, 2020). Gratuitous use of parallel structure (AlTameemy and Daradkeh, 2019; Ayana, 2020; Alfaruqy et al., 2022) is another common error. It is observed that these errors sometimes stem from unfamiliarity with the target language that results in students' carelessness, a failure to edit work appropriately, and interlingual and intralingual interferences of mother tongue to the target language (Goundar and Bogitini, 2019; Manirakiza et al., 2021). In addition, it is noted that novice writers lack knowledge of the important contribution that mechanical aspects of language such as punctuation, spelling and capitalisation make towards the construction of meaning in a text (Goundar and Bogitini, 2019; Seddik, 2023). Nikolenko (2019) specifically argues that most novice EFL writers lack the knowledge of academic writing conventions and they possess inadequate English grammar, and the practical, functional use of language, thus causing them to overlook the importance of some of those mechanical aspects.

Furthermore, different scholars have highlighted that students have too few opportunities to write meaningfully, and this results in their encountering syntactic challenges when faced with writing activities. Furthermore, beyond the technical aspects of language, writing errors are prevalent on a syntactical level. In his study of learners' writing development, Maluleke (2015) finds that the school writing curriculum normalises the construction of fragmented sentences that are disjointed and meaningless. Such writing tests students' knowledge of parts of speech at the expense of expressing their voices.

Boubazine, and Amira (2019) argue that writing errors in EFL and ESL students stem from two factors: interlingual and intralingual errors. In his examination of syntactic errors, Ngangbam (2016: 1) shows that faulty sentences can be attributed to different factors, such as "mother-tongue interference, misuse *[sic]* sentence fragment, overuse, lack of grammatical knowledge, formation and developmental errors". It is interesting to note that, while most of these studies are obsessed with identifying and classifying students' writing errors, scant attention is paid to the pedagogies informing the teaching of writing in foreign and second-language contexts. In addition, most of the work that has been done around the topic of writing errors is not a reflection of a South African context, but an Asian context.

2.3.3. Undergraduate Students' Citation Practices

Citation is one of the conventions of academic writing that writers use to identify themselves and negotiate their membership within the discourses of a disciplinary community. It helps authors justify their position on a particular phenomenon and is used as an instrument to judge their development (Jomaa and Bidin, 2019). As defined by Mansourizaheh and Ahmad (2011), citation is a rhetorical device that academic writers employ to exhibit their depth of scholarship within a specific research area, and to express their membership of the disciplinary community. The term is often used interchangeably with "quoting" or "reporting" to refer to the same practice, but their meanings are fluid. For instance, to cite may mean to quote or to reference someone directly or verbatim, while "reporting" may mean referencing sources, including summaries and paraphrases of the information presented. As defined by Muringani (2021: 18), "citation" is the academic practice of referring to works of other authors for various reasons, such as to support one's point of view or to support a generally accepted viewpoint "with which one happens to agree". Considering that these terms have similar meanings, "citation" will be used as an umbrella term to mean both "quoting" and "reporting". In this study, citation is not only viewed as an act of referencing, but also as an instrument of voice construction. It not only gives an author a sense of credibility, but also allows them to negotiate their position around different views and discourses within a disciplinary community.

The study of citation dates back to the 1950s when Eugene Garfield (1955) introduced what he called the Science of Citation Index. According to Muringani (2021), Garfield's ideas were widely adopted by academics, but tended to be problematic in that he judged the importance of a cited work within a discipline based on its frequency of use, despite the *functions* of such citations. Citation tends to belong to two categories: integral and non-integral (Swales, 1990;

Gao et al., 2021). In an integral citation, the name of the author is introduced as a noun phrase, whereas in a non-integral citation, it is not integrated in the structure of a clause, but rather as a parenthesis. In other words, non-integral citations are placed at the end of the sentence inside brackets and play no significant role in the meaning of the sentence, while in an integral citation, the author's name is an important component of the grammar and meaning of the sentence (Rabab'ah and Al-Marshadi, 2013; Abdualhussein, 2022). In addition, citation has different functions, which reflect their purposes as separate from the two categories. The functions of citations include attribution, support, reference, establishing links between sources, identification and comparison. These functions are prevalent in students' citation practices.

Several studies on students' citation practices reveal that they tend to use citation for display of knowledge rather than critically engaging with it. For instance, Lee et al. (2018) show that students use a limited range of reporting verbs that avoid taking a strong positive or negative position. In addition, they mainly adopt a neutral and non-committal stance wherein they merely acknowledge a source without critically engaging with it. This challenge is caused by factors, such as a failure to balance definiteness and tentativeness, and a lack of knowledge of appropriate linguistic repertoire for engaging with ideas from other scholars (Chang 2010; Jarkovská and Kučírková, 2020). In addition, Bharuthram and McKenna (2012) note that not only is a lack of familiarity with academic writing conventions a reason for challenges with citation, but sometimes lecturers can hardly articulate what academic writing entails and how to cite sources properly. According to Morton and Storch (2019), every discipline has its own conventions of how to write academically. In addition, lecturers too come from different schools of thought, language backgrounds, specialities, histories and preferences, all of which shape the way they approach academic writing. Moreover, as academic writing is very complex and takes time and effort to master, it may be plausible to argue that some lecturers have not fully mastered the skill of citation. Therefore, teaching students some of the strategies of constructing voice in academic writing becomes a challenge.

Research further reveals that the use of citation for the display of knowledge is typical even at postgraduate level. For instance, Sun et al. (2022) argue that students' use of citation tends to be limited to attribution rather than evaluation and establishing links between sources. This can be attributed to evaluation having high cognitive and intellectual demands, which the students cannot meet (Jarkovská and Kučírková, 2020). In addition, for novice students, their sense of voice is fragile, and this may stem from the lack of linguistic resources necessary to negotiate

their position within a discourse community. Similarly, Lee et al. (2018) have highlighted that the frequency in citation for attribution in second language (L2) students' writing is an indication that students are still in the process of developing strategies for using this for complex rhetorical purposes. Their writing tends to be more descriptive than analytical. While these observations provide a broader picture of issues related to students' academic writing, they also highlight issues related to pedagogies of academic writing. Most importantly, this necessitates the need for universities to design programmes that specifically focus on inducting students into the requisite academic literacy skills.

Furthermore, students' language backgrounds play a major role in their development of an authorial voice. Zhao (2019) argues that the construction of voice in academic writing transcends the mere act of expressing your views and attitude, and carries with it cultural behaviours that are inaccessible for second-language students, especially those from conservative cultural backgrounds. These kinds of challenges are further confirmed by De Silva (2015) and de Magalhães et al. (2019) who posit that academic writing pedagogies should be student-centred. They further argue that writing pedagogies which adopt a monolithic lens disempower students from non-native English backgrounds and encourage conformity and compliance with the conventions of native speakers. Such practices favour affluent middle-class students, while trampling on marginalised students from non-native English-speaking backgrounds (Pineteh, 2014). Proficiency in academic writing is therefore measured according to how well a student conforms to dominant norms and ways of seeing. In their paper, De Kadt and Mathonsi (2003) investigate the English academic writing practices of students speaking African languages at the University of Natal[2] to understand whether they feel able to write in the academic context with an own voice. The students contend they should be allowed to write in their home language.

Monolingual approaches to teaching and learning hinder the use of their own voices, and thus limit their access to knowledge. In addition, a lack of space to use their own voices results in them accommodating what they refer to as dominant mainstream Western cultures. He (2020: 519) expresses the same sentiments about monolingual approaches to academic writing, advancing that writing is a way of performing one's identity. However, He finds that "constructing writer identity in academic writing can be challenging for English as an Additional Language (EAL) student writers because the literacy practices of the target academic culture are usually different from the practices of their home culture". Given the

---

[2] University of Natal – currently called University of KwaZulu-Natal.

difficulties encountered by non-native speakers of English, this shows that there is a need to relook the feasibility of continuing to use English solely as the *lingua franca* at the expense of students' first languages.

A study by Motlhaka (2018) investigates ways in which second-language English students are afforded opportunities to incorporate expression from their home language, Sepedi, as a resource for self-expression and socialisation in English academic writing. The study reveals that translanguaging in academic writing enables students to draw rhetorical devices from their home language while heightening epistemic access. The recognition of students' diversity as a resource enables them to take risks, and enhances their creativity in academic writing. My study proposes that personal narratives should be recognised as tools for developing a sense of self in writing. It works with students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to understand how their varied identities can enable them to develop academic writing competences.

2.3.4. The Role of Collaborations in the Development of Students' Academic Writing Voice

As one of the basic tenets of the Sociocultural Theory, collaboration is an effective strategy that enhances the development of academic writing proficiency (Storch, 2019). Mammadova (2023: 143) defines collaborative learning as "an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving a joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together". Collaborative writing, therefore, entails creating a space for interactions where students engage and negotiate meaning, share responsibilities and provide each other with peer-feedback during the process of text construction (Li, 2018). In addition, collaborative writing is characterised by three features: "substantive interactions throughout the writing process, shared decision-making and responsibility for text produced, and a single product" (Li, 2018: 883). Mammadova (2023) states that it takes different forms such as peer-feedback, peer-review and peer-assessment. She observes peer-feedback, for instance, as a learning activity where learners at similar levels of proficiency provide comments focusing on strengths and weaknesses, and making suggestions for improvement. Through such activities, students' confidence is boosted, and they are able to develop critical thinking and self-reflection skills (Mammadova 2023). Similarly, Warsah et al. (2021) assert that collaborations improve students' development of critical thinking skills in various learning contexts, and they boost students' self-confidence, emotional awareness, cognitive development and broad-mindedness.

There has been a robust increase in recent decades of the integration of collaborative writing. And now, we have seen an upsurge in the use of online tools for learning and teaching during the Covid-19 outbreak (Yee and Yunus, 2021). As countries went into lockdown, chalk and a board became things of the past. WhatsApp, Google Docs, Mind Map, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom became prominent as teaching tools that fostered collaborative writing online. Li (2018: 883) argues that "computer-mediated collaborative writing" now affords students opportunities to "negotiate meaning and . . . co-construct . . . and co-revise texts, and jointly produce a single online text through collaborative efforts using [technology]". It is thus important to examine how different digital applications can enhance students' writing, and in this study, digital technology was central to teaching students about voice in academic writing and enhancing it through memoir writing.

While social media platforms and instant messaging apps can enhance collaborations, these also present challenges. Al Fadda et al. (2020) explores the effect of using WhatsApp to enhance teaching and learning during lockdown and determine students' opinions regarding its usage at that time. Using a mixed methods approach to collect and analyse data, the study indicates that instant messaging apps indeed have the potential to increase students' success, enhance learning and teaching, and can create a forum for students to raise questions and collaborate. However, it also found that some activities done through this medium were redundant rather than contributing to students' development (Al Fadda et al., 2020).

2.3.5. Harnessing the Development of a Multilingual Academic Writing Voice Through a Decolonial Pedagogy

Multilingualism at universities has given rise to the need to decolonise the pedagogy of writing in ways that embrace and respond to students' diversities. As alluded to by Blommaert et al. (2005: 197), "multilingualism is not what individuals have and don't have, but what the environment, as structured determinations, and interactional emergence, enables and disables". In essence, multilingualism refers to a plurality of competencies that students bring to the classroom. Ferreira and Mendelowitz (2009) explore how multilingual writing classrooms can be turned into a contact zone through writing language biographies. A contact zone is described as an interactive space where students' linguistic identities are invited and interrogated through shared written narratives. This study will find that written narratives enable students to reflect on their textual identities prior to joining an academic space, and envision who they are expected to become. In addition, while students' diversities are foregrounded, this sees

monolingualism and monolithic conceptions of academic voice being denaturalised and thrown to the periphery.

The recognition of students' multilingual diversity and the creation of a decolonial pedagogy of writing are like sides of the same coin. They cannot be separated. Language policies and pedagogies are gradually eschewing colonial norms and conventions that view community as static and homogenous rather than plural (Canagarajah, 2002; Angu et al., 2020). The need to recognise multilingualism in postcolonial learning contexts does not mean the Africanisation of learning or the purging of Western culture. In fact, it is an attempt to break down dichotomies between native and non-native speakers of English and recognise different ways of knowing and meaning-making beyond the hegemony of English (Canagarajah, 2007; Angu, 2018).

2.3.6. The Expression of Voice Through Life Writing

Autobiography and memoir have for decades been used as instruments of expression that elucidate a writer's sense of self-identity. These forms of life-writing tend to be interchangeable, but have subtle differences. Autobiographical writing has been in existence for centuries, but was not recognised as a genre until the 18th century due to its ill-defined contours (Badra, 2012; Xavier, 2018). Bart Moore-Gilbert (2005: 301) notes its emergence marked "the advent of modernity due to its engagement with one's sense of self and identity". In defining the term "autobiography", Xavier (2018: 105) asserts that it is important to recognise its etymological background, being derived from three Greek words, *auto', bios and graphien*, meaning "self", "life" and "writing". As Mustapha Bala Ruma (2016: 200) observes, "autobiography as a literary mode of expression is the story of the life of the self, written and narrated by that self". In addition, Ruma (2016: 200) observes that "writing the self autobiographically is a complex mixture of subjective experiences, the reframing of those experiences in discourse, and the interrogation of memory for intuition and interpretation of those experiences".

Memory in autobiography writing plays a significant role that transcends the act of reliving past events. It involves the ability to remember and re-capture specific scenes or moments in one's life, and interrogate how and why they happened (Mitchell, 2017). In addition, it assists the biographer to connect the past with the future by reconstructing the past and adapting it to present needs (Badra, 2012). As asserted by Maluleke (2019: 185), "while memory tends to refer to mind pictures we hold from the past, memory can only be exercised from a particular

vantage point in the present. In other words, the present is the lens through which we look back, recall, and create memory".

In theorising how memory operates, Rubin and Umanath (2015: 1) employ the concept of "event memory" to refer to "the mental construction of a scene [as a single occurrence], real or imagined for the past or the future". In the same vein, Badra (2012) argues that it is important to provide a clear definition of "memory" as it is often confused with "history". He shows that, while history is a systematic discipline of recording memory that relies on objective evidence, memory draws from personal consciousness and subjective experiences of a narrator that, according to Ruma (2016), are susceptible not only to subjectivity, but also inconsistencies. As much as autobiography writing relies on memory, it is plausible to state that some of it might be unreliable, as memory fades with time, thus raising questions about its truthfulness.

The definitions of autobiography above prove the subtle nature of its relationship with memoir. Seidnsticker (1999: 46) highlights that "the difference between autobiography and memoir or a set of memoirs is a complex and confusing one". He further notes that while both depend on first-person narrative "I" memoirs are susceptible to inaccuracies as these depend solely on the memories of the writer as the observer, whereas autobiographies verify facts from other participants. This goes to show that the self in an autobiography is an amalgamation of different voices. Isabella Agostino (2023) elucidates the distinction between memoirs and autobiographies. She points out that, while autobiographies rely on the narrative voice of the writer, who is also the subject, in memoir, just like in biographies, the subject can be another person. As Couser (2012: 18) says, "sometimes it [memoir] is used to refer to *any* account of the author's life as if it is synonymous and interchangeable with *autobiography*". Considering these similarities and differences, I intend to use the definition of "memoirs" to refer to an account of an event that happened in a writer's life or that of another person based on the writer's memory.

2.3.7. The Use of Memoir Writing as a Political Tool

In the last three decades, the rate of publication of autobiographies and memoirs about influential public figures, such as celebrities, actors, musicians, politicians and anyone who feels their life stories can inspire others, has accelerated. Paula Fass (2006: 107) quotes a line from a popular song, "everybody is doing it", to highlight the proliferation of personal writing. South Africa has not been an exception. Since the birth of democracy in 1994, many biographies, autobiographies and memoirs of freedom fighters including Thabo Mbeki, Oliver

Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Andrew Mlangeni, Hugh Masekela, and Desmond Tutu, have been published to reflect on their journeys in the struggle against apartheid and colonialism, as well as assert their identity as Black South Africans. As Daymond (2006) puts it, autobiographies and memoir play an important role in South Africa as they afford the previously marginalised space and a voice in their own history.

> For the people of South Africa, autobiographical storytelling and writing has long been an important mode of counter-asserting the existence and values of the culture and individual lives that state apartheid (as a special form of colonialism) attempted to occlude and even obliterate. (2006: 91)

Self-assertion is ubiquitous in autobiographies and memoir. For instance, the popular autobiography of Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, delves into his journey as a political activist. Published worldwide in 1994, the autobiography ushered South Africa into the democracy that Mandela championed as the first democratically elected president. In writing his life story, Mandela integrated his personal memories, history and identity to describe how colonialism disrupted the communal life and cultures of black communities. A salient example is a childhood memory in which he witnessed his father being dispossessed of the birthright to land and his people being made subalterns in the land of their ancestors (Badra, 2012). The writing of the autobiography commenced in 1974 when Mandela was still in prison, motivated by his realisation that most books on South African history contained distortions and lacked the insiders' voice, that of Black people (Xavier, 2018). Such an autobiography forms part of history reconstruction through including a variety of voices. As much as the autobiography was written from Mandela's own recollections, it provides an intimate account of the broader experiences of the struggle which can be shared by other activists.

Considering the violent nature of apartheid, such as the banning of freedom fighters, massacres, murders and the hanging of political activists in prison, autobiographies and memoir written in postcolonial South Africa tend to be defined by these traumatic experiences. The role of these texts has, in part, been to help South Africans come to terms with a catastrophic past (Grzęda, 2015). Maluleke (2019: 117) explores how Tutu, a human rights activist and Nobel Peace laureate, deals with traumatic memories through his writing. Underpinning this exploration is Don Mattera's metaphor of "memory as a weapon" which alludes to the psychological and

emotional effects of evoking memory. In defining this concept, Maluleke (2019: 188) states, "If memory is a weapon, it is a multi-edged sword without a handle …. Those who dare to use it will necessarily be wounded by it in the process". This is to show that, depending on the nature of memory, it can either open wounds or bring comfort. Tutu and Mandela show that, irrespective of the consequences of evoking memories, one need not evade them: "In order for memory to be managed constructively through forgiveness, there is a need to face the truth unflinchingly" (Maluleke, 2019: 185). From this assertion, it can be deduced that autobiography in South Africa, particularly that of political activists, has an important role to play in fostering reconciliation and helping the nation heal from the painful past.

It is interesting to note that after 1994, autobiographies and memoirs of prominent politicians, most of whom were in prison, exile or part of the underground, helped redefine the identity of South Africans. Mandela's autobiography is one among many written by men, and that has perpetuated the patriarchal voice that has dominated the narrative of the struggle against apartheid. Further, as much as we have been preoccupied with the lives of political figures, we now need to make an important call for memoir and autobiographies of the ordinary citizens of South Africa and especially women.

While autobiographies of politicians in South Africa are used to foster reconciliation and forgiveness, these are also used as political tools for asserting identity. Ruma (2016) examines, for instance, how Gandhi's autobiographical representation serves to objectify the voiceless subalterns by textual encoding of difference. In so doing, dichotomies between powerful dominant groups and the less powerful are created and entrench social hierarchies. In Gandhi's case, this granted him the leverage to carve his preferred identity.

Musicians too indulge in memoir and autobiography. Locally, Miriam Makeba did so in 1985 and Hugh Masekela in 2004, while Steve Kekana and the Soul Brothers, to mention but a few, have had a voice in the stories of their lives. In a paper entitled, "The Voice in Memoir", Shank (2016) explores the way in which voice is constructed in autobiographies by popular musicians. He observes that the author's identity as a popular public figure plays an important role in shaping the type of voice used to write their life stories. As a result of their popularity, celebrities' images have been shaped through interviews written by journalists, and it is those which give them their identity in society. With this awareness, the type of voice and identity that they must construct in their autobiographies must now stand out from already-existing ones. Their voice in their autobiographies must now be an authoritative version deemed as accurate. Such a version must serve to correct, confirm or challenge all previous versions. But

in the construction of self against existing images, it is plausible that truth may be compromised.

The construction of voice is a process that involves collaboration, active interaction and consultation with other people who might have knowledge about the author's life. Shank (2016) observes that the incorporation of different perspectives makes voice in a narrative text a collective product that does not emerge from a single self. This process of co-creation of voice can enhance accuracy and gives the author more control and ownership over their life stories. It is interesting to see if this method can help students to develop a sense of voice as they seek control and ownership in their own academic writing. This study intends to investigate that too as an aspect of the development of students' voice through memoir writing.

2.3.8. The Use of Memoir Writing for Therapeutic Purposes

A boom in the publication of grief memoirs that reflect on traumatic experiences, pertains here. These types of memoirs can offer writers a safe space to vent emotions associated with trauma, interrogate their personal thoughts and ultimately help them to find closure (Roodt, 2007). Research on the therapeutic benefits of such writing was pioneered by James Pennebaker and his colleagues, who conceived the idea of "expressive writing" as a tool to disclose trauma secrets (Deveney and Lawson, 2022: 292). The expressive writing paradigm encourages victims of trauma to confront and interrogate their past experiences in a confident manner (Pennebaker and Beall, 1986). "It was developed from the hypothesis that disclosing traumatic events may improve individuals' health" (Kalianivala, 2019: 1). In addition, what makes writing a powerful therapeutic tool is not just the acknowledgement of the problem, but that it enables the writer to interrogate and communicate their thoughts to another person (Pennebaker and Beall, 1986).

Ruini and Mortara (2022) adopt the term "writing therapy" to conceptualise the process of reflecting on trauma experiences though writing. Writing therapy entails using writing as a coping mechanism, in which writing is used as an instrument of expressing emotions and interrogating thoughts. When applied in the context of autobiographical writing and memoir, writing therapy can benefit the author as a means to reconstruct their self-identity (Ruini and Mortara 2022). Den Elzen (2018; 2021) investigates how young widows represent their experiences of grief and reconstruct their fractured identity in "widow memoirs" after experiencing loss. She argues that "autobiographical writing can promote the rebuilding of

identity continuity in the dialogical self following a disruptive life event such as widowhood, and can offer the necessary space to explore the experience of loss from different perspectives" (Den Elzen, 2018: 228). Den Elzen's (2021) study is relevant for this study as it adds another layer in thinking about memoir writing, although I acknowledge that grief is not my specific focus. Still, it can deepen students' development of voice through memoirs.

Memoir that reflects on grief is categorised as grief or widow memoirs as they represent an emotional and psychological reaction to loss that comes as a result of death, separation, divorce, accident or sickness. According to Małecka and Bottomley (2022), these memoirs reflect solely on the period of trauma in a person's life, and may be written during mourning, or soon after experiencing trauma, or later, as a reflection on the experience. In her exploration of grief memoirs, Snauwaert (2021: 867) argues that these shed light on bereavement and should be read "as lessons in living with loss". They offer companionship to both the writer and the reader even if the latter has not experienced loss. As Snauwaert (2021) shows:

> Their reading can provide a source of solace for bereaved readers, as well as an invaluable resource for researchers and grief counsellors, in terms of furnishing a rich and nuanced pool from which to draw vivid real-life examples, as well as poignant and eloquent phrasing to help them find the words. (2021: 873)

Małecka and Bottomley (2022) conducted a survey with 76 participants from psychology, psychotherapy and education backgrounds to examine their familiarity with grief memoir and the functions that they attribute to them. Their participants argued that memoir writing helps remove the stigma associated with grief by creating a safe space where they can express their emotions without fear of being judged. As such, during the process of writing a grief memoir, the writer feels less isolated and lonely as they can share their stories while also engaging in dialogues with the deceased. Like Snauwaert (2021), Małecka and Bottomley (2022) highlight that grief memoirs "create an additional source of comfort and relationality with other human beings whose stories, even though distant in time and space, show that survival after a loss is possible and reconstruction of meaning can be achieved". Furthermore, they assert that grief memoirs become an instrument for making sense of the chaos created by a loss, and can plot a way forward (Małecka and Bottomley, 2022).

The writing of Snauwaert (2021) and Małecka and Bottomley (2022) sheds light on the experiences of mourning by widowed women, but their studies have two shortcomings. First,

they do not reflect on a context where the disclosure of traumatic experiences is still regarded as taboo, as in many parts of South Africa. They also do not shed light on how women experience the emotions of men who have been through loss.

2.3.9. The Link Between Memoir Writing and Academic Writing

Memory work and academic writing do not exist in isolation from the academic writing classroom. In fact, they have a close-knit relationship with academic writing, and for the past two decades, have been integral to pedagogies of academic writing. This is especially true when one seeks a starting point for understanding students' diverse identities, and then in harnessing these for the development of an academic identity. According to Busch (2006: 12), the concept of "memoir or autobiography writing is seen as a group activity and is not conceived as solitary product-oriented but rather as a process which encourages identity work and stimulates students to take up new subject positions". It is an important educational tool that helps students engage critically with their own language identities while interacting and repositioning themselves around the voices of others (Mendelowitz and Ferreira, 2007). Mendelowitz (2005: 23) asserts that the incorporation of autobiography writing not only enhances students' critical literacy skills, but also generates possibilities for students "to craft and reconfigure their life stories, and to reflect critically on the broader social implications of each story". Both Mendelowitz and Ferreira (2007) and Ferreira and Mendelowitz (2009) have taught a sociolinguistics module at the Wits School of Education designed for first-year students from diverse social backgrounds to introduce them to the discourses of academic literacy. Given the diversity of students that enroll in the module, they regard such a learning and teaching environment as a "contact zone for various linguistic identities . . . in which naturalised linguistic identities are made visible and interrogated" (Ferreira and Mendelowitz, 2009: 54). The diversity of students calls out for a pedagogy sensitive to needs informed by specific linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds. Such a pedagogy should, as Mendelowitz and Ferreira (2009) point out, employ multi-dimensional approaches that invest in students' diversity as funds of knowledge. Such approaches are best suited and responsive to multilingual academic environments. Busch (2006) further provides insight into the significance of the integration of autobiography writing in academic writing classes. She states:

> The aim of memory work is not to gather information about 'what happened'
> but rather about which subject positions were taken within the social settings in

which language practices are enacted, as well as to ask the question about possible alternative ways of acting in similar situations. The way for a reflection on and a transformation of practices is thus opened up. Memory work is based on the assumption that individual language practices stand in a complex relationship to collective memory and history. (Busch, 2006: 13)

This study is premised upon amalgamating the genres of autobiography writing and academic writing to help students develop an academic writing voice and identity. While these two genres may appear unrelated, treating them alongside one another will help broaden academic writing pedagogies in how they draw from students' experiences and background. Drawing on Scott's (2013) perspective, I argue that academic writing should be construed beyond the mere transmission of knowledge by conforming to normative codes. Instead of treating it as an alien creature, Mendelowitz and Dixon (2016) show that it should be understood as a space in which students are allowed to take risks, be creative, and take agency. This is not feasible until students are shown that their experiences and voices matter in their own writing.

2.4. Conclusion

This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study, namely: the Sociocultural Theory of writing and the Interactionist Model of voice. The Sociocultural Theory recognises the relationship between writing and writers' sociohistorical contexts. It argues that writing should be construed as a social and cultural tool that serves different purposes, achieved through collaboration among writers. In addition, it shows the construction of voice occurs within a disciplinary context and forms part of identity formation. On the other hand, the Interactionist model of voice in academic writing draws from some of the basic tenets of the Sociocultural Theory. In essence, this model posits that academic writing involves taking a stance and engaging with the audience. It is achieved through hedges and boosters, self-mention through personal pronouns, and questioning strategies to engage readers. The chapter further reviews literature related to factors enabling or constraining students' development of voice in academic writing.

The review has revealed that the construction of voice in academic writing is culturally loaded and remains mostly inaccessible to students from non-native English backgrounds. The tension between cultural patterns in the academic domain and those of students can result in writing errors and anxieties that can result in withdrawal from development and a failure to cope with

the conventions of academic writing. A further review of the literature reveals that memoir writing is an important tool for self-expression. It enables writers to express their feelings and helps them deal with past traumatic experiences. Thus, memoir writing is used for therapeutic purposes. In the next chapter I will discuss the methodology that I used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research methodology that I adopted in this study. The chapter is divided into sections that correspond to the following themes: Research Design, Research Paradigm, Case Study Approach, Research Site and Context, Research Population and Sampling methods, Data Collection Methods, Data Analysis, and Ethical Consideration.

3.2. Research Design

The study adopted qualitative approaches to collect and analyse data. Qualitative research is interested in interpreting how humans behave in a natural setting and make meaning of their worlds and experiences (Wa-Mbaleka and Rosario, 2022). Erickson (2011: 33) argues that "qualitative inquiry seeks to discover and describe narratively what people do in their everyday lives and what their actions can mean to them". In this study, I adopted the following definition:

> Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. (Creswell, 2013: 44)

Proponents of qualitative research, such as Denzin and Lincoln (2005), assert that it differs from quantitative research because it works with qualitative data that cannot be quantified or tested using experiments. Creswell and Poth (2018) posit that qualitative research is distinguished from other research designs because it involves human participants, a natural setting and interpretation of experiences; it focuses on a specific social phenomenon and it uses diverse methods to collect and analyse data and avoid biases. In this research study, the human participants were first-year students registered for an English module. The phenomenon that

the study investigated was the students' development of voice in academic writing using memoir writing. I used qualitative data collected from interviews, written texts that were hermeneutically analysed and observations which could not be quantified.

3.3. Research Paradigm

The study adopted a social constructivist paradigm as its philosophical worldview. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that, besides the social constructivist paradigm, research methodologies are underpinned by three other paradigms: the postpositivist, the transformative, and the pragmatic. The postpositivist philosophy holds that there is only one absolute truth that can be achieved through scientific methods (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This philosophy is aligned with quantitative research and challenges assumptions that there can be multiple ways of viewing the world. In addition, the postpositivist paradigm further posits that there is a need to understand how a cause can produce a certain outcome. In contrast, the constructivist paradigm is interested in gaining insight into how humans understand their surroundings and make meaning of their own experiences (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Aligned with qualitative methodologies, this philosophy is of the view that there are multiple ways of viewing the world. In addition, it is open to possibilities of multiple truths which are subject to bias and subjectivity.

The transformative philosophy challenges the notion of one absolute truth and also highlights the failure of social constructivism in recognising the realities of marginalised groups in society. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), this worldview argues that truth is not pure or neutral in its nature. In fact, it serves the interests of the powerful and elite groups in society, most of whom make laws and control the world. As such, a failure to recognise the marginalised makes "truth" an instrument of discrimination and social alienation. The pragmatic philosophy, which is mostly associated with mixed methods, shows that different methods can be employed to arrive at truth. In addition, every method is adopted to serve a particular purpose.

Against this background, I adopted the social constructivist approach as it is interested in understanding how students perceive the development of their own writing. In essence, the study examines how they think the writing pedagogies adopted by the Memoir Writing Project and the ENG1010 module enhanced or constrained their development of an academic writing voice. Unlike the postpositivist and the pragmatic philosophies, this paradigm is aligned with qualitative research methodologies that are based on a natural context.

3.4. The Case Study

I employed an exploratory case study approach to investigate first-year students' development of voice in academic writing through memoir writing. A case study is defined as a process of inquiry that focuses on how an individual unit changes over time within real-life contexts or settings (Duminy et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). This process of inquiry traces how a series of events occur, and effect change within systems that are bounded by time and place. A case may be any simple or complex unit such as an individual student, a small group, an organisation, a partnership or a single event (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Creswell and Poth, 2018). Thomas defines it as:

> Analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods [can be case studies]. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates. (2011: 23)

The most important aspect that Thomas conveys in his definition is that case studies are holistic by nature, and a failure to recognise how factors intertwine renders the case not worth studying. Tight (2022) points out that cases occur within natural settings; are not artificial, cannot be quantified or tested through experiments, but are part of everyday reality. Similarly, Creswell and Poth (2018: 96) further posit that a case study is "a qualitative approach in which an investigator explores a real life, contemporary bounded system, or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed analysis, involving multiple sources of information" such as interviews, observations and texts. In this study, the case was a group of five first-year students who were registered for an English Module called ENG1010 and also participated in the Memoir Writing Project in 2022. These specific students were a case because, first, they were enrolled for the ENG1010 module for first-year students, and they specifically participated in the Memoir Writing Project. I investigated how their voices in academic writing developed as a result of the ENG1010 module and the Memoir Writing Project.

My study acknowledges that there are other types of qualitative inquiry besides the case study. These include narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory research and ethnography (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Narrative research is interested in life stories as told from personal experiences. It takes the form of a biographical study, autoethnography and oral history.

Although my study explores students' memoir writing which collates personal narratives of lived experiences, it is not interested in understanding them, but rather in how personal accounts can be a foundation for enhancing voice in academic writing. While narrative research is interested in how personal experiences are narrated, phenomenology describes lived experiences in relation to a phenomenon (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). A phenomenon can relate to personal experiences including grief, stigma, fatigue and anger, to mention a few. In this study, I focus on voice as a social phenomenon rather than as a personal subjective experience. It is regarded as a social phenomenon because its development and construction are embedded within social contexts. Grounded theory research as a type of qualitative research follows how actions and processes take place step by step, giving rise to a theory. In this study, I focus on the students' development of academic voice holistically, based on their writing in the ENG1010 module and the Memoir Writing Project. In so doing, I do not pay attention to the steps or process through which the development occurs. The ethnographic study is specifically interested in describing social behaviour and the beliefs of a specific cultural group. It can focus on their type of music, dance and language.

3.5. Study Context

I conducted my study at the Star University in South Africa, a leading Open Distance and e-Learning institution (ODEL). I used the name Star University as a pseudonym for the university to ensure the anonymity of students and the module. Star University has an enrolment of more than 400 000 students per annum, spread out over the world. The students are geographically separated from the university. Learning and teaching occur on digital platforms such as online blogs, livestreams, Zoom meetings, and other social media platforms where students are able to interact with their e-tutors, lecturers and one another to share knowledge. The university offers various qualifications, ranging from higher certificates to doctoral degrees.

3.5.1. The Memoir Writing Project

This research was part of an Engaged Scholarship project called "Creating Space for Voice Through Memoir Writing". The project worked with a group of five first-year students who were registered for the ENG1010 module at Star University. The pseudonym, ENG1010, was used to ensure the anonymity of students and the module. The project consisted of three facilitators, of whom I was the main facilitator. The other facilitators were two female professors from Star University who are also members of the Department of English Studies.

These facilitators supervised the writing workshops and assisted in creating activities which the students completed. As the main project facilitator, I conducted the writing workshops with the students. As the researcher, I obtained research ethics clearance from the university to collect data, and students were invited to attend a series of writing workshops where they would produce short memoirs. In the project, students were asked to write short memoirs reflecting on any event that happened in their lives based on their memories, and they were granted the freedom to choose.

Owing to the Covid-19 lockdowns, many institutions and industrial firms stopped operating, while others were compelled to operate virtually. As an ODEL institution, Star University enhanced its teaching and learning approaches through the use of digital platforms like Microsoft Teams, Telegram and Zoom. Likewise, the Memoir Writing Project adopted this approach and all the writing workshops for the study were conducted online to interact with the students as respondents.

3.5.2. The ENG1010 Module

The students were registered for ENG1010, a year-long module that aimed at introducing them to various English language skills appropriate for teaching the Foundation and Intermediate phases in the South African education system. The module consists of six units that focus on different language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The units are as follows: Unit 1: Characteristics of Language; Unit 2: Language Analysis; Unit 3: Listening Skills: Patterns and Levels of Meaning; Unit 4: Reading for Meaning; Unit 5: Writing Skills: Audience, Purpose, and Genre; and Unit 6: Language Competencies.

The students submitted three assignments as their formative assessments and wrote one exam at the end of the year. Assignment 1 covered Unit 1 and Unit 2. Unit 1 focuses broadly on various issues related to language and its development. These include intelligibility, language development within context, language varieties, multilingualism, and English in the South African context. On the other hand, Unit 2 deals with language aspects such as sound patterns, semantics, morphemes, word structures (morphology and phonemes), lexis and, most importantly, lexis in the academic writing context. The assignment counted for 30% of the module year mark and was marked out of 50. The assignment questions fell within two categories: Content-Knowledge-Based Questions and Application-Based Question.

Assignment 2 covers Units 3 and 4 of the study guides. Unit 3 emphasises the importance of listening in language learning. The students are taught different skills such as sound patterns, listening strategies and sound discrimination, as well as the influence of sound on listening. On the other hand, Unit 4 focuses on reading skills and factors affecting the development of reading proficiency. Like Assignment 1, Assignment 2 counts for 30% of the students' year marks.

Assignment 3 is based on the last two units of the study guide: Unit 5 and 6. Unit 5 specifically focuses on writing skills. The students are introduced to various aspects of writing, such as the purpose of writing, genres, audience and factors influencing writing such as social media, multimedia and blogs and, most importantly, academic writing skills. On the other hand, Unit 6 is based on language competencies and critical literacy. The assignment, which asks students to write an essay in response to a controversial topic, counts for 40% of the year mark.

3.6. Research Population and Sampling Methods

My research population was a group of 2373 first-year students who were registered for the English module, ENG1010, at Star University. The population was part of the Memoir Writing Project. I initially intended working with a slightly larger sample to allow for broader conclusions to be drawn. However, due to poor responses from the students, I ended up with 5 students participating. Upon sending invitations to students through their module site, 92 responded and only 51 indicated having an interest in joining the project. However, only 5 of them participated in the end. When asked why they did not participate in the project as they had indicated, students cited a lack of data, problems with the internet connection and time constraints.

The sample of 5 students who participated in the study shared their writing and collaborated in the writing workshops. The sample was selected using purposive sampling. This sampling method entails selecting participants who meet predetermined criteria. Patton describes it as "selecting information-rich cases, [which] by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated" (2014: 264). The participants were first-year students between the ages of 18 and 40. They were all from South Africa and spoke a variety of languages: IsiZulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans, and English.

I acknowledge that a limited sample size impacts on the generalizability of the findings. Scott and Morrison (2006) argue that while the generalizability of findings seems to be a concern relating to case studies, a case study is not bound to make any claim to generalization. Instead,

readers can utilize the findings for various purposes. In a case study, any sample size is enough as long as the participants who are selected purposively can yield the relevant information. In addition, as this was a qualitative study, there was enough data that was collected using a variety of sources such as students' written assignments, question papers, memoranda, module study guide, students' individual interviews, and observations of the writing workshops. The data collected was also triangulated to enhance the credibility of the study.

3.7. Description of Participants

My participants comprised four female students and one male. The names of the participants were Nicole, Pinkie, Thenjiwe, Leticia and Tshepo. These names are pseudonyms, used to ensure students' anonymity. Three of these participants (Tshepo, Pinkie and Thenjiwe) were Black, whereas Nicole was Indian and Leticia was Coloured. Below is brief description of each participant's profile:

Table 3.1: The demographic description of the participants

Name of Student	Age	Gender/ Sex	Race	Other qualification	Employment	Province
Nicole	36	Female	Indian	Optical Dispensing (Diploma) Paralegal Studies (Certificate	Unemployed	Western Cape
Pinkie	19	Female	Black	None	Unemployed	Gauteng
Thenjiwe	40	Female	Black	Hospitality Management (Certificate)	Retailer	KwaZulu-Natal
Tshepo	27	Male	Black	Operations Management	Unemployed	Gauteng
Leticia	20	Female	Coloured	None	Unemployed	Eastern Cape

3.7.1. Nicole

Nicole was born and raised in Hanover Park in Cape Town in the Western Cap. Hanover Park is a Coloured-dominated area located in the Cape Flats, about 12 kilometers from the Cape

Town CBD. It is a drug-infested area characterised by gangsterism, alcoholism, violence and poverty. The area also lacks basic facilities such as libraries and adequate schools.

Nicole was 36 years old. She completed matric in a public school and went on to obtain two tertiary qualifications: a Diploma in Optical Dispensing and a Certificate of Paralegal Studies. She was an author and enjoyed writing poetry. She also loved to read biographies and autobiographies. Growing up in Cape Town, Nicole was exposed to a variety of languages, but she was fluent in Afrikaans and English. At the time of the study, she was unemployed. Although Nicole was passionate about reading and writing, she intended choosing Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology as her major teaching subjects for Intermediate Phase.

3.7.2. Pinkie

Pinkie was a 19-year-old female student from Alexandra in Gauteng. She was originally from Mokopane in Limpopo where she attended school and completed her matric. After passing Grade 12 in 2020, she completed a short course and obtained a certificate in Computer Literacy. Pinkie was unemployed at the time of attending the project. She was registered for a Bachelor of Education at Star University and intended taking English as her major teaching subject. She was an aspiring author who wrote short stories and poetry. However, her writing had not yet been published. Pinkie spoke Sesotho sa Lebowa (Sepedi) as her home language, but was also conversant in other languages such as isiZulu and Tswana.

3.7.3. Thenjiwe

Thenjiwe was a 40-year-old female student originally from Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal. She completed matric in 1998 and had a certificate in Hospitality Management. She was working as a retailer in a store in her hometown. She intended taking Mathematics and Natural Sciences as her major subjects. Thenjiwe spoke isiZulu as her mother tongue. Other than English, she could also communicate in other languages such as Sesotho, although she was not very proficient.

3.7.4. Tshepo

Tshepo was 27 years old, born and raised in Soshanguve, a township near Pretoria in Gauteng. He attended and completed his matric in a private school near his home. Tshepo held a Diploma of Operations Management. He was working on an internship basis at one of the primary schools in his area.

Soshanguve is situated about thirty kilometres north of Pretoria, next to Mabopane and Ga-Rankuwa. The name Soshanguve is an acronym for Sotho, Shangaan, Nguni and Venda. This shows the multicultural nature of the township. However, upon its establishment in the early 1970s, the different ethnic groups making up Soshanguve were divided through apartheid laws that prohibited them from mixing socially. Soshanguve is the home of the campuses of the Tshwane University of Technology, which accommodates students from around South Africa and neighbouring countries. It is fifteen kilometres away from the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, formerly known as Medunsa.

3.7.5. Leticia

Leticia was a 20-year old student from Bethelsdorp in Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape. She spoke Afrikaans as her mother tongue, but she was also fluent in other languages such as English and isiXhosa. She completed matric in a public school in her town. She was an upcoming author and had published a short story.

3.8. Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods that I used to address the Research Sub-Questions were individual in-depth virtual interviews and documents such as students' written assignments, question papers and memoranda, the module study guide and students' written memoirs.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the students individually to address Research Sub-Questions 1 and 2. These interviews were conducted virtually through *Microsoft Teams:* a digital platform used by Star University for instant messaging, audio and video calling, online meetings and online conferences. Creswell and Poth (2018) and Kumar (2019) describe interviews as social interactions that are commonly used to gain insight into how people view the world around them and make meaning of their experiences. Interviews may be conducted individually or in groups. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2011: 355), "qualitative

interviews may take several forms: the informal conversational interview, the interview guide approach, and standardized open-ended interviews". Informal conversational interviews tend to be based on random questions that are asked during a conversation as it naturally occurs, whereas during interview guide interviews, the questions are planned and structured carefully, and the interviewer follows a specific sequence outlined in the interview guide. The questions in a standardised open-ended interview are posed to each participant in the same sequence and wording. This type of interview is rigid and leaves no room for the natural flow of conversations. In this study, interview guide questions were given flexibility to enhance natural conversation. Initially, I intended to conduct focus group interviews as I had aimed to work with a bigger number of about 50 participants. However, due to the poor response to the invitation for students to participate in the study, I only had five students and focus group discussions were not feasible.

A description of how data was collected in relation to this specific Research Sub-Question is provided below.

3.8.1. Research Sub-Question 1: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

The interview questions that were asked in line with this Research Sub-Question were interested in gaining an in-depth understanding of how the students perceived voice following their participation in the Memoir Writing Project. In gaining a broader overview of the students' perceptions, the interview questions probed their prior experiences of memoir writing and asked them to identify their personal highlights in the project, the themes they wrote about in their memoirs, and how they believed writing memoir enhanced their understanding of voice. In addition, the interview questions[3] asked the students to elaborate on how they approached memoir writing and whether attending the project changed the way they viewed voice in academic writing.

3.8.2. Research Sub-Question 2: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?

The interview questions in relation to this Research Sub-Question were focused on the students' perceptions of voice in relation to the ENG1010 module. The questions were aimed

---

[3] Interview Questions (Appendix A).

at establishing how the pedagogy of the module enhanced or inhibited their development of voice.

3.8.3. Research Sub-Question 3: What are the writing pedagogies adopted in the English Module to develop first-year students' voice and identity in academic writing?

In order to respond to this question, data was collected through documents and observations. The documents included study materials, written assignments (essays), formative assessment activities and field notes on how teaching and learning were conducted in the module. Interviews with the students were conducted before and after the intervention. These data collection tools provided a broader understanding of how the pedagogic approaches adopted by the English module enabled or constrained the development of students' voice in writing. Study materials such as Tutorial Letters were explored to understand the writing pedagogies adopted in teaching writing. The essays, which were formal assessment tasks, were collected after the end of every semester to trace students' development of voice in their writing. In addition, the essays revealed the type of feedback each student received from markers regarding their writing and how such feedback helped shape their voice. Observations of online livestream sessions were conducted to gain a broader overview of how writing is taught in ENG1010.

3.8.4. Research Sub-Question 4: In what ways do students develop their voices through memoir writing?

For this question, data was collected through students' writing, such as short memoirs, blogs and the researcher's reflective journal. The students wrote memoirs which reflected their development of voice in writing. This writing process enabled the students to understand what voice in writing entails and facilitates reflections on the relationship between their writing voices and linguistic contexts. In addition, memoir writing was a continuous process that students engaged in to help them progress from one stage to another. All the students' final memoirs were handed to the facilitator. As part of the writing process, the students shared their memoirs using the ENG1010 module site, where they commented on and provided feedback on each other's texts. The feedback and comments students wrote were examined to ascertain the understanding of writing that underpinned each response. This provided a broader perspective of the way feedback from peers plays a role in the development of students' writing

voice. All facilitators were briefed about the aims of the project, and they were required to keep a reflective journal on the workshops and students' writing.

Table 3.2 below illustrates how data was collected in the Memoir Writing Project from June 2022 to December 2022:

Table 3.2: The Description of the Data Collection Process

Phases	Date(s)/Duration	Activity	Comments
Phase 1	**3 weeks** **(Once a week)**	• The facilitator reads a sample of a memoir that he has written. • The students and the project facilitators discuss what they know and understand about memoirs. • The students and facilitators discuss different memory triggers. During the discussion, the students contributed with examples of things/objects that triggered certain memories.	• The students did not have any background knowledge of memoir writing except for one who says she read them before as her aunt wrote one. • Upon reading the memoir that I wrote as the main project facilitator; the students began to understand what memoirs are and what they can be about. • As the main facilitator, I directed them to different ways of remembering using their senses. This was a build up to their activity of writing the memoirs.
Phase 2	**3 weeks** **(Once a Week)**	• The students were given another example of a memoir to read and answer questions related to it. • The questions asked the students to comment on the type of voice the writer used, the linguistic resources used to express their voice, use of first-person pronouns to convey a sense of presence in the text.	• Students commented on the use of first person to express voice, structure, and the ideal audience. • The students were able to discuss the different elements of the text clearly.

| Phase 3 | 3 Weeks | • The students were requested to start writing their own memoirs based on any topic of their choice.
• The writing did not only involve the students, but the project facilitators wrote theirs which were also critiqued during the sessions.
• The students submitted their first drafts in their online learning site so that they could read them and make comments.
• The students were asked to work in pairs and share their texts. Therefore, they were asked to provide each other with peer-feedback.
• Following sharing their memoirs among each other, the students shared their feedback with the whole group.
• They were encouraged to go through the comments provided by their peers and work on them. | • The students first wrote shorter pieces of two paragraphs. However, this was developed gradually to make their writing more extensive.
• Some of the students struggled to find a memory of an event to reflect upon.
• The students were allowed to work in pairs during one of the sessions where they read each other's memoirs and provided peer-feedback.
• This enabled them to regard each other as writing partners. Moreover, it also gave them a sense of ownership in their texts as the writing was centred on them. |
| **Phase 4** | 3 weeks | • The students engaged in individual structured interviews.
• The interviews reflected on their experiences in the Memoir Writing Project and their writing in the ENG1010 module. | • Having interacted with the students during the writing workshops helped ease the barrier between myself (as the project facilitator) and them (as participants). As a result, they were more comfortable to share information with me. |

3.9. Data Analysis

The data was collected and analysed using thematic analysis, which is concerned with understanding lived experiences and how respondents make sense of those experiences (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data. Thematic analysis works with any qualitative data "to identify themes and patterns of meaning across a data set in relation to […] particular Research Sub-Question[s]" (Damayanthi, 2019: 3). The analysis of the data followed these steps: transcribing, reading and familiarisation with data, coding of data, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finalising and writing the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Damayanthi, 2019). Firstly, the recorded data was transcribed into a written form. Transcriptions of recorded data familiarise the researcher with the data by listening to and reading it thoroughly and getting clarity in what the participants say. The second step involved 'coding', which is giving labels, such as words or phrases, to specific parts of the data that relate to specific Research Sub-Questions. The third step entailed "identifying and naming themes", by finding out the patterns and salient features of the data that respond to a particular Research Sub-Question. In the fourth step - "reviewing themes" - the researcher checked for overlaps among the themes and made decisions on how best they related to certain Research Sub-Questions. Once the themes had been clearly defined, the fifth step was to define or state the essence of every theme. The last step was to write a report and summarise the themes in a logical and coherent manner.

The data sets were analysed in relation to the Research Sub-Questions they intended to address.

3.9.1. Research Sub-Question 1: What are the first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

The findings related to this Research Sub-Question were analysed to gain an in-depth understanding of the first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project. The analysis focused on how students' participation in the Memoir Writing Project enhanced or inhibited their understanding of voice in academic writing. Similarities, contrasts and ambiguities were identified in their interview responses.

3.9.2. Research Sub-Question 2: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?

This question focused on the students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module. The data was coded according to themes, similarities, contradictions and ambiguities. The analysis paid attention to how the students thought the writing pedagogies adopted by the ENG1010 module enhanced or inhibited their development of voice in academic writing.

3.9.3. Research Sub-Question 3: What are the writing pedagogies adopted in the English Module to develop first-year students' voice and identity in academic writing?

Data collected from documents such as study materials, written assignment (essays), formative assessment activities and observations of livestream lessons was analysed using thematic analysis as described above to determine how each document enhanced or inhibited students' development of voice in academic writing.

3.9.4. Research Sub-Question 4: How does memoir writing develop students' voice in English academic writing?

Data was collected through writing activities such as memoirs and blogs and a reflective journal for the Memoir Writing Project. These were analysed using thematic analysis as described above to determine how each document enhanced or inhibited students' development of voice in academic writing.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

This study was part of an Engaged Scholarship research project called "Creating Space for Voice through Autobiography Writing". The project facilitators had applied for and obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee in the College of Human Sciences at the Star University. In conducting the study, all the necessary ethical codes were observed. First, all research participants received information sheets that outlined the purpose of the study as well as consent forms to sign which indicated their interest in participating in the study. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and withdrawal from participation would not in any way jeopardise or disadvantage them. In addition, each student was allocated a pseudonym to disguise their identity and maintain anonymity. The data was used exclusively

for this study and only the researcher, facilitators and supervisors had access to the raw data. This helped maintain confidentiality. Data has been kept in a password-protected computer and will only be destroyed five years from the date that the final report has been submitted.

3.11. Rigour of the Study

In a qualitative study such as mine that is susceptible to biases and subjectivity, rigour needs to be maintained. Ahmed (2024) views rigour as the level of trustworthiness of the findings underpinned by the following elements: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. These elements are discussed in the following sections.

3.11.1. Credibility

Credibility is described as the degree of truthfulness and believability of the results of a study. In achieving credibility, the following standards were considered. First, I conducted prolonged engagements with the students through writing workshops that were held every week from June to December 2022. During the sessions, the students were introduced to memoir writing and the different ways of constructing voice in writing. The students also wrote their own memoirs which were thoroughly discussed during the sessions. In addition, a WhatsApp group was also created where facilitators had easy access to the students. Second, measures were put in place to address my personal biases. The students were actively involved in all the sessions. They wrote their own memoirs and had opportunities to provide each other with peer feedback instead of being passive in their construction of knowledge. Third, data was collected using multiple tools such as individual interviews, observations, field notes and documents that included written assignments, question papers and memorandums, study guides and students' memoirs. These sources of data were corroborated to enhance the credibility of the findings.

3.11.2 Transferability

The second principle of rigour is transferability, which entails the degree to which the findings are applicable in different situations. First, the study was conducted at Star University, an ODEL university in South Africa. The participants came from different provinces in South Africa: Gauteng, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, and Limpopo, and they spoke a variety of official languages. The age of the participants ranged between 18-40. Second,

purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. They were selected based on their registration in the ENG1010 module and their participation in the Memoir Writing Project.

3.11.3. Dependability

Dependability entails the extent to which the data would yield the same result if the same methodology were applied. First, from a methodological perspective, the study was implemented in May 2022 when invitations were sent out via the ENG1010 module communication systems. A Google form was attached to the invitation for students to indicate whether they were interested in joining the project or not. 86 responses were received, and 51 students showed interest in the project. However, by the time the writing workshops began, only eight students were available. Eventually, only five students remained and attended sessions until the end.

The Memoir Writing Workshops began in the first week of June 2022 and were conducted once a week. In the first few weeks, only two students attended, but attendance increased gradually. The sessions began properly in July 2022 after attendance had attained a consistent level. As the workshops were aimed at introducing the students to memoir writing as a way of developing voice in academic writing, I read a memoir entitled *The Chair Under Tree Class*, which I had prepared for them. This gave them an idea of the genre of memoir writing, since most had no prior experience of memoir. Following that, the students were introduced to some examples of popular memoirs to broaden their knowledge of the genre. Subsequently, the students were introduced to the idea of "memory triggers" to guide them on how to start reflecting on certain events. After this session, the students were requested to draft short memoirs and post them on the discussion forum on the online platform. Students had access to each other's memoirs, and they provided feedback on how voice was constructed in each. Each student's memoir was then discussed in the following two sessions, where everyone had a chance to give comments. As a result, the students were able to think about their own writing and take control of the way in which they expressed themselves. One of the facilitators also read a short piece of her memoir, which was reviewed in one of the sessions. This helped the students understand that they had a part in the writing, and that the facilitators were not arbiters, but co-authors whose work could be also critiqued. My reliance on the other facilitators' and students' opinions helped me gain a broader perspective of the effectiveness of the different research methods.

3.11.4. Confirmability

Confirmability alludes to the level of impartiality and objectivity of the findings. In ensuring that the findings were not biased, I shared them with my supervisors to read and give suggestions. This led to several revisions and the refinement of my interpretations to ensure that I presented the findings exactly as they appeared from the data. In addition, I constantly consulted with all the participants as a form of seeking clarity, verification and confirmation of the findings. All the writing workshops and students' interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and I consulted them throughout the presentation of the findings to enhance accuracy. I also kept a journal in which I wrote notes and reflections after every session.

3.12. Conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion of the methodology I adopted to explore the students' development of voice in academic writing through memoir writing. The study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the students' perceptions of the development of voice in the Memoir Writing Project and the ENG1010 Module, the kind of pedagogy employed by the ENG1010 Module and the manner in which Memoir Writing enhanced their development of voice in academic writing. Using a case study approach, the study worked with five students selected using purposive sampling due to being registered in the ENG100 Module and taking part in the Memoir Writing Project. Using a social constructivist paradigm that believes that there are multiple ways of viewing the world, the study collected data using different methods: individual interviews; students' written memoirs and their assignments from the Memoir Writing Project; documents such as study guides, question papers, and memorandums and field notes. These findings were analysed using thematic approaches in relation to the Research Sub-Questions that the data intended to address. Furthermore, the chapter clearly elaborated the ethical considerations observed in conducting the study. These included providing the students' information sheets and consent forms to obtain permission to use their data. In addition, pseudonyms were used to ensure the anonymity of students and the module. The raw data was saved in a password-protected computer and only the researcher had access to it. Lastly, the chapter also elucidated the steps that were taken to maintain rigour. These included ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The following chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this research study, and it is divided into four sections that are aligned with the Research Sub-Questions that informed the process of data collection. The Research Sub-Questions underpinning the study are as follows:

1. **Research Sub-Question 1:** What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

2. **Research Sub-Question 2:** What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?

3. **Research Sub-Question 3:** In what ways do the writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 module enhance or constrain students' development of voice in academic writing?

4. **Research Sub-Question 4:** In what ways do students develop voice through memoir writing?

4.2. Presentation of Findings

4.2.1. Research Sub-Question 1: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

Students' responses to the question on their perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project show that joining the project was a leap of faith for them as they did not have prior experience in memoir writing. In response to the question of why they joined the project, Thenjiwe stated that she hoped the project would improve her academic writing, whereas Nicole, Pinkie and Leticia joined because they felt that it would add value to their passion for writing. These three students enjoyed writing poetry, short stories and essays. The other student (Tshepo) indicated that he was inspired to join because he was passionate about languages as he aspired to be an English educator. The students' comments are shown in the table below.

Nicole
I was interested in the project because I love writing and reading. I thought like the project will improve my writing. Also, I like to write. I write poetry.
Pinkie

> *I love writing. I started writing when I was still doing Grade 4. I have been writing short stories and poem. So, when I heard of the project, I felt I should take it as an advantage or rather and opportunity to just enjoy what I do.*

> **Thenjiwe**
>
> *I wanted to learn, and I wanted to free my voice actually. I wanted to improve my writing actually academic writing.*

> **Tshepo**
>
> *I joined the project because I am going to teach English and I have always loved the language so I saw it as something that could benefit me as well. So I knew I could learn a couple of things about language.*

> **Leticia**
>
> *What attracted me to the project was ever since high school I've always loved doing essays. So, I loved writing stories. Any type of stories that I could write so after school I kind of left it because there was no other way. I could write stories on my own and stuff, but I wanted like an opportunity. So, when I saw that there was a writing project, I got excited.*

All the students expressed that they had not previously encountered the term memoir or memoir writing. However, Nicole indicated that she had read autobiographies of prominent people such as Elon Musk and the Dalai Lama. Pinkie specifically indicated that she was experiencing memoir for the first time.

> **Nicole**
>
> *No, I never encountered memoirs before. I have never read or written one. However, I read books like biographies and autobiographies. I have read the biographies of people like Dalai Lama and Elon Musk. In fact, I have read quite a few.*

> **Pinkie**
>
> *No, I have never written one before, this is my first. From short stories I wrote a novel when I was doing grade 10. I just never published my writing because I did not have anyone to assist. I lost touch with someone who wanted to help me publish.*

> **Thenjiwe**
>
> *I did not know anything about memoirs that's why I wanted to join the project so that I could learn what they are.*

> **Tshepo**

> *I did not write anything, and I did not know what a memoir is. So I never wrote a memoir before.*

In response to the question, "What were your highlights of the Memoir Writing Project?", the students expressed that collaboration was encouraged in the project to enhance their self-confidence in expressing their feelings and emotions as writers. They shared their texts and provided each other with feedback. Nicole mentioned that sharing memoirs with one another created a safe space where they could talk freely about their experiences without fear or judgment. Leticia said that the atmosphere of the project helped her to feel comfortable to share some stories from her life that she deemed personal and sensitive. Pinkie and Thenjiwe pointed out that collaboration in memoir writing improved their writing and critical thinking skills because they could relate to other personal experiences shared with the group. They highlighted that the sense of freedom to express their feelings and respond to questions from the group enabled them to reflect on and take charge of the meanings of their texts.

Nicole

I think my important highlight was being able to produce my own memoir which I shared with others. I was able to express my emotions and memories. What I think I also enjoyed the most was sharing memoirs and reading memoirs written by others and critique them.

Pinkie

I would say my highlight is now when we are busy discussing different memoirs because I'm learning a lot and reading other people's memories, having to relate to them and having to answer questions relating to them. It is one of the things I never thought I could do, so I'm finding it interesting.

Thenjiwe

The way that we were helping each other to improve our writing. That was a highlight of the project. We showed each other what we needed to do and how to make our writing to be right. Helping each other was good because we understood that we had to go deep in our emotions as we write our memoirs.

Tshepo

Something that stood out for me would be retrieving my memories. I think this stood out because I remember I could not get started with writing because it was tough for me to remember things that have passed.

Leticia

64

> *Being able to feel comfortable in terms of my stories because I was always like keep my stories to myself, I don't want anybody reading it. So, this project helped me to feel that it's okay for other people to hear your stories. Being able to discuss everything about the background of writing and story itself.*

The themes the students selected for their memoirs tended to centre on grief and pain experienced at different stages of their lives. They said this when asked, "Did you write a memoir as part of the activities in the project? If yes, what was your memoir about?" Nicole indicated that her memoir reflected on the passing of her mother, whereas Pinkie wrote about losing her father of whom she was very fond. Thenjiwe reflected on the disappointment she experienced when her father refused to give her money to go to university, while Leticia's memoir was about a girl whose life she observed from a distance. The exception was Tshepo, whose memoir was about joy and celebration as he reflected on his graduation.

Nicole   *I did write my own memoir. My memoir was about my mom. It was about the last day she was herself. Because after that day she was so sick that she had to be hospitalised.*
Pinkie   *Yes I did. My memoir was about the moment I watched my father die. I wrote this memoir because my father was very special to me and losing him was like an important part of me was taken away.*
Thenjiwe   *My memoir was about how I felt disappointed when my father refused to give me money to go and study further.*
Tshepo   *Yes, I did. I posted it in the module site I just have not refined it in much details. My memoir was about my graduation ceremony. My memoir started from the moment I went to graduation date. Where I started is when I was about to graduate and I started remembering my journey into achieving my qualification, the people I have met and the stress I experienced when I had to buy the suit for my graduation. The preparation about the graduation, the excitement of buying my first suit and being the first child in the family to graduate. But as I was writing I remember having a difficulty with the focus. Initially the focus was on the suit because it was my first time to wear a suit but I thought that it would limit me. Then I decided to focus on the whole event of graduation from the day I received a letter notifying me of the graduation date. I think there is more to write about the suit as I feel it's very significant. It marks the most significant moment in the family.*
Leticia   *Basically, it was about. Initially that was a girl that was going through a lot of stuff but the girl who is telling the story is just someone that is watching her from a distance. And the*

> *girl that was telling the story is basically just watching a because she's saw she admires her. The girl is going through a lot is able to and she is able put up a face.*

Overall, the students saw memoir writing as serving a therapeutic purpose which helped them gain a better understanding of the events that took place in their lives. When asked about their approach to writing their memoirs, they focused on the process of composition and the emotional effects that came as a result. Nicole related her childhood memories and discussed the observer's status in her memoir. The events that she related involved her parents and had a big impact on the way in which she grew up. Writing her memoir brought about a sense of nostalgia as much as it evoked some childhood trauma. Like Thenjiwe, writing her memoir helped her gain a better understanding of certain events and brought closure. Remembering the traumatic events in order to write her memoir, allowed a better understanding of vivid and painful emotions. In her description of the process of composing her memoir, Pinkie did not focus on the emotional effects but the kinds of linguistic and rhetorical decisions one must make in constructing a coherent text. She had to ensure that she maintained a correlation between the title of her memoir and the content. This emphasis showed how the Memoir Writing Project created space for her to take ownership and authority over her own writing. In addition, this encouraged creativity because Pinkie felt that she owned and could reflect on the title and ideas. She could justify why she selected the title she chose. Tshepo's writing focused on one event that he described in detail. Leticia used a distant third-person perspective to gain insight into certain events that occurred in her life. This is illustrated in the responses below.

> *Nicole*
>
> *Writing the memoir was just a moment of nostalgia if I may say. Just going back to that day, a lot of emotions came back. For me writing a memoir was a way of looking back into what happened in the past from the outside. It's been over twenty years since that day and memoir writing helped me to close that chapter. It made me understand why certain things had to happen.*

> *Pinkie*
>
> *I had to think of a title first that would suit my memoir. And I did not just want to write any title. I wanted to write a title that carries weight and to catch the reader's eyes. When you talk about The Dark Cloud of Misery it raises many questions. Either it is a dark cloud literally like when we are expecting the rain or what kind of dark cloud it is. One would say it is a dark cloud when there is heavy rain. So, it is not what it is. Mine is metaphorical.*

> **Thenjiwe**
>
> *When I started the memoir, I just highlighted, but after the feedback from the project attendees I learned that I had to give reason for the memoir. It did not raise any more emotions because I did not feel disappointed anymore. I felt like let something go out of the chest. I have now made peace with the situation.*

> **Tshepo**
>
> *Okay, the first thing was to pick a memory of an event and tried to remember whatever I could about it and then from there, to sequence all the events and how they happened. In sequencing the events I tried to explain how I felt about what was happening then. That's how I approached writing it.*

> **Leticia**
>
> *When you told us that we should be writing memoirs. I just thought of my life basically. So there is one memory that I kept to myself that I wanted to write about. So it's the story of the girl. This girl in this story is myself. I looked at myself from a distance to understand why I was as a child. I felt like I did not want to explain the story as a third person. I wanted to have a reflective eye as a third person.*

The students were asked, "While participating in the project, did you notice any changes in your academic writing? Please elaborate", and they responded by saying that the writing workshops provided invaluable skills that benefited their academic writing proficiency. They attributed this to their performance in Assignment 3 of the ENG1010 module. Nicole said that writing her memoir boosted her self-confidence and critical thinking, and gave her the ability to express herself when writing Assignment 3, an essay. She said the Memoir Writing Project was invaluable, and that it would have yielded more positive results in her writing development had it started early in the year. In the same vein, Tshepo said that his participation in the project enhanced self-critiquing skills in his construction of voice, and this changed his perception of writing. Pinkie said the Memoir Writing Project helped her to recognise the difference between writing with authority and ownership, and writing to obtain marks. She observed that writing academically comes with limitations as it is judged by lecturers who are arbiters of accuracy. Writing memoir granted her the freedom to write about her personal experiences in a coherent manner, whereas writing for academic purposes was policed by lecturers who serve as gatekeepers. Leticia grew her self-confidence by expressing her own voice.

> *Nicole*
>
> *Like I said that the last assignment for ENG1010 was the essay writing, so this Memoir Writing helped me to become more critical of my own writing and to stress my opinion better. My marks improved in the essay. I don't know but I feel like if the project started earlier, I would have done better in all the assignments across the board.*

> *Pinkie*
>
> *Yes, sir it did. I took most points when we had that session where we differentiated between memoir writing and academic writing. When writing academically, you write for marks so you have to be conscious that whatever you write you must make sure that it does not offend the other party. Though you must express everything out so that the other party is not offended. But when writing memoir, you simply tell a story that happened to you or anybody else. That's allowing you to respect another person's feelings. The sequencing of the story and sentence construction, the events must follow each other step by step.*

> *Tshepo*
>
> *In terms of writing, yes it did. Because I remember when I first wrote my memoir, I remember I had difficulties with writing things and you explained some tricks. But in terms of writing I will say I still feel as though, when I am writing I am not expressing myself enough as I am supposed to. I would say, yes. Because I don't do a lot of my own writing outside of this project. So what I would say I have written in ENG1010 was an argumentative essay. I thought I was expressing myself in that.*

> *Leticia*
>
> *Yes I did. I have never written the way I wrote this piece with my academic work. The project made me aware of a lot of things. I am now able to write in formal. I always find a way of adding voice in my writing. Before I did not really have a background in academic writing.*

The students' perceptions of writing began to change after their participation in the Memoir Writing Project. When they were asked, "Are academic writing and memoir writing connected?" Nicole pointed out that one needed to argue a point and express a voice and opinion in both. Pinkie revealed that academic writing required an expression of one's views and opinions without fear of being judged, just as happens in memoir. However, she felt a need to adhere to the conventions and standards set for obtaining marks. Tshepo believed that his writing improved through the writing workshops. He found that writing academically entailed

taking a stance on a topic. Leticia, however, appeared to be uncertain about whether there are links between academic writing and memoir writing. For Thenjiwe, academic writing remained distinct in that students are corrected for inaccurate responses. These perceptions are expressed in the responses below.

Nicole

Yes, because when you argue your point in academic writing you still need to voice your opinion and your point. I think a correlation between memoir writing and academic writing happens there.

Pinkie

Yes, I think there is. Personal writing and academic writing are related. Because there is a point where you have to give your answer like in your own words or in a way that you think it is. Which I can call giving it my personal answer. Just like writing a memoir. Let's take I have to write an essay, there are some important skills that I learned in the memoir essay writing like having to express your voice without fear though respecting the other party. And also having to write with understanding and not leaving other things out because that will forfeit your marks. If the reader start asking himself, what about this one, that raises questions.

Thenjiwe

I think there is a link because with memoir writing you get a chance to be corrected about your mistakes.

Tshepo

Yes, I think so especially with the essay in Module A. Because in an argumentative essay you are supposed to have a stance. So with that stance you that's your voice, right? Ya so I was able to express myself more clearly. I still managed to present my own voice into that. So I think I improved a lot in that sense.

Leticia
I think there can be. Because for essays you are telling a story and memoir you are telling a story on the memory that you had. They are not the same but I think there is a link. I just don't know how they link.

In summary, the students joined the Memoir Writing Project because it resonated with their passion for languages as writers and aspiring language teachers. Despite some of them being writers, they did not encounter memoir prior to joining the project. They encountered other literary genres, such as poetry, essays, and short stories, at school. Although most of them

claimed they had very little or no knowledge of memoir, one student indicated that she had read biographies and autobiographies. This contradiction indicated she was not aware that memoir and biography belong to the same category of life writing. In addition, the students showed that collaborations in the construction of their memoirs enhanced their critical thinking, reflective skills and their self-confidence in expressing themselves. They argued that sharing their stories and critiquing one another created a safe space that allowed them to explore different ways of self-expression. As the chief facilitator of all the sessions, I also reassured them they were in a safe space.

Furthermore, the students revealed that memoir writing offered them opportunities to vent and express grief and sadness which they had harboured for a long time. In essence, they found memoir writing to be therapeutic as it helped merge their current selves with the old ones. The students further revealed that being allowed to choose their own topics and draw from their own experiences enhanced creativity and an understanding that writing is context-dependent. It is worth noting that memoir writing changed the way they perceived voice in writing. In fact, they began to see links between academic writing and memoir writing. As articulated by one of the students, both types of texts require the expression of voice. After writing their memoirs, the students began to associate voice in academic writing with tone and expressing feelings. In addition to the definition of voice as an ability to take a stance, some of the students viewed it as an expression of emotions, as indicated in their memoirs. The students felt that attending the project contributed to their achievement in writing Assignment 3 of the ENG1010 Module.

4.2.2. Research Sub-Question 2: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?

When asked what the ENG1010 module taught them about academic writing and voice, the students expressed contradictory responses. Nicole lacked certainty about whether the module exposed them to voice in academic writing as she did not attend any of the online classes that were provided. She admitted, however, that they were taught about academic writing, but without any reference to voice. Similarly, Thenjiwe indicated that she was not taught what academic writing entailed in the module. She relied on her self-study skills to access the module content. Pinkie said that she first learned about academic writing during the preparations for Assignment 3, which was an essay. Leticia noted that the Study Guide did not contain much teaching about academic writing or voice. Instead, it concentrated on textual features such as tone, style, and genre.

> **Nicole**
>
> *With academic writing, I can't say for sure. I did not attend any online class or something. I've just done my assignments on my own. I never received any invitation for the module. I just participated in the units in the module, but there was never a class.*

> **Pinkie**
>
> *Yes, sir it does. Assignment 3 where we had to write an essay. They simply taught us the step-to-steps of writing an essay. What actually is needed when writing an essay.*

> **Thenjiwe**
>
> *I read it on myself about academic writing. I did not get any teaching about academic writing I just googled it and read and go through some books where I read a lot about academic writing but in the module I don't recall.*

> **Leticia**
>
> *Not exactly like in the module they talk about the tone, the style, and the genre when writing.*

When asked about the types of questions in the assignments, the students stated these were mostly prescriptive. There was little room for self-expression. Nicole argued that while some of the questions opened a space for them to express themselves, only Assignment 3 specifically encouraged their own views and taking a stance as it was an argumentative essay. Pinkie and Leticia indicated that some of the questions required them to join sentences and define terms. Pinkie elaborated that occasional questions required them to analyse texts and identify features such as tone and audience while providing evidence to support their claims. Interestingly, Thenjiwe did not understand what was expected of her in Assignment 1 and 2 until she had to write Assignment 3, which required her opinion.

> **Nicole**
>
> *Yes. Some of the questions allowed us to express your voice. You asked what you would do in a given situation. For instance, Assignment 3 was an argumentative essay where you express your voice. So I would say that, the assignment encouraged voice.*

> **Pinkie**
>
> *We had to be able to join words in a sentence. We were asked about the things evident in a text, which audience is it referring to, the tone. Yeah, those are the ones I can think of.*

> *Thenjiwe*
>
> *In the first assignment I was completely lost. I didn't know what was expected of me to tackle that assignment, I was completely lost. It was in assignment 2 where I had a little bit of idea of how I had to tackle that assignment. And in assignment 3 it was then that we were allowed to express our views and support them with evidence.*

> *Leticia*
>
> *They were basically from the exam assignment which I do not remember they ask questions like give me a definition of tone and what is reading, stuff like that.*

In summary, the students expressed mixed responses to the question of whether the ENG1010 module created a space for them to express and develop voice. The module taught academic writing, but there was no reference to voice. The students did not, however, attend any of the online sessions arranged by the lecturers. Therefore, they could not ascertain if voice was part of the discussions on academic writing or not. As they were enrolled at an ODEL institution, they relied on self-study to access the module content. Their assertions that the module did not encourage the expression of voice was further confirmed for them by the questions in the assignments which showed that most did not allow them to express their voice as these required them only to define terms or combine sentences. However, they agreed that in Assignment 3, they were allowed to express their voice, being required to write an argumentative essay. Given the limited space and opportunities for students to express their voice in the assignments, it was difficult for them to see how they could conceptualise voice in academic writing.

4.2.3. Research Sub-Question 3: In what ways do the writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 module enhance or constrain students' development of voice in academic writing?

The findings presented in line with the Research Sub-Question are drawn from the three assignments that the students wrote in ENG1010. The findings from the students' assignments are presented in sections as follows:

- Assignment 1
- Assignment 2
- Assignment 3

4.2.3.1 Assignment 1

This assignment consisted of eight questions which were divided into content-based questions and application-based questions. Five were content-based and required students to recall information and provide factual answers, whereas the other three involved the application of knowledge. Questions requiring the recall of information (Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7) required students to "explain", "identify", "distinguish", "define" or "fill in the gap".

Question 1 required students to "explain the distinction between two approaches to teaching English: the descriptive and prescriptive approach". This question expected students to recall specific information and did not provide space for them to express their voices. The students' responses show that they understood the question and thus answered it appropriately. However, their responses tended to be a regurgitation of information, as the concepts were described in their study guide. Even though this was the case, Nicole and Pinkie explained the difference between the two approaches in their own words to express their understanding. But Thenjiwe and Tshepo's responses adhered to the scope of the question and did not elaborate on how the two concepts differed according to their own understanding. Thenjiwe's response failed to explain the descriptive approach to teaching language. Leticia provided a lengthy response that seemed to have been copied from the internet and did not reflect her own understanding of the difference between the two concepts. Against this background, it can be inferred that the question created space for the students to develop a sense of voice in writing as they could explain the concepts using their own words and show their understanding. However, there is also a possibility for them to find answers in their study guide.

Nicole

1. Prescriptive approach is the rules applied to the English language, it is the standard that is used for speaking and writing in the international arena. It is the more formal version of English.

Descriptive approach is the deviation from the rules to make the language more understandable to communicate. It is the informal, more comfortable version of the English language.

Pinkie

1.) A prescriptive approach depends on the command that have to be followed and language difference while descriptive approach seeks to find out who language is being used and found convenient to people. In simple terms prescriptive approach propose English must be used while descriptive approach acknowledge that quality English is convenient to guarantee accessibility.

Thenjiwe 1. Descriptive approach is describing something the way it looks like. Prescriptive is telling how language should be used rather than describing how it is used.
Tshepo **1.** Prescriptive is the term used to prescribe how English should be taught. Descriptive is the term used to describe how English is actually being taught. The distinction between them is that the prescriptive is as it should be (desired) while the descriptive is as it currently is.
Leticia **Question 1** Prescriptive grammar, according to Koshal's book, refers to the strict norms and laws of grammar. It's a language approach that's puritanical. The prescriptive aspect of the school book approach to language is clear. It attempts to instruct you on how to talk and write in the language. The prescriptive approach is more likely to be followed by teachers and editors. Descriptive approach, on the other hand, takes into account the way a language is understood and used by the people. It is a more practical approach. There are two distinct approaches to learning a language and are known as prescriptive and descriptive approaches. Prescriptive approach is textbook knowledge and contains rigid rules of grammar as it should be used. Descriptive approach is much more lenient and takes into account how people speak and write the language. Though both approaches have the same basic purpose of explaining the rules of grammar, they do it in different ways. Descriptive approach is mostly followed by writers while teachers and editors are more likely to follow the prescriptive approach.

Question 2 of the assignment comprised two sub-questions, which required students to explain concepts. Overall, the students' responses showed they did not understand the questions and they failed to describe the concept appropriately. They had only a superficial grasp of the concepts. Question 2.1 required students to explain the term "language varieties" and only Nicole responded appropriately. In her response, she explained the concept of language varieties and provided an example to substantiate her point. While Pinkie's response was correct, it was not supported by examples. Interestingly, both Thenjiwe's and Tshepo's responses showed that they did not understand the concept of language varieties and could not explain how it develops. As in Question 1, Leticia's response was copied and she did not acknowledge the source, and this depicted a lack of understanding of the concept. Her response to the question was too wordy and included definitions of terms such as "monolingualism" and "bilingual" which were irrelevant.

Question 2.2 required the students to express their understanding of the term "multilingual language" in relation to English. Except for Nicole and Tshepo, the students could not explain how they understood the term in the context of English. While Nicole showed how English can be a multilingual language, she also expatiated by bringing in the South African context of English. Tshepo employed a broader approach to elaborate on English as a multilingual language. Pinkie and Thenjiwe attempted to explain what they understood by the term "multilingual" but could not relate that to English. Leticia seemed to copy definitions of terms like "multilingual" and "monolingual" from other scholars without showing how these relate to the English language. As in Questions 1 and 2.1 her response was too wordy, and she did not apply her understanding of concepts. She simply regurgitated facts that she copied from other sources without showing her own comprehension. Overall, these questions enabled students to explain the terms using their own words and demonstrate their understanding, and Question 2.2 specifically ignited the students' abilities to use their voices in writing.

Nicole

2.

2.1. Language varieties refers to the various dialect a language is spoken from region to region or culture to culture. An example of this is that Cape Town has its own slang, the English spoken by Capetonians is different to that of the English spoken by people in Johannesburg and the same can be said about the many other languages of South Africa.

2.2. Multilingual refers to the varieties of the English language. In South Africa, the various languages spoken adopts English into their languages and the English becomes multilingual, so as to create understanding and more effective communication.

Pinkie

2)

2.1. Language varieties means any of the intersecting subcategories of a language, one can also say any characteristic form of a language.

2.2. According to me, it is the skill to use or show oneself in a number of languages.

(https://www.emarald.com>full>html)

Thenjiwe

2.1 Language varitiesis different kind of languages used in a conversation at the same time.

2.2 Multilingual language means language that is used to communicate effectively with others.

Tshepo

2.

2.1. This is the term used to describe exposure to different languages as well as standard and non-standard forms of a language.

2.2. With English being a universal language, it is the language that is used when speakers from different cultures/languages have to communicate. The term multilingual when used to refer to English means that it is a language where speakers are generally fluent in more than one language.

Leticia

Question 2.1

Different dialects—variations of standard English—develop for a variety of causes, according to Nordquist. Geographic considerations, for example, might cause differences; people who live in various geographical areas frequently create separate dialects. Members of a certain group, often intellectual or professional, are more prone to adopt just what other members of that group know and understand. Individuals develop their own idiolects, or individual speaking styles. In sociolinguistics, language variety—also called lect—is a general term for any distinctive form of a language or linguistic expression. Linguists commonly use language variety (or simply variety) as a cover term for any of the overlapping subcategories of a language, including dialect, register, jargon,

and idiolect. It's vital to explore how lects differ from standard English in order to grasp the meaning of language variants.

Question 2.2

Multilingualism, according to Richard Nordquist, is the ability to speak multiple languages or the use of multiple languages. Multilingualism refers to a person's or a group of people's capacity to converse effectively in three or more languages. Monolingualism, on the other hand, is the ability to speak only one language.

A multilingual is someone who can communicate in more than one language. A person's first language, or mother tongue, is the language in which they grew up speaking. A simultaneous bilingual is someone who was raised speaking two first languages or mother tongues. They are referred to as sequential bilinguals if they learn a second language later.

As with Questions 1 and 2, Question 3 required students to recall specific information and provide definitions of three terms. In this question, students had to define three concepts: register, style and cohesion. Each definition was worth two marks. The students' responses were written in simple sentences which were less than fifteen words long. Four of the students — Nicole, Pinkie, Thenjiwe, and Tshepo — provided the correct definitions of the concepts. Leticia however appeared not to have properly understood the essence of the question and how much was expected of her in relation to the mark allocation. Her answers were very long and wordy and seemed to have been copied from another source. Although the students attempted to use their own words in responding to the question, the question involved recalling information without engaging with it or allowing students to express their voices.

Nicole

3.

3.1. Register - refers to the type of audience the language vocabulary is intended for. E.g. Is it social, personal or cultural.

3.2. Style - refers to the way the language is presented. i.e. is it formal or informal.

3.3. Cohesion – refers to the way the language is strung together in a verbal, non-verbal, are signs or symbols used.

Pinkie

3.

3.1. Register can be defined as a degree of usage, as set on by degree of formality and choice of vocabulary, pronunciation and structure, in agreement to the communicative purpose.

3.2. Style can be defined as the exact use of language.

3.3. Cohesion can be defined as to how content and composition of a sentence is joined together to make sense.

Thenjiwe

3.1 Register is the way in which words are used in conversation'

3.2 Style is certain way of making or doing something.

3.3 Cohesion is connection of ideas occurring in a meaningful way.

Tshepo

3.

3.1. Register – this is the language choices made depending on the kind of text written and its intended audience.

3.2. Style - this is the term used to describe the way in which the writer uses words, sentence structure and figurative language to communicate a message.

3.3. Cohesion – This is the joining together of words in a sentence using reference words such as but/then so that the text is easier to read and understand.

Leticia

Question 3.1

The register is defined in linguistics as the way a person uses language differently in different settings, according to Richard Nordquist. Think about the words you use, the tone of your voice, and even your body language. These differences in formality, also known as stylistic variance, are referred to as registers in linguistics. A lot of factors influence them, including the social occasion, environment, purpose, and audience.

All modes of communication, including written, oral, and signed, use registers. The register can be quite formal or very intimate, depending on grammar, syntax, and tone. To communicate properly, you don't even need to use a word. A sigh of irritation during a debate or a grin when signing "hello" can convey a lot of information.

Question 3.2

According to Lisa, the content is semi-formal. In English literature, style refers to how a work is portrayed through the author's voice. In a work of writing, it's just as vital as the tale, setting, theme, and characters. You can tell they were written by two different persons by the way they wrote what you just read when you read a work by one author and then

another by the way they wrote what you just read. The essence of how you may stand out in a sea of mediocrity or connect with your audience beyond the ink is your literary style, which is your voice on paper.

Style is "narrowly regarded as those figures that decorate discourse; broadly, as indicating an expression of the person speaking or writing," according to Richard Nordquist. The sphere of style encompasses all figures of speech." In other words, it is such a broad concept that it can be characterized by the smallest elements of one's writing or by the extremely huge image of oneself that one presents in their writing. For example, one could study the author's word choice or the overall telling of the story in order to determine the style of the piece of work.

Question 3.3

Kaur, Harshdeep mentions that the elements of coherence and cohesiveness can explain how planned, non-spontaneous materials, such as written discourse and speeches, are put together. While coherence and cohesion can be found in spontaneous speech, they are more prominent in planned texts since the employment of cohesive ties and devices of coherence requires more thinking and intention.

Cohesive devices effectively aid in the flow of conversation. Collocations, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, and referring are among them. These technologies establish physical connections between the words in a conversation. Coherence, which we characterized as understanding earlier, can be achieved through devices like cohesive ties, formatting approaches, inference, logical ordering of information, semantic patterning, and consistency.

Question 4 required students to distinguish between two concepts, namely, synthetic and analytic phonics, which were explained in the study guide. However, students were expected to explain the distinction between these concepts using their own words. The students appeared to have understood the question and managed to answer it properly.

Nicole

4. Synthetic phonics is taught by way of first learning the sound and the alphabet, then combining the two to form a word. /c/ /a/ /t/ = CAT. Analytic phonics is taught by first learning the whole word then breaking it down afterwards.

Pinkie

4. Analytic phonics focus on teaching a word as a whole and then concentrate on examining the components parts which made up the word while Synthetic phonics focus on teaching of how letters sound and their combination before focusing on which method can be used to teach on how to form a complete word.

Thenjiwe

4. Synthetic phonics changes to the end of words rather than separate words to show function of words in a sentence. Analytic phonics is an order of words used rather than ending of word to show function of it in a sentence.

Tshepo

4. Analytic phonics is when words have been broken down into the smallest unit of sound of the word. Synthetic phonics is the process by which sounds are taught before words are built. So, the difference here is that synthetic phonics are the first step towards learning how to read while analytic phonics are one of the last steps in reading where words are broken down so they are easier to read/pronounce.

Leticia
Question 4
One of the differences between the systems is that in analytic phonics, children analyse letters sounds after the word has been identified, whereas in synthetic phonics the pronunciation of the word is discovered through sounding and blending.

Question 5 required the students to recall information by demonstrating their understanding of the concept of morphology. The students were provided with a word — "multimodality" — which they had to break down and out of which, show different morphemes: the root, prefix, and suffix. They had to explain how these impact on the meaning of the word. In response, most of the students identified the morphemes and explained their meanings. Thenjiwe did not provide the meanings and Leticia did not respond to the question which is constricted, with students expected to demonstrate their knowledge of the technical aspects of language. This hinders their ability to express themselves.

Nicole

Multimodality

5.1. Root = Modal: this is from the word mode, meaning doing something.

5.2. Prefix = Multi: changes the word modal to having many forms or modes.

5.3. Suffix = Ity: changes the adjective; multimode to a noun; to show the quality of the word.

Pinkie

5

5.1. Multi- prefix

Modal- root word

-Ity- suffix

In this word the prefix multi means more than one, so it means many modes. The root word is modal and it comes from the word mode which means how to do something. The suffix –ity is used to create a noun and it means condition of something.

(https://assingmentexpert.com)

Thenjiwe

5.1 Multimodality

Prefix- multi

Root - mode

Suffix -ity
Tshepo   5.   5.1. Multimodality – In this word the prefix is multi which means many.   The root word is modal/mode which means 'a way of operating or dealing with something.'   The suffix is ity which does not have meaning on its own but when added to a root word means the state…   Multimodality means the state where there are multiple/ many ways of doing or applying something.
Leticia   No Response

Question 6 required the students to discuss different strategies they would use to teach English in a certain learning context. This question allowed them to express their voice, decisions and personal thoughts by drawing on their own experiences and knowledge of teaching. Unlike the other questions, Question 6 expected the students to express their views in a logical and coherent manner while connecting their ideas using the appropriate cohesive devices. Students achieved this through different strategies. For instance, Nicole marked her presence and sense of authority by using the first-person singular pronoun. Instead of referring to herself using the first-person pronoun, Pinkie used the word "one" to refer to any English educator, and provided an explanation of how she would go about teaching the language. Thenjiwe provided step-by-step details of how she would encourage students to read. Like Nicole, Tshepo used the first-person pronoun to express how he would teach English, achieving this by providing reasons why he chose certain strategies. Unlike the other students, Leticia provided a response that was unrelated to the question, as shown in the responses below. This question enhanced students' use of their voices as it expected them to relate their answers to a specific context. The integration of context benefited their development of critical thinking and self-reflection, which are necessary for academic writing.

Nicole
6. I would encourage the learners to participate in group activities and classroom discussions. I would also encourage the learners to ask and answer questions in order to check their understanding of the topic. I would implement a strategy to get the parents involved by asking them to communicate more in English at home. I would do my best to conduct lessons in English in order to be an example to my learners.
Pinkie

6. As an English teacher one can start by operating their previous knowledge, meaning you add up on what they already know and give them a platform to share what they already know.one can also encourage cooperative learning It is said to be true that group work always work out as it gives learners more chance to learn from each other and correct each other therefore is it safe to say through group work they can gain more knowledge. Use of visuals can also be beneficial, using video clips, pictures and other resources help learners grasp content easily.

Thenjiwe

6. Inspiring children to read on their own by identifying favourite book that is suitable to share with them. Developing games that are related to book to extend their understanding and give each a character to play based on the story. Allowing time for open-ended question to help children develop personal response through discussions. Making use of story-aids such as puppets to enhance interest toward reading. Involve children more when designing story sacks so that they value that resource and stimulate love of reading.

Tshepo

6. When reading about something that not all students have been exposed to e.g., seafood; it would help having students from different backgrounds and cultures. Before going into the text, I would start a discussion about seafood and have students talk about their experiences with seafood, describing in detail the food they ate and how it tasted. This way all students in the class have an idea what they will be reading about and can form a picture. I would also use their cultural diversity to ensure that they have a broad understanding of life so they better understand various texts that we come across. Cultures and languages differ in terms of how things are done and how different people are addressed. I would highlight these differences in order to ensure that assumptions are not made but rather careful attention to detail is paid.

Leticia

Question 6

Although there is an imperialistic history rooted in colonial culture, the younger generation tends to see English as a language that can be used to their benefit, and they may consider that access to English is a hard-won freedom. In the rural areas, there is a dearth of general English exposure. Because English is a language of higher education and administration, some people regard it as elitist. Economic and social advancement are hampered in rural and impoverished areas due to a lack of English language teaching and learning materials.

The advantage of English is that it is already spoken by the majority of South Africans to some extent. To encourage learning and well-being, home languages must be preserved. Despite the fact that certain elitists oppose English, its widespread use around the world and accessibility to all makes it a language without class. Even though the English language of oppression is not as prevalent as it once was. Due to shifting perspectives, English is increasingly regarded as a valuable tool for comprehending local and global events. As a result, it is critical to address access to learning facilities and English as a second language.

Question 7 required students to recall information by filling in gaps in a paragraph. Grounded on the idea of critical literacy, this question tested the students' ability to use language in a meaningful manner. Here the students were provided with a paragraph of 115 words which had five gaps. For this question, they had to provide the correct words, that is, the appropriate cohesive devices, to fit into the gaps. The students' responses indicated that they struggled to provide suitable words. None provided all of the correct cohesive devices. In this question, students had no opportunity to express their voice: they were limited to writing the one correct word per gap. As illustrated in their responses below, they all seemed to struggle with coming up with the appropriate cohesive device. Writing in this question entailed encoding words in blank spaces, and this hampered the students' expression of their own voices. Instead, writing here is not related to the construction of meaning. It is a mere regurgitation of information.

| **Nicole** |
| 7. |
| 7.1. Because of ✗ |
| 7.2. As ✓ |
| 7.3. Some ✗ |
| 7.4. While ✗ |
| 7.5. How ✗ |
| **Pinkie** |
| 7.1 with this ✗ |
| 7.2. Because ✗ |
| 7.3.The government ✗ |
| 7.4.Therefore ✗ |
| 7.5 if ✗ |
| **Thenjiwe** |
| 7.1 From ✗ |
| 7.2 That ✗ |
| 7.3 The ✗ |
| 7.4 Of ✗ |
| 7.5 If ✓ |
| **Tshepo** |
| 7. |
| 7.1. In light of ✗ |
| 7.2. as ✓ |

7.3. some ✓	
7.4. Many ✗	
7.5. if ✓	
Leticia	
Question 7	
7.1. Due to ✗	
7.2. Because ✓	
7.3. Many ✓	
7.4. While in other cases. ✗	
7.5. If ✓	

Unlike the other questions, question 8 required the students to provide specific responses pertaining to their knowledge of textual features. They were asked to compare the following textual features in two texts: genre, intended audience, purpose, and register. The students' responses showed that some understood what these textual features mean. However, the following discrepancies were identified in their responses: first, they could not properly discuss the features in relation to the text; and second, they did not understand how these are interlinked. Pinkie, Thenjiwe and Leticia seemed to have a limited knowledge of different types of genres. Pinkie specifically said that Text A was a non-fiction and a reference. She further provided a reason why she thought that the text was a reference. While it may be true that Text A was not a fiction, that did not qualify it as a non-fiction given the type of language features used. In the same vein, Pinkie's choice of the other genre and the reason she gave for choosing it were also incorrect. Thenjiwe's discussion could reflect a lack of linguistic tools needed for discussing textual features such as genres. It can be inferred that she intended writing an informative text. Similarly, Leticia could not properly discuss the genre. Nicole's and Tshepo's discussions of the genres of both texts indicated they had knowledge of a variety of genres. Interestingly, Tshepo also justified why he thought that Text A was expository. In addition, they managed to identify the other textual features properly.

Despite Thenjiwe's and Leticia's answers having been marked correct, they appeared not to have understood the meaning of each text. Subsequently, they could not identify the different features. It should be noted that the students' responses ranged between one-word answers in point form and discussions in paragraph form. Nicole's answers were provided in one-word form without many explanations. Pinkie's answers, meanwhile, contained syntactical errors. The first sentence of her answer about Text A should have been broken into two sentences as

it discusses the purpose and the audience together. The second sentence of her answer for Text B also lacks a logical flow. It discusses the purpose, the audience and the genre. It is written in the style of oral explanation, unlike proper academic writing. This question in particular was closed-ended, and this deprived the students of an opportunity to express themselves. The students' responses are illustrated below.

Nicole

Text A	Text B
Genre: Scientific Report	Genre: Interview/Journalism
Audience: Professional	Audience: Public/Fans
Purpose: Informational	Purpose: Informal
Register: Professional	Register: Social

Pinkie

8.) Text A

Text A concentrates on authorities and subordinates, the purpose of text A is to inform people of how people are reacting to the vaccine. Coming to genre text A is non-fiction but one can also say it is reference because it consists of medical issues. The register is formal.

Text B

Text B concentrates on interest groups and authorities, interest group comes in because there are people who read such articles out of interest. The purpose is to convince the reader and the listener that they did not lose because Orlando Pirates is the best but because of the unfair referee, coming to genre it is interactive and also it is a personal narrative the person is talking about his personal experience. The register is casual.

Thenjiwe

8. In text A, genre used is information with fact. It is intended to citizens of the country and conveys the message of how Covid-19 vaccines can be effective to prevent the spread of corona virus and is written in a way that is clear for everyone.

Text B, genre is one-sided opinion. The information conveyed is towards a certain group of people. Its purpose is to show frustration based on the outcomes of events. The other party is not given chance to raise own opinion.

Tshepo

Text A

- **Genre** – Expository genre is used for text A and it sets forth facts only.
- **Intended audience** – The intended audience would likely be other medical professionals who might need to know the effects of using the Pfizer vaccine.

84

- **Purpose** – The purpose is to inform/educate medical professionals about the allergic reactions that might arise after receipt of the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. ✓
- **Register** – The register of this text is formal and words of a formal nature are used e.g., anaphylaxis. ✓

Text B

- **Genre** – A narrative/literacy genre is used in this text and the personal experiences/opinions of McCarthy are being narrated. ✓
- **Intended audience** – The intended audience is likely soccer fans. ✓
- **Purpose** – The purpose is to inform and entertain. ✓
- **Register** – The register is informal. ✓

Leticia

Genre: Regarding genre in Text A is more seen as a text with information pertaining to statistics in the report being explained in the text whereas Text B has just got information about the report being reported in the text.

Intended audience: Regarding the intended audience Text A's intended audience is more directed at adults, adults who are interested in news of the world and rely on and prefer statistics when getting a report whereas Text B's intended audience in directed at adults, any adults not in particular because in this text there is just information in the text of the report.

Purpose: In Text A the main purpose from the information in the text is to try to inform the people who would be reading it to know what is going on in the world and where the world is at this point in time, especially that it is statistics. In Text B the purpose for the information is just to inform the readers what is happening in the section.

Register: Text A is more formal than Text B because Text A is stating all the information and statistics needed, whereas Text B is mainly just giving information.

In summary, Assignment 1 consisted of eight questions. The responses tended to require students to recall information, apply knowledge and think critically, but most of the questions provided minimal opportunities for students to develop their voice. For instance, Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 expected students to explain concepts, define terms and identify grammar aspects and provide their meanings. The answers to these questions were predetermined and this left very little or no room for students to express themselves. Therefore, some of the students tended to provide strictly the required one-word answers or single simple sentences. While other students seemed to provide correct answers, one seemed not to have understood what the questions required. Thus, for questions that required explanations or definitions of terms, the student copied answers from the internet. In contrast to the other questions, a careful examination of Question 6 shows that, because the question allowed or expected them to express their voice, they were able to offer their ideas more spontaneously and were thus encouraged to draw on their experiences, being at liberty to express their personal opinions.

Question 8 specifically required that students analysed two texts in relation to its features: genre, audience, purpose and register. While the students would use their own words to answer, the answers were already pre-empted.

4.2.3.2. Assignment 2

Assignment 2 consisted of five questions categorised as content-based questions and application-based questions. In Question 1, the students were required to read a text and discuss its structural and language features: tone, genre, audience and message. The students managed to discuss most of the features appropriately. In response to Question 1.1, Nicole, Pinkie, and Thenjiwe failed to recognise the tone of the mood. While Nicole first provided a definition of tone as "the mood of the writing", the discussion of the tone of the text was not related to the tone. Instead, she said that the tone was "informative and instructional", which referred to the purpose of the text. In addition, the example that she quoted from the text was not related to the tone. Pinkie's response revealed that she either failed to recognise a relationship between the tone and purpose of the text or she did not know how to discuss it. She wrote that the tone of the author's tone was "formal and assertive". The word "formal" does not relate to the tone but the register. Further, she could not justify why she thought that the tone was assertive. While Thenjiwe stated that the tone was "calm", she did not provide proper justification for her claims. Tshepo's response was correct as he had shown the relationship between the tone and the purpose of the text. Leticia's response was vague. She first stated that the tone was "positive, negative or neutral", yet all these tones are contradictory and confusing. Furthermore, she could not discuss why she believed that the tone was "positive, negative or neutral". In the other paragraph, she further indicated that the tone of the text was "concerned and tense", which makes her overall discussion of the tone unclear.

The students showed an understanding of the concept of "genre". Nicole, Tshepo and Leticia managed to identify it and discuss it properly. Nicole first described it, then showed what genre she found the text to be. She also provided reasons why she thought the text was a news article. Pinkie provided a vague answer. She first indicated that the text belonged to two genres: expository and narrative. However, she did not provide adequate reasons as to why the text belonged to those genres. Thenjiwe's answer indicated that she could not clearly identify the genre of the text. Tshepo, whose answer is correct, only mentioned the type of genre that the text was without discussing why he thought it belonged to that type of text. Leticia first

provided a broad definition of the term "genre". She then mentioned the genre to which the text belonged. However, there was no proper justification as to why she thought that the text belonged to that genre.

The third question, Question 1.3, expected the students to discuss the audience. Nicole first explained what an audience refers to, and then indicated the ideal readers of the text, but did not provide reasons to support her claim. Pinkie also provided the correct answer for the audience but she did not provide examples from the text as justification. Like Nicole, Leticia provided a background for what she understood as an "audience" in a text. It is interesting that Thenjiwe and Tshepo's answers were marked incorrect whereas both were correct. In terms of the last question, Question 1.4, only Nicole and Tshepo could articulate the message of the text, which was to caution the nation about the ambiguity of the president's statements. Pinkie did not discuss the message that the text conveyed, while Thenjiwe and Leticia appeared not to understand the purpose of the text despite the discussion in the study guide. Overall, while this question enabled the students to write meaningfully using their own words and expressing their voices, it is important to note that some did not understand what is implied by "discussing". They only provided direct answers without making reference to the text to substantiate these. In addition, Leticia seemed to be relying heavily on other sources to explain the concepts without showing how she understood them. In addition, her explanations were verbose and beyond the scope of the question.

Nicole

1.1. Tone refers to the mood of the writing. The tone of the article is informative and instructional. We can see this by the following statement, "Behavioural scientists advising the Government have warned against the danger…" (Studies, 2019)

1.2. The genre refers to type of structure of the writing. In this case it's a news article. This is depicted by the source that the article. (Studies, 2019)

1.3. The audience refers to who the writing is intended for. This article is a news article intended for the public. (Studies, 2019)

1.4. The message refers to what the aim is of the writing. In this case it is a warning against the use of ambiguity concerning Covid – 19 instructions. (Studies, 2019)

Pinkie

1.1.   Tone
 The tone is a formal and also assertive because Dr Rachel Mcloy is somehow expressing the point of view in a clear way but respecting the views of others.

1.2.   Genre
The genre is genre is nonfiction although this text is a narrative and expository writing, it is narrative because it tells a story about a certain event and involves researches. It is also expository because it explains a certain topic.

1.3. Audience

The audience of the text can be workers and subordinates. The text on its own talks about how others were forced to work from home and how others should limit gatherings so it matches those audience.

Thenjiwe

1.1. Tone is calm but firm. It is informative towards the listener or reader.

1.2. Genre is an article of awareness to workers who are expected to return to work uncertain times if covid19.

1.3 Audience is the working class who are uncertain about new normal as covid-19 is affecting lives and working conditions.

1.4 Message raises concerns on how people are going to perform their everyday life, while protecting themselves from covid-19.

Tshepo

1.

1.1. The tone of voice in this text is neutral as the text is only reporting on COVID 19 and ambiguous messages.

1.2. The genre is commentary and the sub-genre is a news report.

1.3. The audience could be anyone that follows the University of Reading or has a keen interest in knowing about the governments approach to addressing COVID 19.

1.4. The message in this text is one of concern at the dangers of ambiguous messaging by the government regarding COVID 19.

Leticia

Question 1.1

Positive, negative, or neutral would be used to define the tone of voice. In terms of the text, the tone has been changed to a negative one. The writer's discussion and explanation of the impact 3.1 COVID-19 has on everyone, and their health is alarming and does not give the book a favourable tone. The text contains facts that could be considered frightening in order to make other readers scared and apprehensive about what they have just read, which is why it is considered a negative sound.

Any written piece, as seen in the text, might have a pleasant or uplifting tone, or a sad or tense tone. The tone of the text is concerned and tense, as evidenced by the text's appearance and sound. The writer's mood at the time of writing the text piece may have had an impact on the overall tone of the text. The tone could possibly have been reflected by the writer's sentiments regarding the text.

Question 1.2

A genre is a writing kind with a specific form and content that is socially and culturally identifiable. Genre refers to groups of texts that share similar characteristics, such as how they are organized and worded for the same audience and purpose. Poems, news stories, and lab reports are all examples of distinct writing genres. Genres aren't just for written works. In terms of the written content, it is clear that the text is more of a news item text genre. A news item text, by definition, is intended to inform readers about current occurrences that are considered newsworthy or significant. As I previously indicated, the news item text genre refers to the language that the writer has created to convey newsworthy information.

Question 1.3

The individual for whom a writer or composer composes is referred to as the audience. According to what he understands about his audience, a writer adopts a specific style of language, tone, and content. The viewers, listeners, and intended readers of a writing, performance, or speech are referred to as the audience. We must evaluate our audience, purpose, and context when making presentations or writing articles.

The text's aim is to inform the intended audience, which in this case is all community members. What is said in the book is plain text telling individuals who read it about what is going on in the world and what might happen. To understand the text's objective, which will be determined by the impact you want your writing to have on your readers. The author of the text wishes to make an impression on the audience in order to inform them of upcoming events so that they are properly prepared for any eventualities. The circumstance, scene, or environment in which you are writing is known as the context. It is the place and time for which you are writing. The context of the writing is our everyday routine life, and how that might be instantly changed by the events detailed in the article.

Question 1.4

A message is defined in rhetorical and communication studies as information delivered through words (spoken or written) and/or other signs and symbols. The content of the communication process is a message (verbal, nonverbal, or both). In the communication process, the sender is the one who creates the message. The message is delivered to the recipient by the sender. The study and practice of effective communication is known as rhetoric. A rhetorical act is a speaker's attempt to persuade others to agree with her point of view. A speaker or author crafts a message whose shape and form are merged in an attempt to persuade an audience when conducting a rhetorical act. In terms of the text, a message is being sent to the public in order for everyone to comprehend what is going on.

Question 2 comprised three questions that involved the application of knowledge and recall of information. Question 2.1, particularly, required the students to explain the difference between active and passive listening in their own words, and to give examples. In addition, the students were encouraged to use their own words instead of copying examples from the study guide as the concepts were explained there. Since these terms were defined in the study guide and on the internet, the students were advised against copying. Except for Thenjiwe and Tshepo, the students wrote correct answers. While Nicole's answer was marked as correct, she provided references for a source from which she found definitions of "passive" and "active" listening, and therefore she did not answer the question in her own words as required. In Question 2.2, the students were asked to demonstrate their understanding of how modal verbs carry different meanings by using them in sentences. Writing in response to questions like this is intended to be context-based, although it also includes recall of information. The application of modality in the sentences was accurate and each student wrote their own sentences, stating the different functions of the modal verb "should". Nicole used it to indicate responsibility and command, Pinkie used it to indicate suggestion and responsibility, and Tshepo used it as command and

advise. Although the second function of the modal as advice was marked as correct, it was in fact used as a suggestion. Thenjiwe indicated she used the modal verb to indicate responsibility in both sentences. In her answers, Leticia used the modal verbs as responsibility, and recommendation. She went further to explain how these functions are achieved in speech or writing.

The last question, 2.3, required the students to find an ambiguous word in sentences and explain its two possible meanings. Most of the students successfully responded to this question, but Leticia could not recognise ambiguity in the statement that was provided. While the word containing an ambiguous meaning was "address", she chose the word "incomplete". Nicole identified the ambiguous word in the sentence, explained its two meanings and provided examples of how it can be used. Pinkie, Tshepo and Thenjiwe, however, only indicated the meanings that the word carried. This is illustrated in the responses below.

Nicole

2. Question 2

2.1 Active learning: is the process of learning with the intention of understanding and processing what is being said. For example, when a lawyer is cross questioning a witness, they must listen actively in order to ask the next question. (Wyse, D, et al, 2013)

Passive learning is the process of listening for entertainment an example of this is listening to the radio while driving or while cooking, it is to fill the silence (Wyse D, et al, 2013)

2.3. You should eat more vegetables, drink more water and exercise more regularly to get the desired results. Here the word "should" is used to give advice. She should go to the doctor immediately for that then. Here the word "should" is used as a command.

2.4. Ambiguity: a word having more than one meaning. (Google, 2022).

In this sentence the word is address. It could mean a physical place where someone resides e.g. My address is 123 ABC Lane Cape Town. Or it could mean a talk or speech being delivered to an audience e.g. His address to the crowd received in a positive way.

Pinkie

2.1 The main difference between active and passive listening is the response given by the listener, in passive listening the listener does not respond to the speaker and in active listening the listener is required to listen attentively so that he can respond to the speaker.

2.2. Should is considered to be a modal auxiliary verb, we use it to advice others, suggest something or talk about responsibility.

You should pay the loan as soon as possible to avoid owing money as penalties

      (suggestion)

  b) I should have spoken to Rose in a formal way. (Responsibility)

2.3. Address

It is a formal speech speech delivered to the listeners.

It can be defined as the information of the place where a person lives.

Thenjiwe

Question 2

2.1. Passive listening is when the listener is not expected for respond or give feedback, like watching news in television, while active listening the listener shoes understanding of what is being said and can give responses and share ideas, like a debate.

2.2 a) The government should provide health care workers with PPE's. Should –indicates it is the responsibility of the government to make sure that PPE's are available to all health wo

 b) The origin of the virus should be known. Should –indicates that something must be done to discover the source of the virus, but not putting the responsibility to anyone.

2.3 Address

-it means the location of the place

-it can also be a statement or speech delivered to a group of people by someone

Tshepo

Question 2

 2.1 The difference between active and passive listening is that active listening is intentional while passive listening is not. E.g. Active listening would be listening to someone explain why they had to use your money without your consent. Passive listening would be overhearing a conversation between two strangers in a taxi.

2.2 You should be at the airport by 06:00 to catch your flight. – This is a command.

You should try ignoring him. It might work. – This is advice.

 2.3 The ambiguous word is address.

Definition 1 – A place/location where someone lives.

Definition 2 – a formal speech given to an audience.

Leticia

QUESTION 2.1

Passive listening is defined as listening without reacting, or allowing someone to speak without interrupting them. I'm not doing anything else at the same time, and I'm not really paying attention to what's being spoken. Passive listening is a form of one-way communication in which the receiver does not answer or ask questions and may or may not understand the speaker's message. Active listening is the process of gathering information from another individual or group. It requires paying attention to the conversation, abstaining from interrupting, and thoroughly comprehending what the speaker is saying.

Active listening is more effective than passive listening because active listeners may more easily absorb the speaker's words while proving to the speaker that they are paying attention. Between active and passive listening, the listener's response is a major contrast. When using passive listening, the listener does not respond to the speaker. Active listeners, on the other hand, simply process the information without responding or reacting to it.

QUESTION 2.2

Since they're a form of auxiliary verb, modal verbs are used in conjunction with the sentence's main verb to convey potential, intent, capacity, or necessity.

There are 3 examples of the word "Should" in a sentence as a modal verb:

1. **"Chelsea should be over there by the end of the day"**

To suggest the possibility of something. We add the word 'have' after the modal verb if something is conceivable today or was possible in the past. This still conveys a sense of possibilities.

2. **"Shouldn't you be over at Sheryl's house by 9:00?"**

To inquire about something. By inverting the subject and the modal verb, modal verbs create questions.

3. "You should start exercising as soon as possible, it will keep you healthy and in shape."

To demonstrate obligation, provide a recommendation or simply express an opinion. To gently communicate obligations or duties, to ask for or provide advice, suggestions, and recommendations, to describe an expectation, and to express surprise, the modal word should is utilized.

Question 2.3

"The most notable thing about the address is that it was incomplete."

The ambiguous word in the sentence above is the word "incomplete". There is two possible meanings to the sentence that has been given.

1. The sentence that was given could potentially mean that the address was given incompletely.

2. The second meaning of the sentence is that the house or building itself is incomplete. As to say that the building or house has not been built finished.

Question 3 consisted of two questions: Question 3.1 and 3.2. In Question 3.1, the students were expected to discuss how a child's home environment as an external factor can influence the development of their reading abilities. The students used their own words and expressed their views on the topic in a coherent manner. Nicole presented her argument in a coherent and logical way by referring to various linguistic and textual features of reading. The entire discussion consisted of four complex sentences and the ideas were linked using cohesive devices, such as conjunctions and logical connectors. Nicole used conjunctions such as "when" and "if", which represented complex thinking. Logical connectors, such as "on the other hand", introduce contrasting ideas in a text, and this epitomises academic writing. It is interesting to note that Nicole referenced the study guide to shape her thinking about the topic. This question also prompted the students to write longer and more meaningfully, and Nicole's response, for instance, was 123 words long.

Pinkie's response focused on social behaviors, such as instabilities, that affect a child's learning and development, rather than focusing specifically on reading. Unlike Nicole who wrote a coherent paragraph, Pinkie's response was split through sub-headings. One sub-heading focused on the positive influences and the other on the negative influences of a learner's reading environment on the development of reading abilities. Overall, Pinkie's answer did not address the question. Thenjiwe's answer was a one-sentence paragraph that was syntactically incorrect, tautological and lacked logical coherence. The tautology stemmed from the first and third clauses, which expressed the same message, as reasons for the negative impact on the development of reading abilities. The reasons were stated as "in homes where there is no interest in reading" meaning the same as "there is not enough space of reading". The clause beginning after the third comma communicates a contrasting message, which could have been expressed in a separate sentence. Despite these discrepancies, Thenjiwe was given four out of five marks for this question.

Tshepo's response was vague as it focused on how the presence of competent users of language impact on the development of their reading abilities. This response did not address the issue of the relationship between the availability of literacy artefacts, supportive family members and the development of reading abilities. Leticia's response was well-articulated and detailed. It brought a broader discussion of the positive and negative influences of the home environment on a child's development of reading competencies. Overall, this question presented the students with ample opportunity to express themselves and take charge of the meaning of their writing. It is important, however, to note that some struggled with creating coherent and logical sentences. That said, this question granted the students the freedom to express themselves in their own unique ways.

In contrast, Question 3.2 required the students to rewrite two false statements correctly and give reasons for the corrections. Writing in this question required the students to provide the correct definition of terms such as "pre-reading" and "decoding". In responding to the question, the students had to refer to their study guides, read about the terms and regurgitate information. Nicole referenced the study guide in her definitions of the terms. Pinkie's response indicated she did not properly understand the requirements of the question. She could not differentiate between pre-reading and post-reading which involves making inferences and conclusions about a text. While she defined the concept of scanning, she did not explain what decoding entails. Despite this, she was awarded marks. Thenjiwe and Tshepo's responses showed they did not

understand what was demanded of them by the question either. In addition, they did not fully comprehend the concepts in each sentence. The students' responses are given below.

Nicole

3. Question 3

3.1. A child's home environment as an external factor can affect the child negatively when there is no role model or access to reading material. If no one in the home reads or encourages reading, when the child gets to school and is first introduced to reading, the child will feel intimidated and despondent as it will be their first experience with books and reading. On the other hand, if a child is exposed to books and other reading materials from a young age, is read bedtime stories and has a love of reading instilled at home by apparent or guardian, this will be a positive external factor from the home environment. The child will be confident with attempting to read on their own. (Studies, 2019)

3.2.

3.2.1. Pre – Reading – refers to what happens before the learner is exposed to the actual text. In this way the teacher can ascerain what the learners understand about reading. Stage refers to where in the process of development of reading the learners are.

The pre-reading stage involves asking questions about what the learners anticipate the text to be of. (Studies, 2019)

3.2.2. Decoding is one of the tools that is used to improve poor reading. Decoding refers to breaking up of words by use of syllables to assist in better pronunciation and spelling correctly. (Studies, 2019)

Pinkie

Question 3

Negative
Things like noise making at home and also fights between parents end up distracting a child from school work, this simply means the child can then spend time thinking about the fight and end up being drained emotionally and mentally resulting in him learning being tampered with.

Positive
Living in a stable and supportive home has many advantages. Having your own space, parents who support you and respect your studying time is much more important it motivates you and gives you more energy to learn by that a child will not have to worry about his studies being disturbed giving him motivation to study and develop at reading. (3.2)

3.2.1 The previewing phase involves engaging with a text by making conclusions, asking questions and making comparisons between texts.
  • The added words makes it easy for one to understand the statement.

3.2.2 Examining is when the reader scans a document.
  • Examine is the synonym of scan, so the word examine means scanning.

Thenjiwe

Question 3

3.1 In homes where there is no interest in reading, the child's reading ability will impact negatively to development, because there is no enough practice of reading and no language

94

skills will be produced, while a home where people show an interest in reading will have a positive impact in a child and lots of language skills will be developed.

3.2.1 Engaging with text by making inferences, avsking question and making comparison is pre-reading. I am giving explanation of pre-reading

3.2.2 Scanning of document by reader is decoding. I have written the sentence in passive voice

Tshepo

Question 3

3.1 If in the home environment, the child is provided with opportunities to engage in talk and receive responses that treat the child as a competent language user, this will have a positive influence and the child would likely be better skilled at reading.

If in the home environment, the child does not have access to competent users of the language and receives no opportunities to engage in talk, this will have a negative impact on the child's development of reading abilities.

3.2

3.2.1 The pre-reading stage involves engaging with a text by making influences, asking questions, and skim reading all set comprehension questions before reading the text.

- there is no comparison between texts that happens in the pre-reading stage.

3.2.2 Decoding is when the reader distinguishes between the sounds of the alphabet and the sound of spoken words.

Leticia

Question 3

Question 3.1

A few environmental elements that have long-term influence on early child development are within our control. The environment in which your child grows, the attention and affection given by parents, parental acceptance, general diet, family, school, and neighbourhood are all environmental elements that have a significant impact on early child development.

Negative home situations, particularly during a child's first three years of development, can lead to a variety of developmental issues, both short- and long-term. Poorer language development by age three, later behaviour difficulties, impairments in school readiness or academics, aggression, anxiety or depression, and impaired cognitive development at three years of age are all issues that disadvantaged or inadequate home situations cause.

The environment in which your child grows up, as well as parental care, affection, acceptance in daily life, and general diet, can have a significant impact on his or her life. The impact of the environment on a child's development, including the physical setting in which they are raised, cannot be overstated. Similarly, unfavourable circumstances might induce children to tune out or bury negativity, leading to an increase in introversion.

Given how much time a child spends at school each day, it is a vital aspect of his life. It is your obligation as a parent to determine which school is most suited to your child's needs.

> **Question 3.2**
>
> **Question 3.2.1**
>
> The pre-reading stage involves engaging with a text by expanding vocabulary, asking questions, and identifying reading deficits and repair strategies.
>
> **Question 3.2.2**
>
> Decoding, or the inability to discriminate between the sounds of the alphabet and the sounds of spoken words, can be remedied by learning to discern between the sounds of the alphabet and the sounds of spoken words. Using syllabic breaks is also beneficial for correctly pronouncing words and spelling.

Question 4 involved recalling information, which is a low level of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). In question 4 (a) and (b), the students were expected to show the different meanings of two words, "object" and "project", when the words were used as nouns or as verbs. In Question 4 (a), they had to underline the syllables that are stressed when the words are used as verbs or nouns, while in Question 4 (b), they had to use the words in sentences to show how the meanings differed, depending on the parts of speech. All, except Leticia, understood the questions. She did not show how stress differed in words if these are nouns or verbs. In addition, she wrote only one sentence featuring each word.

In question 4 (c), the students were provided with a paragraph of 120 words with four gaps that they needed to fill in. The question tested students' knowledge of cohesive devices. Unlike Assignment 1, they were given a range of cohesive devices as hints to choose from. All except Pinkie used the correct words in the blank spaces. Writing in this question entailed encoding words instead of expressing voice. The meaning of the paragraph was, however, contrived, and students did not take an active role in the construction of the text. Their responsibility was to make inferences about the missing words in the paragraph.

> **Nicole**
>
> **4. Question 4**
>
> 1)
>
> a) <u>Pro</u>ject = noun
>
> Pro<u>ject</u> = verb
>
> <u>Ob</u>ject = noun
>
> Ob<u>ject</u> = verb (Studies, 2019)
>
> b) The research project was handed over to the students in time. (noun)
>
> Please project your voice when demonstrating your research. (verb)
>
> The object is larger than the vehicle is meant to carry. (noun)

The students object to the new rules implemented. (verb)

c) Listening is a complex process *that* involves utilising various strategies and modes to construct meaning. *Without* the knowledge of these strategies and modes, you cannot claim to be a critical listener. As a critical listener, you should be aware that *although* there is to the surface meaning of a message, there may be nuances. However, not everyone is aware of this point, which makes taking this module worthwhile. If we are not conscious of such complexities, we are more likely to be persuaded, if not misled, *particularly* when we listen to political speeches. In short, critical listening means that things are not white and black; there are grey areas that require the listener to sift through information carefully and cautiously.

i) That

ii) Without

iii) Although

iv) Particularly

Pinkie

Question 4

(a) For nouns emphasis falls on the first syllable and for verbs on the second syllable.

Object- verb   project- noun

Object – noun   project- verb

(b) **Project**

i. My father is in charge of the housing project that will commence on the 12th of June.

ii. The English research project was a success.

Object

i. What objects can we use to scare dogs off?

ii. People believe a sentence should be made up of an object and the subject.

(c) Listening is a complex process **that** involves utilising various strategies and modes to construct meaning. **Without** the knowledge of these strategies and modes, you cannot claim to be a critical listener. As a critical listener, you should be aware that **although** there is to the surface meaning of a message, there may be nuances. However, not everyone is aware of this point, which makes taking this module worthwhile. If we are not conscious of such complexities, we are more likely to be easily persuaded, if not misled, **mostly** when we listen to political speeches. In short, critical listening means that things are not white and black; there are grey areas that require the listener to sift through information carefully and cautiously

Thenjiwe

Question 4

a) Project-noun

Project-verb

Object-noun

Object- verb

b) Project

Sibahle is busy with the science project.

The graph project the actual marks of learner.

Object
The thief stabbed the man with sharp object.

The parents object the ruling regarding vaccination of learners.

Listening is a complex process **that** involves utilising various strategies and models to construct meaning. **Without** the knowledge of these strategies and models, you cannot claim to be critical listener. As a critical listener, you should be aware that **although** there is to the surface meaning of message, there may be nuances. However, not everyone is aware of this point, which makes taking this module worthwhile. If we are not conscious of such complexities, we are likely to be easily persuaded, if not misled**, particularly** when we listen to political speeches. In short, critical listening means that things are not white and black; there are grey areas that require the listener to sift through information carefully and cautiously.

Tshepo
Question 4
a. Pro<u>ject</u> – Verb
<u>Project</u> Noun
Ob<u>ject</u> – Verb
<u>Object</u> – Noun

b. Project - It is important to project your voice in public speaking.
Project – I was working on my research project this past weekend.

Object – I object the idea that higher education should be optional.
Object – It is dangerous to leave sharp objects lying around.

c. Listening is a complex process **that** involves utilizing various strategies and modes to construct meaning. **Without** the knowledge of these strategies and modes, you cannot claim to be a critical listener. As a critical listener, you should be aware that **although** there is to the surface meaning of a message, there may be nuances. However, not everyone is aware of this point, which makes taking this module worthwhile. If we are not conscious of such complexities, we are more likely to be easily persuaded, if not misled, **particularly** when we listen to political speeches. In short, critical listening means that things are not white and black; there are grey areas that require the listener to sift through information carefully and cautiously.

> **Leticia**
> **Section B**
> **Question 4**
>
> A) Project and object[1] ✓
>
> B) Project – The man strives to project the image of youth. ✓
>
> Object – The man carried a heavy object up the stairs.
>
> C)
>
> Listening is a complex process **that** involves utilising various strategies and modes to ✓ construct meaning. **Without** the knowledge of these strategies and modes, you cannot claim to be a critical listener. As a critical listener, you should be aware that **only if** there is to the surface meaning of a message, there may be nuances. However, not everyone is aware of this point, which makes taking this module worthwhile. If we are not conscious of such complexities, we are more likely to be easily persuaded, if not misled, **particularly** when we listen to political speeches. In short, critical listening means that things are not white and black; there are grey areas that require the listener to sift through information carefully and cautiously.

In Question 5, the students read a poem and analysed it. The first question required them to explain the theme of the poem. According to the marking guideline, possible themes included courage, self-confidence, patience and optimism. Students were also expected to quote a line from the poem to support their answer. Nicole's answer, that the theme was "motivational" was not exactly what was mentioned in the marking guideline, although this word described an overarching theme of the poem. Pinkie, Tshepo, Thenjiwe and Leticia encountered two challenges in relation to this question: failure to recognise the theme, and how to articulate it. For instance, Pinkie stated that the theme is "failure or defeat", and she quoted the following line to motivate her claim: "If you can dream and not make dreams your master". Her argument, that the theme of the poem is defeat or failure, may reflect a lack of understanding of the message of the poem or what a theme entails. Similarly, Thenjiwe and Leticia failed to recognise and state the theme of the poem. Leticia indicated that the word "son" in the poem alluded to Jesus Christ. Although Tshepo's answer was marked incorrect, it was interesting to note that his position was closely related to the themes of self-confidence, patience and optimism, as shown in the marking guide. This question prompted the students to think critically, make inferences and substantiate their answers with evidence. It also granted them the freedom to make claims and express their own understanding of the poem.

Questions 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 focused on figures of speech in the poem, especially rhyme. First, the students had to explain what rhyme is; then identify examples of rhyming words in the poem. While Nicole and Thenjiwe struggled to explain what they understood by rhyme, the others could identify rhyme patterns. Thenjiwe battled with the meaning of rhyme as she could not explain it or identify it. Question 5.2.3 prompted the students to think critically and demonstrate their understanding of the poetic strategies of conveying a message. Every student provided different explanations for the meanings created by the repetition of the conditional conjunction, "if". While Nicole indicated that the repetition was an emphasis of motivation to the reader, Tshepo said it drew the reader's attention to the overarching theme of the poem and creating a rhythm. In her answer, Leticia argued that the repetition of the word "if" was a way of instilling values for the son and the reader. The last question required the students to comment on the title of the poem. Each provided explanations expressing their views. Thenjiwe's response was, however, marked incorrect as it showed that she, once again, did not fully understand the theme. The students' responses are illustrated in the following table.

Nicole
5. Question 5
5.1. The theme is Motivational. "Or being hate, don't give way to hating."
5.2.
5.2.1. Rhyme refers to two or more words that have the same sound.
5.2.2. Spoken and broken
5.2.3. "IF" is used as a way of intriguing the reader to see what motivation comes next. It also a way of him encouraging the reader to show that "if you can dream -and not make dreams your master…" it is the poet's way of motivation.
5.2.4. Yes, I do think it's a suitable title as it is the basis of the poem. The motivation comes directly from the word "if" therefore the title is suitable.

Pinkie
Question 05
5.1 failure/ defeat
"If you can dream and not make dreams your master"
(5.2)
5.2.1 ending with a sound that corresponds to another.
5.2.2 waiting and hating.
• Line number 5 and 7
5.2.3 The writer tells us about the moral values at first and then caries on to tell us about the outcomes at the end, and that on its own matches the title. It can be referred to as a conditional clause.
5.2.4 Yes, the poem on its own suggests we can get rewards after hardships only "if" we can patience and be strong.

Thenjiwe

Question 5

5.1 Put your needs first ✓

"If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you". ✓

5.2.1 Rhyme is the way which words are used to convey message. ✓

5.2.2 "Or being" ✓

5.2.3 I think the author is trying to say that we stop using "if" in our lives and do what we need to in order to achieve what we want and not blame other people for our failures. ✓

5.2.4 Yes, because people fail in life because they are held back by "if" rather than focusing proceeding to the next step towards success. ✓

Tshepo

Question 5

5.1 The theme here is identity/self-awareness as well as possibilities. ✗

"If you can dream – and not make dreams your master" ✗

5.2

5.2.1 Rhyme is the repetition of words that have the same sound ✓

5.2.2 Same and aim. ✓

5.2.3 The intention is to emphasize the word and draw attention to the theme and message of the poem. Repetition here also creates rhythm. ✗

5.2.4 Yes. The word is repeated a lot and emphasis placed on it. The poem is also about possibilities, so the word "if" is appropriate. ✓

Leticia

Question 5

5.1

The theme of the poem above is revolves around the coming of age of his son and the poem lists different virtues that would help his child become a man. ✓

Question 5.2

Question 5.2.1

Rhyme is known as two or more words with similar-sounding last morpheme placed in a phrase that they echo one another. ✓

Question 5.2.2

If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you, ✓

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,

But make allowance for their doubting too;

The one example of rhyming words in the poem is the one above, the poem has used the rhyme.

AABB.

Question 5.2.3

The usage of the word "if" throughout the poem indicates that the author is attempting to instil values that a boy or anyone should strive towards in order to become an honourable, successful man or person. Because the title of the poem "If" is repeated throughout the poem, it is an example of repetition, because the author wishes to present a number of examples of how a developing and mature person should behave, the word "if" is repeated a lot.

Question 5.2.4

Yes, it is appropriate for the poem because the author first teaches us about the values and the poet then tells us about the outcomes. As a result, the author explains and illustrates what a godly moral man should be. The poem's title is appropriate because the author uses the word "if" in the poem by presenting examples.

In summary, Assignment 2 consisted of five questions based on content and the application of knowledge. Most of these questions prompted the students not only to recall and regurgitate information, but also to think critically and express their views. While most of the questions encouraged them to write meaningfully, they struggled with the articulation of concepts. In question 1, they were expected to analyse a text and discuss its features, including tone, genre, audience and message. The students encountered challenges with discussing tone, confusing it with other textual features such as "genre" or "register". This error could be the result of a lack of a proper linguistic repertoire necessary for textual analysis. In addition, the students clearly did not grasp how these features intertwine and contribute to meaning. This challenge also emerged in Question 5, where the students had to analyse a poem and could not explain the concept of theme.

I noticed that the focus on the technical aspects of language, such as syllable stress in words and gap-filling, deprive students of opportunities to write meaningfully and use language in a real-life context. Question 4 saw them underline syllables that are stressed in words, write sentences to show differences in meaning when words are used as verbs or nouns, and fill in gaps in a paragraph. The example of gap-filling in this assignment treated the students as passive recipients of knowledge who do not have control of their own learning and development. In such an instance, the meaning of the text and the words that should be written in the blank spaces were pre-empted, and the students' role was to guess where they would fit according to the meaning of the text. As a result, students did not write, but merely regurgitated information. This was prevalent as the students copied the paragraph into their assignment with no changes or commentary. Despite these discrepancies, there was an improvement in the students' writing proficiency as most of the questions required them to write.

4.2.3.3. Assignment 3

In Assignment 3, the students wrote an argumentative essay of 300-400 words in which they expressed their opinions on legalising polyandry in modern South Africa. The students were provided with a short text for them to gain background information on the topic before answering the question. They were also given a guideline to construct their essays, which stated they should provide the topic, adhere to the structure of academic essays, avoid using subheadings, use cohesive devices to ensure cohesion and cite other sources such as academic journals, articles, newspapers or websites to substantiate and justify their positions. The subject is controversial in the South African context and therefore I believe its provocative nature pushed the students to respond as they did.

This question encouraged the students' expressive abilities, critical thinking skills and development of academic voice. Each expressed individual views and took a stance on the topic based on their experiences, cultural and religious beliefs, and personal beliefs. Nicole, Pinkie, Leticia and Tshepo argued in favour of legalising polyandry, whereas Thenjiwe was against it, her argument based on her African culture and customs which promote polygamy. Her point of view underscored the value of preserving these cultural customs, which date back to ancient times. One of the customs she highlighted in the second paragraph, was lobola, the bride price for a groom to the bride's parents as a gesture of appreciation for raising her. Thenjiwe showed that the legalisation of polyandry would be detrimental to the well-being of women, as having multiple partners is psychologically demanding. She justified her arguments by quoting the *Bible* as an authority. According to the Christian religion, wrote Thenjiwe, it is blasphemous for a woman to have multiple partners. In this sense, the *Bible* served as an authoritative document for her to confirm that polyandry does not have a place in African society. Furthermore, Thenjiwe showed her position regarding this topic in the first paragraph by using the first-person singular pronoun "I". Apart from being a stance marker, the personal pronoun also helped the writer to mark her presence and exert her authority in the text. This was not necessarily the best decision. Although she elaborated on her argument in the essay, she did not use references or incorporate other people's views to justify her own as stated in the guideline. Everything was her personal point of view.

Nicole's essay supported the legalisation of polyandry in South Africa. She began with a brief background on the proposal for its institutionalisation by the government, and the rationale behind it. She introduced her position in the last sentence of the paragraph, and this was

achieved using the first-person singular pronoun, "I". The use of the personal pronoun created proximity between the author and the arguments outlined in the essay.

Nicole used a variety of strategies to substantiate her argument, including referencing other authors and sources to justify her position. The essay relied on three quotes from various sources, each bringing a different angle to the argument. For instance, in paragraph two she consulted Wikipedia, which brought background as to why women would have multiple partners, dating back to ancient times. But while Nicole understood she should justify her argument by using references, it seemed she had not mastered the skill of referencing. It was unclear as to whether the reference in the first paragraph was integral or non-integral. Names cited appeared outside the sentences featuring quotes. This discrepancy was also prevalent in other paragraphs where referencing was used. Nicole's strategy to show her stance through asking the reader a question in paragraph two, was more successful. While the question showed the author's audience awareness, it also served as a way of engaging the reader throughout the whole essay, which is critical in academic writing.

It is important to note that Nicole's essay followed a coherent structure. Every paragraph focused on a specific idea. The first was the introduction, while the second focused on how polyandry became an integral part of society in days gone by. The third paragraph, which explored benefits that come with polyandry in family structures, was, however, undermined by the last two lines, which included an error and therefore a contradiction in her argument. This was the use of the word "despite", which questioned what she had proposed in her first two paragraphs. In essence, the sentence was then rendered paradoxical.

Pinkie proposed the recognition of polyandry as it formed part of achieving equality between men and women. She introduced her position by giving a background and asking a rhetorical question to prompt readers to think deeply about the unfairness of allowing only men to marry more than one person, and how that injustice affected their self-esteem. In addition, she outlined some of the potential benefits of polyandry in family structures, the population and socioeconomic status in a domestic setting.

Although Pinkie used references to support her argument, she still positioned herself as the writer using the first-person singular pronoun, "I". While this marked the author's presence in the text, its repetition enhanced cohesion. In addition, the author expressed her authority in the argument that she pursued. Overall, Pinkie's academic writing proficiency showed signs of development from Assignment 1 to Assignment 3.

Tshepo's essay also promoted the legalisation of polyandry as a way of achieving social justice and equality. As the writer, he clearly indicated his position regarding the topic in the first paragraph. In his introduction, he proposed how he would reach his position, by showing the arguments that supported polyandry and those that were against it. Following this sequence, Tshepo quoted prominent public figures such as Musa Mseleku, a popular polygamist, and political leader Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, who objected to the recognition of polyandry. Tshepo critically engaged their arguments in order to show shortcomings therein. In addition, the fourth paragraph focused on the opinions of others who support the institutionalisation of polyandry. In his engagement with their arguments, Tshepo took a stance and provided reasons why he agreed with them. His conclusion further confirmed his position.

Through his writing in this essay, Tshepo showed his growing self-confidence in expressing himself. Like the other students, Tshepo revealed his authoritative voice using the personal pronoun, "I". He strategically incorporated his voice after engaging with every argument of those he chose to quote. For instance, in paragraph two, he said, "I would like to point out how these statements are contradictory and how hypocritical it is of him to be against polyandry when he has four wives". Other than expressing the author's presence, the repetition of the personal pronoun also enhanced the cohesion of Tshepo's text. In addition, he asked questions as he engaged with the arguments of others. For instance, he asked a question in paragraph three: "How can we say we want equality then become selective in the areas of that equality?". This question also served as a strategy to engage the reader's mind as they read the essay.

It is worth noting that Tshepo's essay followed the same chronological order as stated in the introduction. It had a body that discussed the arguments in support of the motion and those that were against. He also provided a short conclusion which summed up his position on the topic. It must, however, be noted that while he referenced words from other sources, he did not acknowledge the sources in the text.

Leticia's essay failed to make it clear which side she took on polyandry, lacking even an introduction that could have clearly indicated her position. Instead, the first paragraph merely provided definitions copied from the internet, although the second paragraph gave a broader perspective, of the South African government's stance on recognising polyandry as a legal basis for marriage. Leticia also made the damning error of using words without acknowledging her sources. For instance, "the existing marriage rules are 'not informed by an overall policy that is based on constitutional ideals and the comprehension of modern society dynamics', according to a claim that South Africa inherited a marriage system that was founded on

Calvinist Christian and Western traditions", can be found *verbatim* on the internet.This was not the only example. Further, Leticia did not only regurgitate information from the *Government Gazette* and other sources, she also failed to critically engage with these, meaning her essay did not represent her own ideas or her voice.

Nicole

Yes to Polyandry to Promote Equality

The legalization of polyandry was proposed in a Green Paper by the Department of Home Affairs in an effort to broaden the definition of marriage. The plan, which was part of a broad government initiative to overhaul the nation's marriage law, has alarmed conservatives and several religious organizations in the nation as they argue that it is "unAfrican" and unreligious. (India, 2021) I will argue that it is necessary to promote equality in its entirety.

Why would a lady need two husbands, one would wonder? The truth is that women have had multiple husbands for a variety of reasons throughout history and throughout cultures like the queen bee who mates with several different partners to expand the hive; there are examples of polyandry for the sake of lineage dating back to 2300BC. Then there is the case of one woman would marry brothers to retain the land in the family. Woman also married more than one man to manage population. There are also instances such as in India in which the sex ratio is imbalanced, causing there to be much more men than women, which ultimately led to polyandry. (Wikipedia, 2022)

Despite the fact that these circumstances are no longer particularly applicable in modern society, there are still valid arguments for why a woman should wed more than one man and also why any man would consent to a polyandrous marriage. One such reason is the man's infertility, to save face, he would permit her to marry someone would bear her children and raise them jointly. (Dreger, 2013) Some men find it difficult to satisfy their partner sexually; in order to prevent adultery and, eventually, divorce, they consent to polyandrous unions. They simply do not want to lose the love of their lives and would prefer to share her, which is ultimately the major reason. Additionally, when a woman marries an older woman, she may choose to accept another husband than divorcing him when he grows old to stimulate her mind. In some cultures, a woman will take a second husband when her husband is away at work for her safety and because the kids still need a dad to be there physically. The fact that some women are unable to divorce their resentful partners amicably prevents her from moving on with her life and prevents her from getting married again until the day comes when the resentful partner decides to free her. Because of this, I support this, I support polyandrous marriage.

Despite all the factors I've listed above, polyandry must be legalised in South Africa if the country wishes to advance gender equality. This is true regardless of religion or culture.

Pinkie

Promotion of gender equality through polyandry.

Polyandry is said to be the polygamy in which a woman has more than one husband, but here comes the problem culturally and legally polygyny whereby one man is married to many women has always been recognized more than polyandry which to me works in favor for men than for women and that resulting in inequality. The big question is how do we promote gender equality while our cultures and system still support men more than

---

women? By so saying polyandry should also be legal as a symbol of showing respect for women and their feelings.

Looking at it deeply men take advantage of the fact that polygyny is supported by both culture and system to cover up for their cheating. In places whereby polygamy is legal only polygyny is legal, so in other words man can have more wives but women cannot. Men are given more power than women which is the first cause of gender inequality, health wise it results in women suffering from mental problems thus resulting in marriage failure.

Women also have rights to say no to things they do not want, by allowing only men to marry many wives and being against women doing that we are also violating women rights and spreading it out that women have no say at all. We grew up in a society that always works in favor of men, that women should stay home and bear children or become housewives while men go out, study and work for the family, according to me that's where inequality began. Women end up losing their self-esteem and self-respect, they look down on themselves and think they are not enough. I do not know what to call it but to me that is destroying our mothers and sisters.

Let me take you through the advantages of polyandry, firstly it strengthens the family and the population becomes under control thus the families will be well taken care as the financial burden will be shared among the husbands. I can positively say the benefits of polyandry are breathtaking, the female is provided with a range of genetic diversity for her eggs thus supporting the cultural practice that women should bear children and grow the family name. The will be no division of property, women can bear many sons and grow the family name (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>pmc) and gives women a sense of belonging to the family.

Looking at all of the reasons given I see no problem in legalizing polyandry instead I take polyandry as one of the aspects of a developed and financially stable family. I can safely say polyandry also plays a role in supporting some cultural practices, like allowing women to grow the family name. It can also destroy the mentality we have installed in our minds that men have more power than women, thus promoting gender equality by allowing women to also have a say and create a safe space for them to voice out their opinions.

Thenjiwe

Polyandry would breed more bad things than good (if any), so it should not be legalised.

As much as I am in favour of gender equality in all areas such as government positions, work place, etc. but I don't think polyandry will work, hence I say it is not necessary. I am a firm believer in African and its customs, so this polyandry will undo things that our forefathers lived for.

Black Africans do pay lobola to the bride's family as a form of appreciation for raising her and trusting the groom's family that they will take care of their daughter. It would be a clash of customs and cultures if women would marry to another family. A married woman takes the husband's surname, so does the children, so this polyandry thing would destroy lot of things which will cause a lot of problems in other marriage if a wife decides to marry another man.

It will not be even good to a woman wellbeing, because sometimes she would be needed in two places at once, e.g her husband's family having certain ceremony and second husband wants to be with his wife. That would be psychologically draining fort that woman.

Even if the *Bible* says a bride and groom will become one flesh and should stick to each other and prevent the third party which would destroy their marriage. It also state that

woman must be submissive to her husband that would be difficult if she has multiple husbands.

Polyandry regardless of any race, culture and or religious beliefs should not be made legal by any government throughout the world, because it's not a good thing to do.

Tshepo

If we are to promote equality among men and women, polyandry should be legalised, just as polygyny is.

Equality is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights or opportunities. With this in mind, legalizing polygyny should mean legalizing polyandry since they are the same thing. Debating this means debating on the whole idea of equality and what it means. In the first paragraph I will outline the arguments against polyandry and point out how absurd they are. In the second paragraph I will outline the arguments in favour of polyandry. I will then conclude by restating my position.

Critics against polyandry say there are no cultures or religions that recognise a woman having multiple husbands. But are we really going to blindly follow the rules of culture that were created pre-1956 when women were considered inferior and had no voice? Another critic of polyandry is Musa Mseleku, a reality TV star who has four wives. According to CNN World, Mseleku said he is 'pro-equality'. He furthermore said, "The woman cannot now take the role of a man. It's unheard of. "I would like to point out how these statements are contradictory and how hypocritical it is of him to be against polyandry when he has four wives. Reverend Kenneth Moshe, leader of ACDP also objected to polyandry and his whole argument was that "men are jealous and possessive". However, we must ask why women learnt to accept and live with polygyny while men can't. Polygamists against polyandry are not defending their cultures as Mseleku says but are actually defending patriarchy.

Those in favour of polyandry point to the fact that objection to legalizing polyandry is mainly about control. According to Professor Collis Machoko, a renowned academic on the issue, "African society are not ready for true equality, we don't know what to do with a woman we cannot control". I completely agree with this. How can we say we want equality then become selective in the areas of that equality? If polyandry is unacceptable, then polygyny must also be cancelled. In a debate on twitter, an account with the username @BokangWrote said opposing the legalizing of polyandry means denying women the choice that men are freely given in our country.

In conclusion, women deserve the same choices and courtesies that men are already receiving. We cannot continue to uphold culture at the expense of women. Polyandry, like polygyny must be legalized.

Leticia

Essay Question

Polygamy is the practice of having many partners in a marriage at the same time, whether one spouse is having another partner(s) or both spouses are. Polyandry is the simultaneous marriage of a woman to two or more men. Adelphic, or brotherly, polyandry is the practice of having multiple husbands who are brothers or are perceived to be brothers.

The government of South Africa is thinking about allowing women to have several spouses. A green paper from South Africa's Department of Home Affairs, which seeks to make marriage more inclusive, included a suggestion to permit polyandry. It is acceptable

for men to have many spouses, a practice known as polygamy. The existing marriage rules are "not informed by an overall policy that is based on constitutional ideals and the comprehension of modern society dynamics," according to a claim that South Africa inherited a marriage system that was founded on Calvinist Christian and Western traditions. Human rights advocate said that in order to achieve equality, polyandry must be officially acknowledged as a legitimate form of matrimony. South Africa might stop classifying marriages based on factors like race, sexual orientation, religion, and culture. Thus, either monogamous marriage system or a polygamous marriage system might be implemented in South Africa.

The Department of Home Affairs asserts that religious leaders were also influenced by the notion that polyandry is not truly South African. The green paper observed that it became clear from conversations with traditional leaders that they believed the only gender allowed to have many spouses is men. Traditional elders also view polyandry as inappropriate because it is not an African habit. The rationale given for why a marriage with numerous husbands would not work was because men are envious and possessive. Later on in the green paper, representatives noted that although certain stakeholders supported polygamy, there were also those who were opposed to it. This also holds true for polyandry as a practice. Ironically, those involved opposed polyandry because they supported the practice of polygamy. The idea of amending the laws governing traditional marriage to let women to marry more than one spouse or husband is a sign of how quickly society is evolving. Women have the same rights as men, and legislation needs to alter for there to be meaningful change. The realization of equality in our society does not require the introduction of its opposite because polygyny exists in our culture. The establishment of polyandry must be based on more than just granting women the same rights as males. As a response to a long-standing and accepted cultural practice like polygyny, polyandry cannot be legalized. It needs to be codified into legislation because it is a behaviour that is already accepted as part of South African culture or religion.

Its introduction in South Africa is ill-advised since it allows the government to appoint foreign or unfamiliar cultural practices, which are often more complex than they appear to be, in an effort to crudely address gender disparity. With regards to the politics of marriage, the department's engagement looks out of touch with what is actually taking place in the real world. Even if there were a solid case for legalising polyandry in South Africa, it is still difficult to imagine how it could exist in a culture where men continue to control the majority of economic power, giving them the authority to start marriage and claim the role of the head of family. For polyandry to be an equaliser in a society where even the notion of a woman proposing to a man is viewed as off-limits, a lot more than just the legislation would need to change. The conversation surrounding the polyandry issue has been very revealing and unoriginal, which has added to the anger with it. According to the internet comments, some women enjoy the concept of dominating males because thy feel that they have been dominated by polygynous marriages. Instead of being interested in how we may disrupt how we embody power in our intimate relationships, there is a troubling allure to the power reversal. Our attempts to change our culture will be just as wrong as this polyandry gaffe unless we as a community comprehend how patriarchy operates.

Even though this discussion about polyandry is misguided, I am glad it has been started because it gives many a chance to analyse the new family arrangements that are developing in our cultures. Instead of stealing traditional customs as weak remedies for profoundly ingrained gender inequity, the Department of Home Affairs should respond to what is actually occurring on the ground. When it is reasonable and consistent with our

> constitutional ideals, we should discuss some of the new ways that individuals are choosing to form families and how the law might support these new ways and family structures.
>
> The idea of amending the laws governing traditional marriage to let women to marry more than one spouse or husband is a sign of how quickly society is evolving. Women have the same rights as men, and legislation needs to alter for there to be meaningful change.

In summary, Assignment 3 enhanced the students' development of voice in academic writing. They were granted the freedom to express their views, and to draw from their own experiences, cultural or religious beliefs and personal beliefs. Three expressed their support for the legalisation of polyandry, whereas one argued against the motion. Thenjiwe based her argument on her cultural beliefs and quoted the *Bible*, while the other students quoted prominent public figures who also commented on the proposed legalisation of this marriage regime. The students understood they had authority over their writing and they could take sides. Each gave their essays unique angles which correlated with the position they intended to take. In addition, they emphasised their arguments using a variety of linguistic resources. It became evident that this type of writing encouraged them to use the first-person singular pronoun, which enhanced the cohesion of their essays and marked their presence. Still, it must be noted that the students appeared to struggle with referencing, which is an important skill in academic writing. They used integral or non-integral referencing inappropriately. Cited names appeared outside sentences that had quotations. In other cases, students did not acknowledge their sources.

4.2.4. Research Sub-Question 4: In what ways do the first-year students develop voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

The writing activities in the Memoir Writing Project required students to write memoirs based on any event in their lives. The students had the freedom to choose and reflect on their selected event in writing. Sad moments, such as the death of a loved one, disappointments and irreconcilable childhoods, proliferated. Tshepo, however, wrote about a jovial moment as he celebrated his graduation. Nicole chose grief. Her memoir was about losing her mother after there was a court battle with her father over child maintenance. The title of her memoir, *The Last Day She Lived to Fight For Us*, alluded to the day her mother went to court as her health began to deteriorate, and soon after, she passed on. In this memoir, Nicole remembered her mother's face as she sat on the bench waiting for the magistrate to call her in. Nicole also drew

a picture in words of how her father looked that day: unshaven and messy. These details helped create the mood.

Pinkie's memoir, titled *The Dark Cloud of Misery*, reflected on losing her father who suddenly passed away after a short illness. In describing her relationship with him, Pinkie used the memoir to help her express the process of her coping with grief since she regarded her father as her close friend. Thenjiwe's memoir, *Disappointment* or *Shattered Dreams*, was a recollection of her memories after she passed matric and her father refused to let her pursue her chosen field of study and fulfil her dreams. She used memoir to bring to light gender prejudice, where women are not allowed to enjoy education. Leticia's memoir, *Broken Pieces*, reflected on her childhood, when she grew up sad and lonely. She wrote her memoir from an observer's perspective, to gain a better picture of events when she grew up. Unlike the other students, Tshepo's memoir, *Hope for a Better Tomorrow,* reflected on his graduation ceremony and described the joy his success brought to his family. The memoir described the jubilation and the pride the family felt when he became the first among them to graduate. Overall, it appears the students used memoir writing for therapeutic purposes, and it helped students like Nicole, Pinkie and Thenjiwe to find closure on issues that had hurt them for a very long time. Pinkie's memoir also helped her share family secrets.

The students' sense of freedom to choose any memory and reflect on it in writing enhanced their sense of authority, ownership and control over their memoirs. It should be noted that their sense of ownership also stemmed from writing about personal experiences and choosing titles. Each ensured that the title of their memoir should correlate with the message they attempted to convey. Interestingly, Thenjiwe's memoir was initially entitled *Disappointment,* but this changed after several revisions to *Shattered Dreams*. This showed that she understood that a writing context affects the meaning, and the choice of linguistic resources contributes to the construction of such meaning. Furthermore, the students used the conventional past tense in writing their memoirs to reflect on past events. However, they could also alternate between present and past tense, depending on the meaning, as they merged their past and current selves. This enabled them to gain a better understanding of their own emotions and mental state and why certain events took place. Also, how they felt about the current moment. For instance, in paragraph three of her final draft, Pinkie stated, "I do not know if I should call it depression or trauma, but from that day, I knew the definition of both those words".

Furthermore, the students' sense of freedom in their writing ignited their creative abilities. This was evident particularly in Pinkie's and Leticia's memoirs. In writing her memoir, Pinkie used metaphorical expressions such as, "Truth is the opposite of life is death and that it is not death but dying that alarms us", to emphasise how we do not get used to death even though it happens so frequently. She also incorporated poetry as a way of addressing her deceased father and expressing how she felt about his passing: "You left, you are not coming back…The smile on your face that won my heart all gone". Pinkie quoted a line by Quintus Horatius Flaccus, "Pale death, with impartial step, knocks at the hut of the poor and the towers of kings", to emphasise how death besieges any person regardless of class or social status. On the other hand, Leticia took an observer's posture to reflect on her younger self. She used third-person pronouns rather than "I". Writing her memoir from that distance enabled her to review her life and gain a better understanding of her young world. The following example further elaborates, "When I met her, she seemed kind and beautiful. She was vibrant, her energy made me feel happy and full".

The pedagogic approach employed in the Memoir Writing Project confirmed that creating a space for students to write, while drawing from context, enhanced their metacognitive skills. Writing their memoirs was a recursive process of moving back and forth, submitting drafts and having fellow authors provide peer feedback. It was also an exercise in self-censorship. Pinkie and Thenjiwe submitted two drafts. After submitting the first drafts that were peer reviewed, they submitted the final ones with some improvements. Pinkie's first draft focused specifically on how her father had passed away and the events that took place during the funeral arrangements. In her second draft, she included a section about how her maternal and paternal families interacted during preparation for the funeral, although that was omitted in the final draft. During the discussion of the drafts in the writing workshops, she indicated she felt that addition contained very sensitive family secrets and she was not comfortable to divulge these publicly. Her decision to omit this stemmed from self-censorship, about whether some information qualified to be included in her memoir or not. This was a sign of her having a sense of control and authority over her own writing. In addition, the final draft showed signs of improvement as Pinkie provided more details about the passing of her father, how she related to him, how she coped with his death and how she found strength in the support of people around her. It is, however, notable that the final drafts still had the same grammatical errors as earlier ones. This can be attributed to the fact that the project failed to emphasise the importance of editing and proofreading during text composition. Instead, more attention was paid to students' ability to construct and articulate their own voices.

Overall, the students' memoirs indicated that they had mastered the conventions of the genre and had the ability to express their voices. They chose specific events and described them in the past tense, which is typical of memoirs. In addition, they expressed their own voices using the first-person pronoun, "I", and "my", which helped them mark their presence in the texts. However, as has already been noted, Leticia used a third-person perspective to write her memoir as an observer of events that had happened to her.

It is further important to highlight that the peer collaborations within the group contributed to the development of ownership and control over the meaning of the texts. After the students submitted their memoirs on the online site, they commented on them, focusing on how voice had been constructed and their general impressions of the memoirs. That said, not much commentary was given by the students. Nicole and Pinkie appeared to be the only ones who commented, with Nicole remarking on Pinkie's second draft by focusing on how Pinkie captured emotions and, most importantly, on how the title correlated with the theme of the memoir. With regards to Tshepo's memoir, Nicole not only focused on the content, but also the general structure and the use of language. Pinkie's comments on Leticia's memoir covered different aspects, such as the tone, the language and the expression of voice. Interestingly, Nicole was interested in how Leticia had written her memoir in an unconventional way, using the third-person pronoun rather than the first-person pronoun like the others.

Author: Nicole

Title: The last day she lived to fight for us.

It was around 6am, August 10 2002. I was woken by my mother's voice calling my name as usual. Today would be different because instead of me getting ready for school, I would be accompanying mom to court. My father hasn't been paying maintenance for a very long time and she is going to fight for us today. I'm going with her, because since my birthday two weeks ago, she has not been feeling well. She is weak and looks sad, but she still has hope, she has hope that the courts will bring us justice.

The weather was dull. It was cloudy, but no rain. We took a taxi to Athlone, passing my school. It was still too early for any of my friends to be there.

We arrive at the courthouse just before 7am, it's already full. So many mothers, most of them look exhausted. This is obviously not the first time they are here, fighting for their kids.

We sit and we wait, my mom is quiet mostly, the atmosphere is sombre, quiet. I don't remember what we spoke of, if we did. I know she was feeling sick, I said let's just go home but she was adamant to get this done. Our case was finally called by 12pm, the state attorney called my mom to a back room, spoke to her briefly and then we went to sit down. It was my first time in a courtroom. Seeing people in black robes and white wigs on their hair, it felt so surreal, so overwhelming and sad to be there.

My father was called to the stand to state his case. I could not believe him, he was wearing broken clothing, he hadn't cut his hair or shaved for what seemed like months. He stood on that stand and said that he could not afford to pay maintenance for us, he stood there and lied about being unemployed and homeless. I could not believe that a person could be so cruel. He was ordered to pay R100 per child per month, unbelievable. The look on my mom's face was defeat. I will never forget how disappointed she was in him.

That day changed our lives forever. We got home and my mom was sick, physically sick. I asked my grandpa to take her to the doctor, she was admitted to hospital and it would be the start of the change of our lives. That was the last day my mom lived to fight for us.

Everything changed, my Mom was in hospital! We visited twice a day and she just never got better. Our relationship grew stronger over the next few months. Still, when she was discharged it would only be for one or two days and she would have to return because she got sick again. It took two months before she was properly diagnosed with a brain tumour. And exactly 4months and 4 days after that court day, the day she last lived to fight for us, she passed away peacefully at home.

by **PINKIE** - Wednesday, 7 September 2022, 1:45 PM

Number of replies: 0

THE DARK CLOUD OF MISERY

Truth is the opposite of life is death and that it is not death but dying that alarms us. Here is a little description of what pain is and the how deep it can get. I remember the date like the lyrics of a song, 23 July 2020, I was doing my matric year and I was extremely sick. My father took the responsibility of taking care of me because my mom was working, my classmates were preparing for preliminary exams. I call this month the month of the dark cloud because there really was a dark cloud hanging over the roof and not even a prayer could help remove it. Exactly 18:00 my mother ran a bath for my father, 5minutes later he came out and I noticed he has not taken his bath yet let me say something just told me to go check up on him. I then went to his room and found him lying down on the floor, I panicked and called my mother to come and help me pick him up. She did not even waste time we then carried him and placed him on the bed my mother gave me a warm cloth to rub him, as she was busy calling the ambulance, he was struggling to breath, he felt nauseous and all I can say is that I felt so useless and hurt at the same time truth be told I do not even know how to explain the feeling. A few minutes later the ambulance came and they took him to the clinic, it was around Covid times so there were new rules that a patient has to get a letter from the clinic first before going to the hospital. Now this is where the dark clouds covered my house, unfortunately the nurses failed to help my father ad he took his last breath, how little we knew that day what sorrow the night will bring, the smile that won so many hearts all gone and we are just left with a picture of him in a photo frame. My mother called and broke the news to me, and I felt my world crushing down, felt this heavy weight on my shoulders and wished someone could tell me it was all a lie. I do not know if I should call it depression or trauma but from that day I knew the definition of both those words. I realized I needed to lose him to find out how much I love him. The one thing I can say now is that never judge someone if you do not know their situations, my father's side of the family really left my mom all by herself, they blamed her for everything and I could feel the pain was so deep. I began to have suicidal thoughts right that moment and I could tell I was losing my mind. Slowly the end was linked to the beginning and the story of my life reached its climax. I felt lonely and truth be told I gave up on my matric results right that moment. My father was my number one cheerleader he was the one person who gave me purpose and strength when I was down and losing focus. Allow me to say I felt like God failed me, well that is how I felt, the big question is why did I end up feeling like that?

2nd draft memoir essay

by Pinkie - Monday, 7 November 2022, 7:44 PM

Number of replies: 0

The dark cloud of misery

classmates were preparing for preliminary exams. I call this month the month of the dark cloud because there really was a dark cloud hanging over the roof and not even a prayer could help remove it. Exactly 18:00 my mother ran a bath for my father, 5minutes later he came out and I noticed he has not taken his bath yet let me say something just told me to go check up on him. I then went to his room and found him lying down on the floor, I panicked and called my mother to come and help me pick him up.

she did not even waste time we then carried him and placed him on the bed my mother gave me a warm cloth to rub him, as she was busy calling the ambulance, he was struggling to breath, he felt nauseous and all I can say is that I felt so useless and hurt at the same time truth be told I do not even know how to explain the feeling. A few minutes later the ambulance came and they took him to the clinic, they left me back at home and my aunt accompanied my mother. Minutes later my grandmother arrived, it was around covid times so there were new rules that a patient has to get a letter from the clinic first before going to the hospital. Now this is where the dark clouds covered my house, unfortunately the nurses failed to help my father ad he took his last breath, they ran some tests on him trying to find out what is wrong but they all came back negative besides the ones that they have to send to the lab. How little we knew that day what sorrow the night will bring, the smile that won so many hearts all gone and we are just left with a picture of him in a photo frame.

My mother called and broke the news to me, and I felt my world crushing down, felt this heavy weight on my shoulders and wished someone could tell me it was all a lie. I do not know if I should call it depression or trauma but from that day I knew the definition of both those words. My grandmother held me as I was slowly losing my mind and with just a blink of an eye she also lost it, she began crying and breathing became difficult for her I did not even know what to do. In the process I decided I will give her water and try to balance her with a pillow, I could hear her mumbling and slowly calming down.

I realized I needed to lose him to find out how much I love him. The one thing I can say now is that never judge someone if you do not know their situations, I began to have suicidal thoughts right that moment and I could tell I was losing my mind. Slowly the end was linked to the beginning and the story of my life reached its climax. I felt lonely and truth be told I gave up on my matric results right that moment. My father was my number one cheerleader he was the one person who gave me purpose and strength when I was down and losing focus. Allow me to say I felt like God failed me, well that is how I felt, the big question is why did I end up feeling like that? I have been one of those kids who go to church and attend Sunday schools, one of those kids who kneel down and talk to god. I am not saint I make mistakes but I have lived my teenage years dwelling in the house of the Lord but the one time I needed his touch the one time I needed him to intervene he left me.

Rather let me say that is absolutely how I felt, I prayed to God the moment the car left to hospital I begged he who lives to keep my father for me, but he denied me the little opportunity to shine in my father eyes. I just remembered "he whom the Gods love dies young, while he is in health and his judgements sounds". Allow me to pour out my heart, allow me to share the poem, the words that came to mind.

*"**How painful it got that night**"*

How little I knew that day what sorrow the night would bring

How little I knew that day the storm the night would bring

So sudden my mother called and I faced reality

The tears in my eyes filled like water in the ocean

You left, you are not coming back…..

The smile on your face that won my heart all gone

A little time you had, but greater pain you felt

I am left with a picture of you in a photo frame……

Should I let go? Should I continue like you never existed?

In misery you left me, wondering what I will become

Rest my love, rest my rock, and rest my gem

You fought and the journey ends today!!!

Let the forefathers welcome you and bring me light

I am one of your footprints

Love, light and doves

From that day forward my life became the worst nightmare I could ever dream of, the circle incomplete and all the happiness faded. I call these the dark cloud of misery because when the cloud covered my house my life became miserable and the delight on my face faded. The battle continued, between my heart and mind, the mind was ready to heal but the heart was already broken into many pieces with no glue to hold them together. I learnt that physical pain is way better than emotional pain and I am certain the first question is why? When you cut yourself you are able to clean the wound and cover it up, but when you suffer from depression or heartbreak how do you begin to clean it up.

At times I would feel like cutting myself or hurting myself so that I bleed, well I believed that was the only way to remove all that pain or rather at least I will be feeling pain that I can control. Some situations require us to grow they build and break us, as bad as I was hurt I had to be strong for my mother, I just could not watch her breakdown. I personally believe that nothing will ever shake me like this one, I am stronger now. I call this dark cloud the big scar that lives within me, firstly people cannot see how deep I am hurt, thus allowing me to say there is no greater pain than having to hide the pain you are feeling

just so you can make those around you believe you are breathing fine. Some days it hurts some days it cuts even way deeper that I even feel like drowning myself.

Now if you have another definition of misery or rather another definition of pain bring it to the table and I promise you I will relate, with all being said I have become a good listener, I no longer judge others if I do not know what they are going through. I am because pain made me, and once again one day it will all make sense. The cloud I am talking about is a bride to every family, it has no timing and I quote "pale death, with impartial step, knocks at the hut of the poor and the towers of kings" by Quintus Horatius Flaccus (Horace).

During the week it all felt like a dream, I never really believed he is gone, the memories we shared revisited by just a look of his picture in a photo frame, I remember how we used to go to town just to have ice cream and buy fruits. He would wake me up ask me to bath , take a taxi and go have fun, walking in the streets of Mokopane town eating ice cream. Now I remember how he stood up for me when I was being cyberbullied, he fought my battles, he made sure everyone noticed the delight on my face. I have lost count of the how many times he stood up for me how he became my superhero in the mist of hardships, I am because he is. He would read my books with me, help with my homework's, I looked way happier with him. Funny how we used to lie on the green lawn near the gate and I would listen to him telling me stories of how he met my mother , suddenly I would smile hearing his voice saying "ngwanyana, my one and only girl". Now I know the little things matter ,the times when he would put me on his lap and remind me of how beautiful and strong I am, when he would take a walk with me to the forest to show me the beauty of nature. Ohh!!! My hero are you really out of sight?

Everyone was too busy to notice the dark journey I was travelling, my mother travelling to prepare for the funeral with both my brothers, exactly Friday and we were asked to go see him for the last time at the mortuary, I walked in there and it was so cold, my aunt holding me and I could not feel my feet anymore. His skin colour changed he was so dark, so peaceful and quite, I spoke to him I asked him to wake up, everyone looked at me their eyes filled with tears and my mom cried out loud. I looked at her and asked why is she crying, they took me out so I could get some air and then we left and went back home. 17h30 my father arrived at home, the choir singing, I was in my mom's room with her and the elders she looked at me and cried again. They brought him to the room and asked for one of us to identify his body, no one stood up and I did, they opened the coffin and it was him I fell down, I cried calling his name that's when I knew he left me. The night was too long, the memories of him playing in my mind like a movie, I tried sleeping but I just could not stop them from coming out. They were busy cooking and peeling vegies I was all lone dealing with my dilemmas.

Saturday the 1st of August 2020, we woke up bathed and dressed up, held a service in the tent everyone speaking highly of him all I could do was just cry, we left and went to the cemetery. When we arrived they placed him on his last room, his last bed, his last home, and it clicked to me I have to say my last goodbyes. Everyone had calmed down and ready to say goodbye even my mom did not cry, the coffin went down and I was the only one shouting out his name, fighting everyone trying to stop me from running to him. I wished to follow him, I wanted to leave with him but I could not, they covered his coffin with soil until I could not see it anymore, he is gone and he is never coming back. We

then went back home and as usual everyone stood in lines for food, later people started leaving going back to their respective homes that's when the pain got worse and I promised myself I am going back to school I will pass my matric and make him proud. Well that was his last wish, me completing my matric.

Going back to school the next week was not easy I had flashbacks, but lucky enough I had my teachers support and some of my friends. I would cry in the exam room and lose focus, nothing made sense. I had sessions with my teachers to help me heal, I moved and lived with my principal so I can focus, because every time I passed my mom's room I remembered everything that happened that night. I can positively say I fought and even in misery I passed my matric with an admission to a bachelor's degree, I fulfilled his last wish, maybe he really is resting. Let me not leave you hanging the results from the lab came back a month later and they did not find anything in his system, maybe it was his time, God had really called his name. The healing journey is way too long if I could share all the details maybe I could write a story book, I have not healed but I believe in one step at a time. He has joined my forefathers, he is my guardian angel now. I look up at the skies and talk to him whenever I feel I miss him and I eat ice cream to feel close to him. He left he is not coming back.

Re: COMPLETED MEMOIR ESSAY

by NICOLE - Tuesday, 25 October 2022, 7:59 PM

The feeling is sad and the emotions are raw. The theme matches the title. This moment has laid a "dark cloud of misery" on the writers life from that moment.

The writer captures the events and her feelings well and you can almost feel what she is describing.

The writer seems to still be dealing with the aftermath of the event. And that is depicted in questioning her faith.

The Memoir was heartfelt.

Disappointed

by **THENJIWE** - Sunday, 17 July 2022, 1:59 PM

Number of replies: 2

I could feel the tears in my eyes. I couldn't hold them back. I let them flow down my chicks. Unable to utter words out of my mouth. I cried so loud that I could feel my heart beating slowly. I cried until I fell asleep.

After studying so hard for matrix and obtained good marks, I was denied opportunity to fulfill my dreams. As I grew up, I imagined myself as a doctor. Even when playing with peers, my character was that of being a doctor.

At school I gained a lot of support from teachers. They had much confidence that I would admitted to medical school. I applied to various Universities, and Cape town university accepted me. I was so excited that my dream would come through.

The results were released, and I have gained entry to any university. I was so happy and so were the teachers. My happiness was short lived as my drop a bomb on me. He was against my dream of studying further. According to him, girls were not meant so study further after matric. He was so old fashioned, and stubborn at the same time.

The teachers pleaded with him, but it was such a waste of time. I tried persuading him but was unsuccessful. He would not burger. That was the last decent conversation I had with. I was angry with him I did not feel like talking to him anymore.

I asked myself how he can call ruin my life like this? Was I not good enough to practice medicine? All these questions were useless, they only brought more disappoinment in my life. The only thing I could do was make peace and move on with my life.

Comments

In reply to **THENJIWE**

Re: Disappointed

by **Sydney Fetsie MALULEKE** - Tuesday, 19 July 2022, 5:16 PM

Dear THENJIWE,

Although you only wrote few paragraphs of your memoir, I can already feel your voice: emotions, feelings of pain, disappointment, and confusion that you went through when someone denied you an opportunity to fulfil your dreams. I feel you already have the right words to express your voice. Please carry on, probably you will read the story in our next session.

In reply to THENJIWE

Re: Disappointed

by **NICOLE** - Tuesday, 25 October 2022, 8:15 PM

The writer captures her disappointment and hurt and confusion well.

Shattered dreams

by Thenjiwe - Sunday, 27 November 2022, 7:08 PM

Number of replies: 0

I was doing my matric in 1998. My dream from young age was always of being a doctor. I made it my mission to study hard so I get excellent results. I encountered difficulties along the way but managed to pull through. The idea of making something for my life kept me going. There were times where it seemed like I would not make due to hardships I had faced, but somehow I made it through. I knew I had to pass, but would it be enough for university admission? I had to wait and see the following year.

The day of the results came. I went to the local garage and bought the newspaper and search for my name. I found it, and ran home to show the family. There was too much excitement as I was the first to pass matric. My results were good for university admission. I had applied at different universities, including UCT. Each day I would check post box for that faithful letter. At last it came, I was so happy so was everybody. The excitement was short lived, as my father was against the idea of me being away from home at young age. Actually he was against the idea of me studying further, as he believed that woman are not meant to have education beyond matric. Everybody pleaded with him, but he heard none of it.

I could feel the tears in my eyes. I could not hold them back, I just let them flow down my cheeks. So many question came flooding in my mind. Hw could he shatter my dreams like this? What have I done to deserve such heartache ? I cried so hard that I could feel my heart bouncing off my chest. Eventually I fell asleep, with family trying to comfort me. All I could think about was my dreams being shattered before my eyes by the person who I thought would help me fulfil them. I thought that he would be proud of me one day when I had achieved something to improve family situation.

He was supposed to be my cheer leader, but instead he was against my ambitions and success. I was so hurt , I could not face him .I was so disappointed, I felt like the walls of the earth were closing on me. Was my hard work at school for nothing.? His stubbornness ruined my life. Why was he stuck in the beliefs of our forefathers ? Was it too much for him to change ways of the past and give women opportunity to make something for themselves ? There was nothing anybody could do to change his decision . I had to accept it and move on with my life. I had to make peace with it.

Memoir Writing Project: Hope for a better tomorrow.

by Tshepo - Sunday, 11 September 2022, 1:00 PM

Hope for a Better Tomorrow

One random morning, I casually checked to see my graduation status as I usually did since I had been waiting for my graduation letter. I had already gotten used to seeing it with no change. I had waited for it for a couple of months and was unemployed during this time, I felt as though I was going to waste. I was broke and literally everyday was exactly the same. I'd wake up, eat, bath then watch movies the entire day. The graduation represented hope for me. I felt that it would signal a positive change in my circumstances in the near future.

On that random morning, it was different. The status had changed and my letter was ready to be downloaded.

I downloaded and opened it.

As I read the letter I could not help but recall all the joys I had experienced on campus, the experiences and the people I had met that had become so dear to me. Laughter was shared, challenges were faced. I vividly remembered the financial challenges I had faced and was reminded just how God had made provisions, this was further comfort to me, I felt secure in that moment knowing that provision would be made even in future. I remembered missing an important exam because of a taxi strike, I had to fight to gain entrance to the supplementary exams, even then I was able to gain entrance and pass. I

remembered sleeping in class while studying throughout the night with friends in preparation for exams.

It had been a long journey, and it all led to this very moment.

I showed the letter to my mother and she was overjoyed and full of pride. News of this spread quickly among the family and before I knew it, my phone was being flooded with congratulatory texts and calls.

Along with all the thoughts that varied came the thought of my graduation outfit. I could already see myself in a suit and the graduation gown. This was going to be my first suit and it had to be perfect.

I went onto Pinterest and searched formal looks for over an hour, and with one that I liked, I saw myself in it. "This is surely going to be a great day, it will be my day, my turn and after this life will change for me" came to mind over and over again.

Re: Memoir Writing Project: Hope for a better tomorrow.

By **NICOLE** - Tuesday, 25 October 2022, 8:05 PM

The writer made me feel his joy, his pride and his ambition.

It is heart-warming, the struggles he overcame and then to receive the outcome, after an anticipated wait. He has captured the events well. The writing and language and structure is well suited to the title.

LETICIA - Thursday, 8 September 2022, 8:45 AM

Number of replies: 2

Broken pieces.

I met this beautiful girl one morning, we were both very young. When I met her, she seemed kind and beautiful. She was vibrant, her energy made me feel happy and full. I did not know her at all but the more we spoke, I felt I did.

Little did I know, I didn't know her at all. Months went by and I heard what she had been through. She was good at putting up a front to make others happy when at the same time it was slowly eating her on the inside. I started watching her from a distance. I saw how she treated others, with the utmost gentleness. She worried me, I mean anybody would be worried if they knew what she had been through.

She was hurt… they hurt her. Did she deserve it? Did they take her kindness for weakness to get what they wanted? Her heart was of pure gold. Despite how they treated her, she still remained sweet.

I asked myself 'why?'. But it was not my place to answer. I expected her to be cold and hurtful towards others, but she wasn't, not at all. She loved like her heart wasn't broken. She laughed like SHE wasn't broken, but the question remained 'Was she okay?'

I couldn't understand it. I struggled to understand her. Why? Why would she put the needs of others above her own, I asked myself. That is when I realised, she did that because she did not want to be seen. They took her, they used her… they hurt her. Did they actually love her or were they fooling her? I understood why she didn't want to be seen. She tried her best to spread so much love, but I know, I know that she didn't feel loved at all. When

you don't feel loved, you try your best to spread as much love and more love than you can give because you know how it feels to not feel loved.

It hurts, and I'm sure it hurt her. Did what happen to her make her feel at war with herself?

She spoke to me like she was the happiest in the world and it confused me. How was she able to do that. I asked her, 'How do you do that? How do you act as if everything is okay when it isn't". She looked at me and, in the moment, it was as if she knew that I knew everything that had happened. She replied, its not needed for everyone to know in how much pain I am in, nobody deserves that. She was hurt. She was brutalised. She was abused by two people whom she had dear to her heart, her closest friend, and her boyfriend. Why? That is a question that probably lingers in her head each day. She was severally brutalised and yet she is still the same person she was before it started.

How do you love after being hurt so badly? Despite what had happened she refused to let her hate control her life. It takes so much strength and bravery to do that.

Could she bare the pain?

I know she is going through so much pain internally because I have seen it before. It is a type of pain that makes you feel so alone. Does she deserve it? Nobody ever deserves to be hurt like that at all. She was always a light in the darkness to everyone.

They didn't deserve her kindness. They didn't deserve her.

Nobody did.

Was it needed for them to treat her as if she was nothing? It hurt me to know what happened to her and to see her still be patient and kind with everyone else. A few weeks went by I noticed she was more quiet than usual. I wondered what was going on. I came up closer to her and noticed dark rings around her eyes.

She's not sleeping.

I asked her if she wasn't sleeping well, she replied saying how could you sleep when your mind is constantly awake. I felt for her. She was experiencing all these things alone. Nobody knew what she was going through. Should she have told someone?

One thing I knew for certain is that she was having nightmares

Nightmares.

They are flashbacks of what happened that she had to experience every night. They could yet be the salt on her sore wounds every single night.

Is she in pain?

Is she hurting?

Is she scared?

That is a question that was most important, 'Did she still feel scared?" Could she answer that question?

Was she strong enough? I wish I knew.

Despite everything she felt, she still remained herself. A heart full of love.

Nobody deserved her.

Utterly nobody.

In reply to LETICIA

Re: Memoir Writing project

by NICOLE - Monday, 12 September 2022, 5:43 PM

The impression I get is that the memoir is told from a place of observance.

The use of the pronoun "she" tells us the the writer is talking about someone else.

The tone is concern, the writer is concerned about the person being observed.

The tense is past tense, it is something that happened in the past.

The writer is also writing from a place of experience, the way she is able to relate and sense what the person she is observing has been through, seems like she has been through something similar herself.

In reply to NICOLE

Re: Memoir Writing project

by PINKIE - Wednesday, 14 September 2022, 12:30 PM

The theme is dealing with pain and survival..because in pain she is trying to survive and yet give out LOVE.

The heading supports the memoir because the young girl is really broken.; to a point whereby even when she close her eyes she doesnt really sleep. I believe there is no greater pain than having to hide your pain.

The language is formal and it can be read by many audinces without feeling a sense of disrespect. The use of rhetorical questions and clear language made it more attractive. I believe any reader can relate to the pain; i think she should use "do not" instead of " don't " for the memoir to look more professional. It is an in-person voice and the writer can relate to the pain.

In summary, memoir became an instrument that the students used to express their emotions, especially difficult emotions such as grief and pain, and to find closure for unresolved issues. This was evidenced in the memoirs of Nicole, Thenjiwe, Pinkie and Leticia. Given that most of the events they reflected on happened years ago, memoir writing was nostalgic. It helped them to connect their current and their younger selves, and this gave them a better understanding of why certain events took place. In addition, the writing pedagogy employed in the Memoir Writing Project created space for the students to express their emotions, feelings and views freely, without fear, and to take authority over their writing. The development of authority in writing was further enhanced by encouraging them to give each other peer feedback. However, it was noted that only two students commented, and this can be attributed to their writing histories, where they were treated as having no stake in or control over their own writing.

The students' memoir writing integrated the process that encouraged them to write several drafts before submission. This was prevalent in the memoirs of two students, Pinkie and Thenjiwe, who wrote two drafts each. While the drafts showed signs of improvement in the structures of the memoirs, it was noted neither paid much attention to editing and proofreading their work. Both drafts contained grammatical errors related to tense and syntax. Students wrote long sentences that resembled paragraphs and were sometimes inconsistent in terms of tenses. Despite these shortcomings, it became clear that memoir writing enhanced students' development of voice in writing by creating a space for them to choose any event that appealed to them and reflect on that.

4.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Memoir Writing Project helped the participating students in developing a sense of voice in writing. The findings from the interviews reveal that the Memoir Writing Project was an eye-opener for first-year students as they had their first experience in expressing their feelings, emotions and opinions freely, without fear of being judged. According to the students, the Memoir Writing Project helped them express their emotions and find closure about some events and issues. In fact, the project played a therapeutic role. The creation of a space where students could freely choose events for their memoirs did not only give them ownership over their own writing, but also heightened their awareness of the relationship between context and writing. They made conscious decisions about what to include or omit, depending on the sensitivity of the material. In addition, the students expressed an understanding of the need to ensure that the titles of the memoirs correlated with the story. In addition, their comments on each other's memoirs placed more emphasis on meaning, structure and creativity, rather than the technical aspects of language, such as grammar.

As much as the project introduced them to the concept of voice and its importance in writing, the students indicated that it also helped them see the links between personal writing, like memoir, and academic writing. Moreover, they contended that memoir writing did not only contribute to their perceptions of voice in writing, but also benefitted their development in academic writing, and this was evident in their Assignment 3, which required them to write an argumentative essay. On the other hand, the students appeared to be ambivalent about whether the writing that was done in the ENG1010 module helped them develop voice in their writing. While some believed that the module taught them about writing with a voice, they could not

articulate what it involves in academic writing. In fact, they also expressed that the assignment questions were prescriptive and did not leave room for self-expression. It was only when they wrote the last assignment that they could write with their own voices as it was an argumentative essay.

The findings further reveal that the bulk of the questions in the students' written assignments in ENG1010 module were closed-ended and prescriptive. They involved recall of information, which is a lower-order thinking skill in Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). Students were asked questions that required them to define or explain terms for answers that were pre-empted, leaving no room for self-expression. A typical example was gap-filling, where the students were required to predict the missing words in a paragraph. Writing for such a question involved regurgitation of knowledge, and students were not involved in constructing the meaning of the paragraphs. In addition, the lack of space for students to write meaningfully deprived them of opportunities to express their voice and have authority in the writing. As much as these questions encouraged regurgitation of information, the students were seen copying answers from the internet and their study guides.

The assignments also consisted of questions that encouraged students' expression. Such questions required them to discuss concepts and relate to their own personal experiences. The students, however, said during the interviews that writing argumentative essays saw them expressing themselves more directly, as compared to the other assignment questions. They further noted that attending the Memoir Writing Project played a pivotal role in how they viewed writing and the significance of self-expression in academic writing. As evidenced in their essays, the students took different positions towards the given topic, with each expressing individual views and taking independent positions. However, it should be said that while they managed to respond to the essay questions appropriately, they did not fully master conventions of academic writing, such as citation and constructing a coherent, well-structured essay. Despite being encouraged to cite sources in their essays, some did, while others did not use citations properly. The most common error that emerged in relation to citation was the displacement of a cited name where such appeared outside sentences they were related to, thus affecting the logical flow of the essays. In other instances, students would quote information without acknowledging sources. Reflecting on the ENG1010 module, the students said it paid scant attention to teaching of, and the importance of voice in, academic writing. This may be one of the reasons why they struggled with the required skills, such as the structuring of ideas,

editing and referencing. The next chapter will be dedicated to the analysis of the findings I have presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the findings in this research study on how memoir writing can enhance first-year students' development of voice in English academic writing. The discussion is aligned with the Research Sub-Questions, the literature review and the theoretical framework underlying this study. The four Research Sub-Questions are:

1. **Research Sub-Question 1:** What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

2. **Research Sub-Question 2:** What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?

3. **Research Sub-Question 3:** In what ways do the academic writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 module enhance or constrain students' development of voice in academic writing?

4. **Research Sub-Question 4:** In what ways do students develop voice through memoir writing?

5.2. Analysis of the findings

This section provides an analysis of the findings on each of the four Research Sub-Questions. In addition, the discussion on each Research Sub-Question draws on the literature review, the theoretical framework and research studies discussed in the previous chapters. The analysis of each Research Sub-Question is provided below.

5.2.1. Research Sub-Question 1: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

The findings on first-year students' perceptions of voice in the memoir writing project revealed similarities between all five participants' perceptions of voice. The findings showed that overall, students had a limited knowledge of or no exposure to the variety of existing writing genres, in particular of memoir, which can be classified as a life writing genre. While they expressed that they were passionate about reading and writing, they seemed to have very little to no knowledge of what life writing genres, especially memoir, entailed. In other words, their previous exposure to writing genres was limited, and tended to centre on short stories, poetry and narrative essay writing which they had encountered at school level, those experiences

tending to inform their general perceptions of what writing and especially "voice" encompasses.

In addition, the findings showed that the Memoir Writing Project provided students with first-hand experiences of what memoir and memoir writing entailed. Their responses to the question of whether they had any experience of what memoirs entailed before joining the project, indicated that they had not read or written a memoir previously. Interestingly, when asked about their experiences of biographies and autobiographies, two of the students confirmed that they had read biographies and autobiographies. Thus, their responses showed that they were not able to relate biographies and autobiographies to memoir. This contradiction indicates that some were not aware that memoir and autobiography belong to the same category of writing genres, that is, life writing. Therefore, the Memoir Writing Project presented the students with a first-hand experience of, not only constructing a personal reflective voice through memories, but also a better understanding of the various categories of life writing.

The findings further revealed that students used memoir for therapeutic purposes. The process of writing their memoirs seemed to help students deal with painful emotions such as grief. Małecka and Bottomley (2022) call memoirs written for therapeutic goals "grief memoir[s] or mourning memoir[s]" because these shed light on people's experiences of living with loss. The findings also align to Snauwaert's (2021: 866) argument that grief memoirs can be viewed as lessons of how people live with loss "because they provide narrative literary forms to an experience that, until the late twentieth century, had been almost exclusively occupied by poetry and the elegy". As shown in the findings, the students wrote about traumatic circumstances, including losing their parents, disappointments in life and growing up under difficult conditions. Writing about these experiences, according to Roodt (2007), can help writers face past traumas that have long been buried and, in the process, allow them to gain a better understanding of the events.

The exception, as the findings showed, was that, in as much as themes of pain and sadness dominated, one student's memoir reflected on a joyful moment when he became the first in his family to graduate from university. All, however, indicated that writing memoir was an opportunity to vent, and share some of their deepest emotions with others. While the students indicated they found the process of writing their memoirs nostalgic as it brought back emotions they had suppressed, it also helped them find closure on unresolved issues. One realised that writing memoir brought relief in her life, thus aligning with Ruini and Mortara's (2022: 23) assertion that memoir writing is a form of "writing therapy" that entails investigating personal

thoughts and feelings through writing, which can in turn promote self-healing and personal growth. They further showed that writing for therapeutic goals results in the formation of narrative identities constructed through stories of memories of the writer's existence (Ruini and Mortara, 2022). These narrative identities can help writers gain a better understanding of who they were in the past, currently and could be in the future.

Furthermore, the findings showed that the Memoir Writing Project enhanced students' development and self-confidence in expressing their emotions and sharing trauma they had experienced in the past. This aligns with Deveney and Lawson's (2022) study, which explores the therapeutic effects of life writing, as a form creative writing, on the well-being of writers. Thus, the Memoir Writing Project created a space where the students felt safe enough to express their emotions freely and reveal their feelings about any past experiences without fearing admonishment or judgement. As further illustrated by Snauwaert (2021: 873), grief memoirs do not only "teach us how to speak of grief, how it can be formulated, how we can thereby diminish or cease to be intimidated by the deep, heavy silence that surrounds it", but also offer companionship to the writer and the reader who may be going through loss.

The findings, further, brought to light that the Writing Memoirs Project provided students with an opportunity to not only read and comment on each other's memoirs, but gain a better understanding of what memoir entails. As a result, they were able to reflect on and provide valuable peer feedback to each other. The sharing of each other's essays and providing feedback further enhanced the students' experiences of an enabling environment that allowed them to express themselves freely. The value and importance of such student collaboration in enhancing learning, aligns to the Sociocultural Theory which identifies collaboration as one of the core principles underlying teaching and learning (Li, 2018). Students' experiences confirm that collaboration involves co-authorship and sharing of responsibilities where every writer contributes to what Storch (2019: 143) refers to as "the generation of ideas, deliberations about how to organise these ideas and how best to express them" (Storch, 2019: 143). In this study, writing collaboratively not only helped the students develop the appropriate peer reviewing skills, but also their abilities to question and provide relevant feedback to each other. As a result, the students perceived the Memoir Writing Project as a social process rather than just an end product.

Likewise, the findings further revealed that the Memoir Writing Project contributed to enhancing participants' sense of ownership and control over their own writing because they were allowed to choose their own topics. The freedom to choose based on their experiences gave them exclusive rights to their unique experiences and memories and to understand that meaning is context-dependent. This also underscored the importance of ensuring that the title of a memoir must correlate with the content. In addition, one of the participants indicated that being granted the freedom to choose a topic enabled her to make conscious decisions about what to include or omit in her memoir, taking into consideration that certain information was too sensitive to be shared with the public. This emphasises the theoretical approach of the Sociocultural Theory that conceives of writing as a purposeful activity informed by context (Slavkov, 2015).

The students found that participating in the Memoir Writing Project benefitted their understanding of voice in writing and the development of their academic writing, as revealed in the findings. As stated by Mendelowitz and Ferreira (2007), writing personal narratives enhances a writer's critical engagements with their own identities, and multiple voices and experiences. Seeing their assignments improve after joining the project, the students felt the project should have started earlier in the year as this could have assisted them as they tackled the first two assignments in the module. One of the students pointed out that the project helped her develop critical thinking skills through collaboration and discussion with the others about how best to write their memoirs.

The findings showed that attending the writing workshops changed students' perceptions of writing and highlighted the importance of voice in academic writing. Students were able to grasp that all types of writing, including academic writing, require the expression of the writer's voice. As one of the students pointed out, there is a link between memoir writing and academic writing. While acknowledging that memoir writing requires the expression of emotions, students argued that writing is an act of stance-taking, where one is required to express one's opinion. According to the Interactionist Model of writing, stance-taking is a requisite skill for academic writing according to Hyland (2008), a proponent of this theoretical approach. He argues that writing academically cannot be devoid of voice; it involves taking a stance as a way of positioning oneself within the discourses of a disciplinary community (Hyland, 2008). As one of the students argued, while memoir writing gave them the freedom to make their own choices, academic writing was contrived and constricted by gatekeepers who tend to act as

adjudicators. In other words, while writing memoir is meant for personal fulfilment, academic writing tends to be focused only on the correct answer.

The findings confirmed that students found attending the Memoir Writing Project beneficial because it contributed towards developing their academic writing competencies, enabled them to express their voices and allowed them to become critical of their own writing. These findings are corroborated by the argumentative essay, the last assignment of the ENG1010 module, when students observed an improvement in their essay writing. The students remarked that the project should have been implemented from the beginning of the year because they could have had a better understanding of what was required in academic essay writing assignments they had to submit.

5.2.2. Research Sub-Question 2: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?

The findings reveal that students are not afforded adequate opportunities to express their voice when writing assignments in the ENG1010 Module. Of the three assignments that they wrote, only one, an argumentative essay, was sufficiently structured to enable them to start writing meaningfully. The other assignment questions required lower-level thinking responses from students. As observed by Nappi (2017), lower-level questions require students to recall and recognise information without deeply engaging with it. My participants showed that some of the questions in their assignments asked them to define terms, fill in missing words, join sentences and underline words. These types of questions tended to require single answers, were often not meaning-oriented and did not draw from context. As Storch (2019) argues, instead of allowing students to be creative and express their voice, these assignments require students only to regurgitate information and deny them opportunities to express their voices.

The findings further reveal that the students had very little knowledge or no idea of what voice in academic writing entails. On the whole, students' views regarding whether the ENG1010 Module allowed them to express their voice in academic writing tended to be contradictory. Some were uncertain about this as they did not recall being taught what "voice" entails, especially in academic writing, because they had not attended livestreamed lessons organised in the module to take students through its aims and requirements. They claimed they had not received notifications or invitations to attend the lessons from the lecturers. Other students

indicated they relied more on the study guide than the livestream sessions, but the study guide does not address voice in academic writing. One student believed they were taught about academic writing and voice too late, when they were about to write the last assignment being the argumentative essay. Their responses raise important questions about the efficacy of online learning pedagogies adopted at the CODeL institution.

5.2.3. Research Sub-Question 3: In what ways do the writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 module enhance or constrain students' development of voice in academic writing?

The findings show that most of the questions in the assignments were structured in such a way that they required lower-order thinking skills rather than the higher-order questions that Bezanilla et al. (2019) associate with critical thinking. In Assignments 1 and 2, most of the questions were closed-ended, and predominantly expected students to recall or recognise information. Assignment 1 consisted of eight questions, five of which involved lower-order thinking and three, middle-order thinking. The lower-order questions were typified by instruction words such as "explain", "define" and "fill in the missing words", whereas the middle-order ones asked students to "discuss" and "distinguish". The lower-order questions also asked students to "underline morphemes", "rewrite sentences" and "identify". Assignment 2, on the other hand, had five questions, three of which were lower-order questions. The students' responses to the lower-order questions were typified by simple sentences or a disjointed list of words unrelated to meaning or context. Meanwhile, their answers to middle-order questions were short paragraphs. The lower-order questions tended to convey a message to the students that there is only one correct answer, and any deviation from it would mean breaking the rules. As Ntombela et al. (2020: 2) rightly put it, "the goal of teaching writing in product approach classrooms is for learners to produce a text that is similar in form and language conventions to the one they have learned. Diversion in terms of creativity is less appreciated." Although the students used their own words to respond to the questions, the answers were contrived.

Furthermore, the findings show that the questions involving gap-filling tended to treat students as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in the construction of meaning. Assignments 1 and 2 consisted of questions that required filling in gaps in paragraphs, each more than 100 words long, which had five blank spaces that needed to be filled with

cohesive devices. In one paragraph, the students had to make inferences about the appropriate cohesive device based on the meaning of the paragraph. On the other hand, a range of cohesive devices were provided in the other paragraph, and students had to match them according to the meaning of the sentences. In Assignment 1, the students could not figure out the correct cohesive devices, but managed to write the correct ones in the paragraph in Assignment 2 because they were given hints. In addition, for the paragraph in Assignment 1, the students' responses were a meaningless, unconnected list of words, and in the paragraph for Assignment 2, they copied the whole paragraph with the missing words. Writing here was prescriptive and involved a regurgitation of information. It is interesting to note that while the paragraphs consisted of more than 100 words each, the students had to insert only five words which were contrived. This kind of writing aligns neither with the Sociocultural Theory of writing nor the Interactionist Model approaches that underpin this study (Hyland, 2008; Storch, 2019). In addition, I would like to argue that the students' failure to find accurate cohesive devices should not be perceived as an inability to use them appropriately in context. Instead, this shows how accuracy-oriented approaches limit their ability to express their voice and take control of their writing.

The lower-order questions in the assignments encourage academic dishonesty as students provide answers copied from various sources without acknowledging them. Most of the answers had been copied *verbatim* from the internet and the study guide, and this amounts to plagiarism. The students relied on sources such as the study guide, and internet sites like Google and Wikipedia. One of the participants provided answers copied *verbatim* from the internet without even acknowledging the sources, and those answers were not even in line with the mark allocation, the lecturers failing to detect any plagiarism. This conveys the message that students may continue copying as there is no penalty. It can be deduced then that students resort to copying because the questions do not leave room for self-discovery or the development of independent thinking. In their study, Gennrich and Dison (2018) argue that the failure to find accurate answers that led to the copying, is a result of frustration and low self-efficacy that cause students to withdraw and lose the enthusiasm to develop. Furthermore, I believe that markers and lecturers also find themselves in compromising positions with regard to lower-order questions as it is difficult to detect plagiarism in closed-ended answers. In addition, writing references when responding to closed-ended questions shows that the students know academic writing demands them to acknowledge their sources, but they do not understand which types of questions require referencing. Therefore, this shows that they have

not mastered the skill of referencing. They lacked a proper understanding of how in-text referencing is used in a text. As observed in Assignment 3, the students struggle with in-text referencing. They tend to place the name of the cited author after a full stop outside the sentence. This displacement distorts the meanings of the sentences in which referencing is done and where the name of a cited author is placed. In other instances, the students did not provide the date of the cited authors in both integral and non-integral citations, as well as bibliographies, with full details of the references. These errors are clear indications that the students have not fully mastered the convention of referencing which is prerequisite in academic writing. In their study, Gao et al. (2021: 1) note that while citation is an integral part of academic writing, "undergraduate writers often struggle to effectively integrate citation forms and functions into their writing". Similarly, Motlhaka (2020) and Khumalo and Reddy (2021) argue that it takes a process of socialisation and acculturation for students to master the conventions of academic writing, such as citation. Given the challenges that the students encountered in their essays, it appears that the module places citation and other important conventions of academic writing at the periphery of the curriculum.

It is interesting to note that scholars such as Gao et al. (2021), Lee et al. (2018), and Mansourizadeh and Ahmad (2011), have paid considerable attention to students' citation, focusing on the categories of citations they use. However, there has not been much work done on the writing errors and other challenges students encounter with citing sources at first-year level at an ODeL institution. Overall, these errors may be attributed to two factors. First, some of the skills, such as citation, were not nurtured in the school curriculum before they enrolled at university. Second, the teaching of writing at university does not adequately emphasise the significant role and relevance of referencing in academic writing.

Furthermore, the findings show that the question in Assignment 3 was structured in such a way that it afforded the students an adequate opportunity to write academically *and* express their voices. The assignment required them to write an argumentative essay that granted them the space to take a position and express their views on a specific topic. According to Hyland's (2008) Interactionist Model of writing that this study adopted, stance-taking is the hallmark of academic writing and serves as an author's self-representation. It challenges what Bi Ambe (2020) construes as traditional paradigms that conceive of voice as distractive, amateurish and unprofessional. Characteristic of stance-taking, the students' argumentative essays represented their different views. Some supported the motion, whereas others disagreed. In fact, each took a position and provided justifications.

The students' positions were marked by the use of the personal pronoun, "I". They used personal pronouns strategically in the introduction paragraphs to indicate the position they intended to pursue in the essay regarding the topic. In addition, they used the personal pronoun as a way of locating themselves within the arguments of other authors after critically engaging with them. In this way, Hyland (2008) states that the strategic use of "I" helps students negotiate their positions within the discourses of a disciplinary community. Furthermore, the personal pronoun also serves as a cohesive device that glues text together. MacIntyre (2019) observes how traditional paradigms discourage the use of personal pronouns, despite their benefits in signalling the writer's identity and presence. Writing an argumentative essay enabled the students to take ownership and control in their writing. Each chose a topic that correlated with their position. In addition, their writing reflected having the freedom to choose any position and afforded the students space to not only express their individual voices, but also use a variety of strategies to express those voices.

5.2.4. Research Sub-Question 4: In what ways do students develop voice through memoir writing?

The analysis of the findings reveals that the Memoir Writing Project accommodated students' diverse backgrounds. Students were allowed to choose and reflect on their own topics. Their memoirs were about personal memories of events that occurred in their lives. One student wrote about the impact of her parents' divorce and her mother's death, in her upbringing. Another one wrote about how her life changed after the death of her father, with whom she had a very close bond. Another student's memoir reflected on the disappointment she experienced when her father denied her an opportunity to further her studies, and another reflected a proud moment when he became the first to graduate in his family. This approach confirms Rubin and Umanath's (2015: 1) conceptualisation of memoir as "an event memory" which alludes to mental constructions of something one has observed. In addition, memoir writing tends to be the writer's intentional description of events according to how they observed them. The version of the events is relative to the writer's personal narrative and reflection.

Overall, the findings show that the students used memoir writing for therapeutic purposes. Their memoirs resembled what Snauwaert (2021) refers to as "grief memoirs". As defined by Małecka and Bottomley (2022: 842), "the grief memoir focuses on a time in the writer's life framed by the loss of a loved one and the grief that follows, often resulting in many 'special' circumstances". This was evident in the students' memoirs as they described specific events

where they lost their loved one. For example, the memoir of one participant provided the details of how her parents' divorce affected her mother's health, eventually leading to her death. Adopting the position of an observer, the student described events, such as her parents appearing before the magistrate where her father received a demand to pay child maintenance, and how, the day after, her mother's health began to deteriorate. Another student's memoir described how she coped after the death of her father. Characteristic of the grief memoirist, that student used her memoir not only to reflect on her father's death, but also some of the beautiful moments they shared. That student also wrote a poem dedicated to her father, expressing how she felt about losing him. This indicated the freedom bestowed on her as writer to take ownership and authority in her writing. In his study, Snauwaert (2021) observes that grief memoirists spend time reconnecting with their deceased loved ones, to help them deal with the loss and understand the changes they are going through. As stated by Małecka and Bottomley (2022), grief memoirs are commemorative in nature and serve as therapeutic goals for authors.

Memoir-writing helped students gain a better understanding of why certain events took place and how these shaped them. For instance, the memoir on disappointment delved into the student being denied the opportunity to further her studies by her father. Moreover, she reflected on cultural beliefs that might have informed her father's decision. Another student's memoir reflected on her younger self, and this helped her understand why she became who she is today. As pointed out by Ruini and Mortara (2022), personal narratives benefit the writer's construction of identity as they allow the writer to relive the past, become aware of the present and have a future perspective. The students' voices in memoir were constructed using the personal pronoun, which culminated from the freedom to relate their own experiences, construct their "selves", and mark their presence in a text. Although most wrote their memoirs using "I", one student used the unconventional third-person distant voice to recreate her past and gain insight into issues that affected her childhood. According to Graves (2019), one of the goals of memoir writing is to help the author gain a deeper understanding of experiences that are significant to their future as an adult. In essence, memoir writing enables authors to connect the past, the present and the future. Most of the students were enabled to understand the events that happened to them from a much more honed perspective, and as a result, gain closure.

The findings further reveal that the students' voices benefitted from collaborations where they shared their texts in an online discussion forum and provided each other with peer feedback. According to Slavkov (2015) and Storch (2019), collaborative writing is the hallmark of the

Sociocultural Theory that underpins this study. Unlike in traditional academic writing contexts where lecturers serve as audience and "powerful" arbiters with exclusive rights to judge, Gennrich and Dison (2018) argue that collaborative writing creates a safe space where unequal power relations are diminished and participants feel they have a stake in the production of texts. In the Memoir Writing Project, the students were encouraged to comment on each other's texts in the online discussions where they shared the drafts of their memoirs at different stages of production. The memoirs were also discussed during the writing workshops where everyone would raise their concerns and make comments about the writing. As is evident from the data, the students' comments on the texts focused on the structural aspects of writing, such as coherence and cohesion. As Nondabula and Nomlomo (2023) argue, collaboration has reciprocal benefits for everyone involved in writing. It creates a community of writers who can rely on each other, raise their audience awareness and enhance their sense of ownership over a text. It has been noted, however, that the students in my study gave minimal feedback. Only two commented on their peers' writing. However, it should be noted that a failure by some students to provide feedback may be attributed to the fact that collaborations were not encouraged in their previous writing experiences. In addition, the same practice is witnessed in their academic writing experience, with more time needed to nurture this culture.

5.3. Discussion

The analysis of the findings provides a broader perspective on how first-year students' development of voice in academic writing is enhanced by memoir writing. The first-year students indicated that the Memoir Writing Project provided them space to enact their self-expression through writing. They had previously limited exposure to a variety of writing genres, particularly life writing genres like memoir. The project therefore introduced them to memoir writing, which shaped the way they viewed the importance of "voice" in writing. Following their participation in the project, the students felt that their perceptions of "voice" had changed. In fact, they began to recognise a synergy between memoir writing and academic writing. On the other hand, they expressed conflicting views about whether the ENG1010 module enhanced their development of voice in academic writing. They indicated that the curriculum did not include such, as most of the questions in their assignments tended to be closed-ended and oriented to achieving accuracy.

The findings from the students' written assignments further indicate that the writing pedagogy in ENG1010 module fails to nurture students' development of voice. Most of the questions

asked in the assignment require regurgitation of information, which eventually encourages students to copy answers from their study guide or the internet. Further, this creates a tendency to be too wordy and fail to address questions directly. In addition, the lecturer did not detect plagiarism when students had copied, and this encourages that behaviour because there is no penalty.

The students' citation practices revealed they had not mastered the skill of referencing which is significant in academic writing. This was evidenced in their last assignment which required them to write argumentative essays. The students struggled with in-text referencing, with the names of cited authors displaced, and often, the students did not include the dates on which sources were published.

The students' participation in the Memoir Writing Project provided them with ample opportunities to express their voices, emotions and feelings. They used memoir writing for therapeutic goals where they vented about past traumas caused by the deaths of their loved ones, a painful upbringing and other disappointments in life. Writing memoirs about memories of their choice gave the students a sense of ownership over their writing. In addition, this was achieved through collaboration among the students and the project facilitators who shared responsibilities in shaping each memoir. The students would comment and provide peer feedback which helped in their sequencing of events, and eventually, their expression of their voice. It has been noted that most were not familiar with peer-feedback, as this skill was not nurtured in their previous writing experiences.

5.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter provided a critical analysis of how memoir writing enhanced the students' development of voice in academic writing. The students said that attending the Memoir Writing Project yielded positive results in their development of voice in academic writing. They highlighted that memoir writing was a social activity in which they shared responsibilities in the construction of meaning. Through collaboration, they were able to help each other in ensuring an effective expression of their voices where everyone took ownership and control over their own writing. They used memoir writing for therapeutic purposes and to vent their sorrows. As is prevalent in their written memoirs, the students reflected on moments of grief and pain in their lives. As a result, writing their memoirs helped them deal with their grief and find closure on issues that remained unresolved. Eventually, writing their memoirs

gave them a better understanding of why certain events happened, and how those affected them, and assisted them in becoming what they are today.

In addition, the students used various strategies such as the first-person singular pronoun to mark their presence in the memoirs. While most followed the conventional approach of writing from a first-person perspective, some wrote using the distant third-person voice to gain insight into issues that shaped them. It was also found that, once writing is related to context, writers are able to bring their creativity and ensure effective construction of meaning. It must be noted, however, that while students mastered the conventions of memoir writing, their expression of voice in writing was hampered by linguistic repertoires in which sentences were poorly constructed and not properly edited.

On the other hand, the analysis of the findings from the students' interviews and written assignments reveals that most questions in the assignments required lower-order skills such as recall and comprehension. The bulk of the writing in the module involved regurgitation of information rather than critically engaging with it. The students showed that the assignment questions were epitomised by instruction words such as "define", "explain", "identify" and "fill in gaps", and writing in this case was not related to context. Instead, students provide one-word answers, lists and simple sentences that are disconnected from and unrelated to meaning. It has been especially noticed that a prescriptive approach to writing is adopted in the module in which students are expected to fill-in gaps in paragraphs. They are expected to produce specific, accurate answers pre-empted by the assessors. A typical example of this was in the first and second assignments where students had to fill in gaps in paragraphs of more than 100 words. Writing in this instance involved guessing the appropriate words, with incorrect words being marked as wrong. I found it ironic that, for this question, the students only had to encode five words in the paragraphs, and as such they did not have control over the meanings of the paragraphs as they were provided for them. Interestingly, the outcomes entrenched on their course outline entails developing students' academic writing proficiency which cannot be achieved with gap filling questions. The actual approach is monotonous for students as they are expected to produce specific responses, with the prescriptive approach encouraging students to copy answers from the internet and the study guide, or to share answers among themselves without acknowledging the sources. What is striking about this is that lecturers cannot penalise students for presenting the same answers as each other, as long as questions were closed-ended.

In addition, an over-obsession with accuracy-oriented questions placed other requisite skills, such as referencing, at the periphery of students' academic writing development. Students appeared not to know when to use references. Meanwhile, cited author's names in an in-text reference fell outside the sentence that contained the citation. While in some cases students did not include the date on which sources were published, they sometimes did not acknowledge their sources at all. The following chapter will provide the conclusion, summary and recommendations that this study makes.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This study examined how memoir writing can enhance first-year students' development of voice in academic writing at an CODeL institution in South Africa. The study explored the writing of five first-year students registered for an English module (ENG1010) who also participated in the Memoir Writing Project in 2022. This was to gain insight into how their writing voices developed, both in the Memoir Writing Project and the module. In addition, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the students and analysed to gain a broader overview of their perceptions of voice after their participation in the Memoir Writing Project and being registered for the ENG1010 module. This chapter will provide a critical review of the findings. It will also discuss the contribution of the study, the pedagogical implications and the limitations, as well as offering suggestions for further research.

6.2. Review of the findings

This section summarises the main findings of the study related to the four research sub-questions that underpinned the study:

1. **Research Sub-Question 1:** What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?
2. **Research Sub-Question 2:** What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?
3. **Research Sub-Question 3:** In what ways do the writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 module enhance or constrain first-year students' development of voice in academic writing?
4. **Research Sub-Question 4:** In what ways do first-year students develop voice through memoir writing?

6.2.1. Research Sub-Question 1: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the Memoir Writing Project?

The first-year students' perceptions of voice indicate that the writing pedagogies adopted by the Memoir Writing Project created space for the development of a sense of ownership and control over their writing. First, the students indicated that their understanding of voice was enhanced by writing collaborations fostered during the project. They confirmed that sharing

texts and discussing them during the writing workshops was one of the highlights of their participation. Collaborations created a safe environment for them to express themselves freely without fear of judgement. Writing was centred more on the students than the facilitators. The students felt that through collaboration, they developed self-confidence, critical thinking and the metacognitive skills necessary for the development of voice in writing. Interestingly, some of the lecturers who helped facilitate the sessions shared their memoirs too, and the students were encouraged to comment on those. The students felt empowered through being able to determine what worked for them and how they wished to express themselves. Having to critique the writing of their facilitators, meanwhile, broke the unequal power relations that existed previously. This made the students understand that they are not only "powerful" arbiters vested with the authority to judge writing. Furthermore, the students' freedom to retrieve the memory of any event in their lives for the purposes of writing about it, helped them to understand that writing transcends the mere skill of encoding words on paper. Instead, it is related to context and involves making conscious decisions about what to include or omit.

Overall, the students' participation in the Memoir Writing Project not only benefitted the development of their voices in writing, but also allowed them to recognise a link between narrative and academic writing. According to the students, the link between the two types of writing was found in the expression of voice and for this reason, they felt their involvement in the project helped improve their marks in their last assignment, an argumentative essay. However, the improved marks in the last assignment can also be attributed to the nature of the question which required them to express themselves more than in the other assignments.

6.2.2. Research Sub-Question 2: What are first-year students' perceptions of voice in the ENG1010 Module?

On the other hand, the students expressed contradictory views about whether the English module ENG1010 helped them improve their writing and whether it encouraged them to express their voices. Overall, they found the pedagogic approaches employed by the module to be prescriptive as they were expected to produce certain accurate responses, rather than allowing them to express themselves. Not only did this impact on their development of voice in academic writing, but also caused apprehension, as they did not understand what was expected of them. The students felt that the module did not teach them anything about voice in academic writing. Meanwhile, it emerged that some did not make use of interventions provided by the module to help them prepare for their assignments because they did not receive

invitations. As a result, they said they relied on their study guides to navigate the module. Students' failure to attend online sessions can, however, be attributed to various factors such as the lack of a laptop or data to connect to online sessions, and the ubiquitous power cuts that have disrupted internet connections across the country.

6.2.3. Research Sub-Question 3: In what ways do the writing pedagogies adopted in the ENG1010 Module enhance or constrain first-year students' development of voice in academic writing?

An overall analysis of the results from the written assignments reveal that the pedagogies adopted in the English module do not afford students adequate opportunities to develop their own voices. Most of the questions involved the recall of information which requires lower order thinking skills, according to Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). In addition, the prescriptive approach employed by the module conveys a message to the students that there is only one correct answer to questions, and this leaves no room for self-discovery or taking ownership of the meaning of a text. As such, responses are contrived, and writing entails a regurgitation of information.

The students' lack of control and authority in their writing perpetuates unequal power hierarchies between themselves and the lecturers. Since the students cannot bring their experiences into their writing, the gap between themselves and the lecturers widens. Lecturers take an authoritative posture as custodians of what counts as academic writing. They are vested with the powers to assess writing and provide feedback, while students, on the other hand, take a passive position and lack authority in the construction of texts. This approach deprives the students of opportunities to develop academic voices and identities.

Due to the prescriptive approaches adopted in the module, the students' responses are typified by a list of words and fragmented sentences. For instance, the students had to fill in gaps in paragraphs, and define or explain terms. In gap-filling questions specifically, the students were provided with paragraphs of more than 100 words each and five blank spaces to be filled in. They had no authority over the meaning of the paragraphs as that was pre-empted by the assessors. The students' only contribution was to figure out the missing words. Such writing resembles the school-based curriculum, where students must display knowledge of content without any application in real-life contexts. This practice does not expose them to what academic writing actually entails.

Most writing activities in the module were not focused on developing the students' academic writing proficiency. As stated in the course outline, the only assignment which involved meaningful writing counted for 40% of the year mark. In this assignment, the students were asked to write an argumentative essay in which they expressed their views, attitudes, positions and opinions, and took a stance on a given topic. Although the students remarked there was an improvement in their writing through doing this, the analysis showed they had not mastered the conventions of academic writing. They struggled with various aspects, such as structure, the use of linguistic features to construct their position and, most importantly, the use of citation. The curriculum of the module simply does not allocate enough time to induct students into the conventions and discourses of the discipline.

6.2.4. Research Sub-Question 4: In what ways do first-year students develop voice through memoir writing?

Overall, the Memoir Writing Project effectively enhanced the students' development of voice in writing. Unlike in the English module, writing in the project was open to many possibilities. The students were granted the freedom to decide on the topics of their memoirs and this enabled them to develop a sense of ownership and an understanding that their memoirs should reflect their unique experiences. While most of the students reflected on grief following losing loved ones, others reflected on light moments which brought joy to their hearts. This specifically conveyed a message that memoir can focus on various events and experiences in one's life. Most importantly, a sense of ownership of their writing enhanced the students' metacognitive and reflective skills. In the process of writing, they made conscious decisions about what should be included or omitted and ensured that their chosen titles related to the content of the memoirs.

The development of students' voice in writing was further enhanced by collaborations among students and between the students and the lecturers who facilitated the project. Using the online discussion forum created for the project, students posted their memoirs and everyone had access to comment and provide peer feedback. At the same time, facilitators also wrote their memoirs and posted those, and the students provided comments and gave them feedback, too. Having the facilitators be critiqued by the students allowed the power of constructing meaning to be shared among all the writers. In this sense, the students assumed an active position in the construction of meaning.

Overall, the writing pedagogies employed by the project enhanced the students' development of self-confidence in expressing themselves. The project created a safe space to express their feelings and emotions without fear of being judged. They made use of various linguistic features, such as the personal pronoun, to indicate their presence in the text. In addition, this saw them using their creativity in conveying their feelings and emotions. One of the students wrote her memoir using an unconventional style. Instead of using "I", she used a third-person voice to allow her to take a distant posture as she reflected on her life.

6.3. Guidelines for Developing First-Year Students' Voices in Multilingual CODEL Contexts Through Memoir Writing

Having critically reviewed the weaknesses and strengths of the study, I propose the following framework for developing first-year students' voices through memoir writing in multilingual CODeL contexts. The framework is based on the following:

- Compilation of an Anthology of Memoirs
- Frequency of Writing Sessions
- Creation of a Community of Writers
- Participation in the Project
- Publication of the Memoirs

6.3.1. Compilation of an Anthology of Memoirs

In recognition of the fact that some students had not encountered memoir before joining the project, an anthology of memoirs need to be developed for other students to gain a broader picture of what this genre entails. In addition, this could serve as a model for the kinds of texts they will be expected to produce at the end of the course. The electronic version of the compilation should be posted on the online site of the project as an additional resource which will be accessible to all of the members.

6.3.2. Frequency of the Writing Sessions

The project must be conducted for at least a period of twelve months from the beginning of the year until December. The longer period of the project will benefit the students' development of academic writing across the board, as they will have to utilise some of the skills gained in the project in their modules. In addition, the students will have adequate time to develop their texts effectively before they are published. The writing workshops should take place at least

three times a week instead of once. Lower frequency of sessions causes students to lose track of their writing and thus lose the motivation to attend.

6.3.3. Creation of a Community of Writers

The project should work with a larger sample of participants in smaller groups. Working in groups will enhance student collaborations in the development of their memoirs where responsibilities are shared. Students should be assigned different roles as peer-reviewers to provide each other with feedback on their texts.

6.3.4. Participation in the Project

The project should be incorporated as one of the requisite modules for all first-year students. It should focus specifically on developing students' voices in academic writing through memoir as a narrative text. Making the project compulsory will ensure a large number of students participate. In addition, students should be ensured that memoirs produced are part of their project and will be assessed at the end of the year.

6.3.5. Publication of the Memoirs

In line with the principles of CODeL, the students would use online sites to write and publish their memoirs. A specific site should be created for students to post their writing and provide each other with comments. In addition, an online site for the publication of the text would provide students with access to their peers' writing. Moreover, the site would serve as a bank for research purposes.

6.4. The Contribution of the Study

Having synthesised the findings of the study, I would like to highlight some of the contributions of the study to theory, methodology and practice.

6.4.1. Contribution to Theory

Historically, research has treated academic writing as formal, convention-bound, impersonal and objective, at the expense of a writer's sense of being enacted through voice. More recently, voice has indeed been recognised as an integral part of academic writing as it represents a writer's stance and a way of negotiating their position as a member of a disciplinary community. Still, the recognition of voice as advocated by the Interactionist Model of writing

remains excluded from most discourses of academic writing. Against this background, this thesis expands the definition of academic voice in academic writing. It defines voice as the writer's expression of attitude, judgement, opinion or position based on personal experiences. In addition, apart from stance-taking, I argue that voice is a weapon of self-empowerment that gives writers exclusive control and ownership over a text. Given this, my thesis further asserts that a writer's personal experiences cannot be divorced from the expression of voice in academic writing.

I further propose the conceptualisation of academic writing as an amalgamation of the Sociocultural Theory of writing and the Interactionist Model of voice. The collation treats the two theoretical lenses as complementary rather than dichotomies. In addition, they help in seeing the expression of voice in academic writing as a process that occurs within a community of writers who share responsibilities for generating ideas and shaping a text. It also helps to develop students' sense of agency and control over their own writing.

6.4.2. Contribution to Methodology

This thesis makes an important contribution to methodology by introducing online platforms as tools for collecting data related to students' development of voice in academic writing through memoir writing. I posit that online platforms provide a space for students to collaborate on the production of texts. They can share their writing and provide peer feedback as a community of writers. In addition, virtual platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom can help bridge the distance between researchers and participants. They can attend writing platforms where they have an opportunity to discuss each other's texts and share their experiences.

6.4.3. Contribution to Practice

One of the main objectives of this study was to contribute to the practice of developing students' voice in academic writing. This contribution challenges the existing pedagogies and constructs of voice in academic writing. I argue that pedagogies of voice in academic writing should build on personal narratives such as memoir as they lay a foundation for students' understanding of what "voice" entails. The integration of "voice" creates a safe space for students to gain confidence in expressing themselves and take ownership of their writing.

6.5. Pedagogical Implications

The analysis of the results from the students' interviews, written assignments, memoirs and observations has shown how personal writing plays a role in laying the foundation for developing students' voice in academic writing. It has also been observed that the English module does not adequately nurture the development of voice, which enhances students' self-efficacy, critical thinking skills and authority over their writing. Given the benefits of voice in writing, this study suggests that the writing pedagogies and the curriculum of this module and others that follow the same pedagogy, need to be reviewed so that a space is created for the students to bring their own experiences, express their opinions and judgements, and position themselves within the disciplinary community. Personal writing should be integrated into the curriculum as a tool for introducing the notion of voice, which is necessary in the construction of an own academic identity. To this end, lecturers can explore different strategies and avenues of using memoir in ways that provoke students to think about the development of their voice in writing English.

My analysis of the findings has noted a lack of balance between the teaching of writing and other aspects of language, such as grammar. It is further noted that the bulk of the writing in the English module focuses on students' ability to recall information, while meaningful writing is placed at the periphery of the curriculum. Of the three assignments that the students write, Assignment 3, which involves essay writing, counts only 40% of the year mark. This lack of balance has seen students struggling with components of academic writing, such as structuring their essays and citation. This calls for a need to integrate writing throughout the year in all the assignments. An integration of writing skills into the module will not only benefit students in attaining marks, but orientate them to research writing, which is the core of academic development.

6.6. The Limitations of the Study

According to Simon (2011), limitations are potential weaknesses that are beyond the researcher's control. These limitations may present themselves in the methodology, sampling methods and/or the time period in which the study is conducted. My study uses purposive sampling, which entails selecting only information-rich participants, or participants who are more likely to be knowledgeable about the phenomenon under study. The participants were selected on the grounds of being part of the community engagement project, "Creating Space for Voice Through Autobiography Writing", and being enrolled for one of the English modules

at Star University (a CODeL institution). The sample size for my study was five students due to a high dropout rate from the project. Thus, the findings cannot be used to generalise about a larger population as in other universities where students have contact sessions with their lecturers.

Secondly, the advent of Covid-19 brought about changes that impacted on teaching and learning at universities. Although institutions like the Star University have long used CODeL approaches, they also had contact classes with certain students. However, since 2020, learning and teaching takes place mostly on virtual platforms at this institution. The memoir writing workshops, as a method of data collection, were conducted virtually with students from different places around the country. Embarking on CODeL approaches entirely had a negative impact on obtaining participants for the study, however. We initially had about fifty students indicate their interest to participate. However, only five to eight students attended the workshops, and this can be attributed to challenges with regards to the amount of data they needed to access the virtual sessions.

On the other hand, the efficiency of online learning has also been impacted by the unstable economic climate of South Africa, where there are regular power cuts at random time intervals (known as "loadshedding") around the country. Some sessions had to be cancelled due to network problems caused by loadshedding in different areas. Thus, some of the objectives of the study were not easily achievable. Some students could not attend sessions where their memoirs were reviewed, which affected their writing negatively.

The study encountered two limitations that are discussed in this section. The first, as outline in Chapter 3, was related to the sample of the study. Ideally, the study intended to work with a sample of fifty students registered for the English module and who participated in the Memoir Writing Project. Invitations were sent to them via their student emails and announcements on the module's online platform. Out of about 1500 students registered for the module, only 92 responded. Of these 92, only 50 indicated being interested. However, the number of students decreased upon commencement of the workshops. While the sample size appeared to be a limitation for the study as it did not provide a broader reflection of students' experiences and development of voice in academic writing, it showed the strength of every student involved.

The other limitation the study encountered was time. The project commenced in the second semester in July and the writing workshops were held for one hour in the evening once a week. The sessions faced disruptions due to loadshedding schedules in students' residential areas which conflicted with the times of the workshops. Due to this, the workshops were sometimes

postponed as there would be only one student in attendance, or none. In addition, students were sometimes not able to attend due to data impoverishment or having personal commitments. The project also had to close early at the end of the year to allow students to focus on their exams. These disruptions resulted in the project not being able to cover as many aspects as intended. As a result, some students' memoirs were not fully developed, although they had a clear grasp of what voice entails. It is also important to note that some of the limitations the study encountered were related to pedagogic factors. The study was being implemented for the first time and the pedagogic approaches employed were in a pilot phase. Had the project been implemented two years in advance, we would have had a clearer picture of the kinds of challenges to expect and how to deal with them and yield better results.

6.7. Suggestions for Further Research

My suggestions for further studies stem from the limitations outlined above. Considering the sample size, I suggest that further study be conducted focusing on a bigger sample to provide a broader perspective on students' academic writing development. There are alternative ways in which this can be achieved. First, a follow-up study may be conducted with first-year students from various English modules. This inclusive approach may yield much richer data on how different English modules employ strategies and pedagogies to develop students' academic identities. In further addressing the limitation, the study may trace students' writing development from first year until final year when they complete their studies. This would provide a much broader perspective of the efficiency of the pedagogies employed in English Studies within the institution.

Furthermore, time is a limiting factor in the study. Instead of implementing the study for six months, I propose a similar study should be implemented for a much longer period, about a year. This will allow the project to cover different aspects of voice in writing and making links with academic writing. This will benefit students' development of academic writing as they will transfer some of the skills acquired in the study into their other writing.

6.8. Conclusion

The present study presents a framework for developing first-year students' academic writing voice through memoir writing. An examination of the students' memoirs shows that writing pedagogies that create space for collaboration, enhance students' development of ownership and authority in the construction of texts. Collaborations give power to students and break

unequal power relations that render them passive recipients of knowledge, rather than constructors. It also creates a safe environment where they are free to express themselves without fear of judgement. While the students used memoir writing for therapeutic goals, they also viewed it as an important tool that helped them develop critical thinking skills and metacognitive skills: the ability to think meaningfully about their own writing. To this end, I argue that life writing such as memoir should be treated as an integral part of academic writing development. It is an important tool for teaching about voice and reflection in writing.

On the other hand, this study has observed that the prescriptive approaches employed by the English module leave no room for students' development of voice in writing. Writing based on such approaches is driven by accuracy. It involves recall of information that is pre-empted by the lecturers who are arbiters of what is accurate. As a result, a lack of space for students to express themselves takes away their freedom to explore different ways of knowledge construction. In addition, writing that is aimed at regurgitating information tends to create writing anxieties, and if students fail to achieve accuracy, they tend to withdraw from developing. To this end, this study argues that essay writing should be placed at the centre of the curriculum to give students an opportunity to exercise their academic voices. It should be integrated in all assessment activities that students must complete throughout the year.

REFERENCE LIST

Abdualhussein, M. (2022). The utilization of integral citation in published research articles written by Iraqi writers. *Res Militaris* 12(2): 6229-6233.

Agostino, I. R. (2023). Memoir as metaphor: a study of the relationship between readers, history, and memoir. Università Ca' Foscari Venezia.

Ahmed, S. K. (2024). The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health* 2: 100051.

Al Fadda, H., Osman, R., and Metwally, A. S. M. (2020). Using WhatsApp in coordination with Zoom and Microsoft Teams to enhance online learning during COVID-19 lockdown. *International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education (INT-JECSE)* 29(5): 1024.

Alfaruqy, D., Setyawan, H., and Rohman, T. N. (2022). Exploring first-year EFL students' problems in essay writing. *ELE Reviews: English Language Education Reviews* 2(1): 1-12.

Alkhudiry, R. (2022). The contribution of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in mediating L2 knowledge co-construction. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 12(10): 2117-2123. DOI: 10.17507/tpls.1210.19.

Allison, D. (2018). Voicing the academy. *Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1(3): 102-117. DOI: 10.29140/ajal.v1n3.79.

Allman, B. 2020. Socioculturalism. In *The Students' Guide to Learning Design and Research,* edited by Kimmons, R., and Caskurlu, S. *EdTech Books* 1: 23-30. DOI: 10.59668/10.

AlTameemy, F., and Daradkeh, A. (2019). Common paragraph writing errors made by Saudi EFL students: Error analysis. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 9(2): 178-187.

Angu, P. E. (2018). Disrupting western epistemic hegemony in South African universities: Curriculum decolonisation, social justice, and agency in post-apartheid South Africa. *The International Journal of Learner Diversity and Identities* 25(1): 9-22.

Angu, P., Boakye, N. A. N. Y., and Eybers, O. O. (2020). Rethinking the teaching of academic literacy in the context of calls for curriculum decolonization in South Africa. *The International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum* 27(1): 1-16.

Ariyanti, A. (2017). Foreign language anxiety in academic writing. *Dinamika Ilmu* 17(1): 143-152.

Ayana, T. G. (2020). An investigation of EFL students' essay writing: problems and suggestions: Ambo University first-year students in focus. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 10(1): 37-42.

Badra, L. (2012). History, memory and identity in Nelson Mandela's autobiography: *Long Walk to Freedom (1918-1962)*. *Atenea* 32(1-2): 49-58.

Bassiouney, R. (2012). Politicizing identity: code choice and stance-taking during the Egyptian revolution. *Discourse and Society* 23(2): 107-126.

Bezanilla, M. J., Fernández-Nogueira, D., Poblete, M., and Galindo-Domínguez, H. (2019). Methodologies for teaching-learning critical thinking in higher education: The teacher's view. *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 33: 100584.

Bharuthram, S., and McKenna, S. (2012). Students' navigation of the uncharted territories of academic writing. *Africa Education Review* 9(3): 581-594.

Bi Ambe, M. (2020). Exploring first-year students' voice and subjectivity in academic writing at a university in South Africa. Unpublished MA dissertation. University of the Western Cape.

Blommaert, J. (2008). *Grassroots Literacy: writing, identity, and voice in Central Africa*. New York: Routledge.

Blommaert, J., Collins, J., and Slembrouck, S. (2005). Spaces of multilingualism. *Language and Communication* 25(3): 197-216.

Bloom, B. S.; Engelhart, M. D.; Furst, E. J.; Hill, W. H.; and Krathwohl, D. R. (1956). Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals. *Handbook 1: Cognitive domain*: 1103-1133.

Boubazine, Z., and Amira, W. (2019). Native language interference in writing. The case study of third-year learners of English, Mohammed Seddik - Ben Yahia University, Jijel. *Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific research.*

Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. *American Psychological Association,* 2: 57-71.

Bruner, J. (1995). The autobiographical process. *Current Sociology* 43: 161-177.

Busch, B. (2006). Language biographies – approaches to multilingualism in education and linguistic research. In *Language biographies for multilingual learning,* edited by Busch, B., Jardine, A., and Angelika Tjoutuku. Cape Town: Praesa 24: 5-18.

Canagarajah, S. (2002). Multilingual writers and the academic community: Towards a critical relationship. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 1(1): 29-44.

Canagarajah, S. (2007). Lingua franca English, multilingual communities, and language acquisition. *The Modern Language Journal* 91: 923-939.

Chang, P. (2010). Taking an effective authorial stance in academic writing: Inductive learning for second language writers using a stance corpus. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Chokwe, M. J. (2011). *Academic writing in English second language contexts: perceptions and experiences of first year university students and tutors*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. University of South Africa.

Cornelissen, S., and Horstmeier, S. (2002). *The social and political construction of identities in the new South Africa: An analysis of the Western Cape Province*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Couser, G.T. (2011). *Memoir: An introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing Among Five Approaches. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W., and Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications 15.

Creswell, J. W., and Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California*:* SAGE Publications.

Dacus, L. C. (2022). *First-Year college students' perceptions of writing and writing instruction across high school to college transitions*. New York: State University of New York at Albany.

Damayanthi, S. (2019). Thematic analysis of interview data in the context of management controls research. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Daymond, M. J. (2006). Self-translation, untranslatability, and postcolonial community in the autobiographies of Mpho Nthunya and Agnes Lottering. *English in Africa* 33(2): 91-111.

De Fina, A. (2019). Discourse and Identity. In *The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics* edited by Chapelle, C. A. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons: 1-8. DOI: 10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0326.pub2.

De Kadt, E., and Mathonsi, N. (2003). Writing in English with an African Voice: Ownership, identity, and learning. *Journal for Language Teaching* 37(1): 92-103.

De Magalhães, M. B., Cotterall, S., and Mideros, D. (2019). Identity, voice and agency in two EAL doctoral writing contexts. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 43: 4-14.

De Silva, R. (2015). Writing strategy instruction: Its impact on writing in a second language for academic purposes. *Language Teaching Research* 19(3): 301-323.

Den Elzen, K. (2018). *"My decision: A memoir" and "The young widow memoir: Grief and the rebuilding of fractured identity"*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. Curtin University.

Den Elzen, K. (2021). Therapeutic writing through the lens of the grief memoir and dialogical self-theory. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 34(2): 218-230.

Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Deveney, C., and Lawson, P. (2022). Writing your way to well-being: An IPA analysis of the therapeutic effects of creative writing on mental health and the processing of emotional difficulties. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* 22(2): 292-300.

Du Bois, J. W. (2007). The stance triangle. *Stance taking in discourse: Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction* 164(3): 139-182.

Duminy, J.; Andreasen, J.; Lerise, F.; Odendaal, N.; and Watson, V. (2014). *Planning and the case study method in Africa: Planner in the dirty shoes.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elbow, P. (1994). What do we mean when we talk about voice in texts. *Voices on voice: Perspectives, definitions, inquiry* 1: 1-35.

Erickson, F. (2011). A history of qualitative inquiry in social and educational research. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* 4: 43-59.

Esambe, E., Mosito, C. and Pather, S. (2016). First-year students' essay writing practices: Formative feedback and interim literacies. *Reading and Writing: Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa* 7(1): 1-11.

Fass, P. S. (2006). The memoir problem. *Reviews in American History* 34(1): 107-123.

Ferreira, A., and Mendelowitz, B. (2009). Diversity, double-talk and (mis) alignment: Pedagogic moves for epistemological access. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 27(1): 77-92.

Flowerdew, J., and Wang, S. H. (2015). Identity in academic discourse. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 35: 81-99.

Gao, J.; Picoral, A.; Staples, S.; and Macdonald, L. (2021). Citation practices of L2 writers in first-year writing courses: Form, rhetorical function, and connection with pedagogical materials. *Applied Corpus Linguistics* 1(2): 100005.

Garfield, E. (1955). Citation indexes for science: A new dimension in documentation through association of ideas. *Science* 122(3159): 108-111.

Gennrich, T., and Dison, L. (2018). Voice matters: students' struggle to find voice. *Reading and Writing: Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa* 9(1): 1-8.

Goundar, P. R., and Bogitini, L. J. (2019). First year Fijian undergraduate university students academic essay writing error analysis. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature* 8(1): 172-177.

Graves, V. M. (2019). *Exploring my memoir as a centering place movement toward the nature of indigenous education: dream, vision, spirit and ceremony*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. University of Arizona.

Grzęda, P. (2015). Trauma and testimony: Autobiographical writing in post-apartheid South Africa. In *Postcolonial traumas: memory, narrative, resistance*, edited by Abigail Ward. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK: 65-82.

Hampl, P. (1999). *I could tell you stories: Sojourns in the land of memory*. New York: WW Norton and Company.

He, F. (2020). Identity construction in academic writing of student writers who use English as an additional language: A Literature review. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* 43(4): 506-524.

Hewett, H. (2004). In search of an "I": Embodied voice and the personal essay. *Women's Studies* 33(6): 719-741.

Holt, L. K. (2020). *The struggle we share: Writing anxiety in college composition and what teachers can do to help*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. San Francisco State University.

Hunma, A. (2011). Identities in transit and academic writing: An ethnographic study of first-year Mauritian students at a South African university. *Members of the Editing Team* 6(2): 53.

Hyland, K. (2002). Authority and invisibility: Authorial identity in academic writing. *Journal of pragmatics* 34(8): 1091-1112.

Hyland, K. (2005). Stance and engagement: A model of interaction in academic discourse. *Discourse Studies* 7(2): 173-192.

Hyland, K. (2007). Genre pedagogy: Language, literacy and L2 writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16(3): 148-164.

Hyland, K. (2008). Disciplinary voices: Interactions in research writing. *English Text Construction* 1(1): 5-22.

Hyland, K., and Salager-Meyer, F. (2008). Scientific writing. *Annual review of Information Science and Technology* 42(1): 297.

Ivanič, R. (1998). Writing and identity: The discoursal construction of identity in academic writing. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company: 10.

Ivanič, R., and Camps, D. (2001). I am how I sound: Voice as self-representation in L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 10(1-2): 3-33.

Jarkovská, M., and Kučírková, L. (2020). Citation practices in EFL academic writing: The use of reporting verbs in Master's thesis literature reviews. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 10(2): 571-579.

Johnstone, B. (2009). Stance, style, and the linguistic individual. In *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*, edited by Jaffe, A. New York: Oxford UP: 29-52.

Jomaa, N. J., and Bidin, S. J. (2019). Variations in the citation use and perceptions in writing the literature review by EFL postgraduates. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics* 5(3): 441-460.

Kalianivala, A. Z. (2019). *Traditional vs. Self-Compassionate Expressive Writing: Differentiating Processes Through Linguistic Analysis*. North Carolina: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Keskinen, M. (2004). Voice Doubles: Auditory Identities in Michel Tournier's 'Tristan Vox'. *Romanic Review* 95(1-2): 135-149.

Khelalfa, N. (2018). Writing anxiety, self-efficacy, effort, and their roles in writing achievement. *Proceedings of the 10th International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*. Amsterdam: Atlantis Press 211: 33–34.

Khumalo, N. P., and Reddy, S. (2021). Cross-disciplinary synergy: First-year students' experiences of learning academic writing through integrated writing support at a University of Technology. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 17(1): 1-10. DOI: 10.4102/td.v17i1.1038.

Kumar, R. (2019). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Lantolf, J., and Thorne, S. (2000). *Sociocultural theory and the genesis of second language development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lee, J. J., Hitchcock, C., and Casal, J. E. (2018). Citation practices of L2 university students in first-year writing: Form, function, and stance. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 33: 1-11.

Lensmire, T. (2000). *Voice as project. Powerful writing. Responsible teaching*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Li, M. (2018). Computer-mediated collaborative writing in L2 contexts: An analysis of empirical research. *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 31(8): 882-904.

MacIntyre, R. (2019). The use of personal pronouns in the writing of argumentative essays by EFL writers. *RELC Journal* 50(1): 6-19.

Małecka, K. A., and Bottomley, J. S. (2022). Grief memoirs: The familiarity of helping professionals with the genre and its potential incorporation into grief therapy. *Death Studies* 46(4): 842-850.

Maluleke, S. F. (2015). *An exploration of grade 5 learners' writing development*. Unpublished master's dissertation. University of the Witwatersrand.

Maluleke, S. F. (2017). *Soul Brothers – The Life and Times – Through the Eyes of Black Moses Ngwenya*. Johannesburg: Maluks Books.

Maluleke, S. F. (2019). *Steve Kekana – The I in me (From Victim to Victor)*. Johannesburg: Maluks Books.

Maluleke, S. F. (2022). *Dr Thomas Chauke – Everything is Ximatsatsa (Up Close and Personal with the King of Xitsonga Music)*. Johannesburg: Maluks Books.

Maluleke, T. (2019). Tutu in memory, Tutu on memory strategies of remembering. *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 47(2): 177-192.

Mammadova, T. (2023). *Academic writing and information literacy instruction in digital environments: A complementary approach*. Berlin: Springer Nature.

Manirakiza, E., Mugirase, G., and Hakizimana, I. (2021). Reflecting on the nature and causes of errors in second language learning and their classroom implications. *European Journal of Teaching and Education* 3(4): 18-28.

Mansourizadeh, K., and Ahmad, U. K. (2011). Citation practices among non-native expert and novice scientific writers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 10(3): 152-161.

Matsuda, P. K., and Jeffery, J. V. (2012). Voice in student essays. In *Stance and voice in written academic genres*, edited by Hyland, K., and Sancho-Guinda, C. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK: 151-165.

McMillan, J. H. and Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry*. 7th Ed. New Jersey: Pearson.

Mdodana-Zide, L., and Mukuna, K. R. (2023). Enhancing the academic writing skills of first-year English second language students at a South African university. *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research* 5(2): 206-222. DOI: 10.46303/jcsr.2023.27.

Mendelowitz, B. (2005). Representing shifting selves: Reflections on teaching memoir writing to pre-service teachers. *Perspectives In Education* 23(1): 15-24.

Mendelowitz, B., and Dixon, K. (2016). Risky writing: Working with a heteroglossic pedagogy to deepen pre-service teachers' learning. *Perspectives in Education 34(1): 120-134.*

Mendelowitz, B., and Ferreira, A. (2007). Engaging narratives: using language biographies to facilitate student learning. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 25(4): 487-504.

Mitchell, K. M. (2017). Academic voice: On feminism, presence, and objectivity in writing. *Nursing Inquiry* 24(4): e12200.

Mohammadzadeh, A., Ahour, T., and Saeidi, M. (2020). A sociocultural perspective on second language writing: The effect of symmetrical versus asymmetrical scaffolding on intermediate EFL learners' writing accuracy, fluency, and complexity and their attitudes. *Education Research International* (1): 5292356.

Moore-Gilbert, B. (2005). Western autobiography and colonial discourse: The case of Rousseau's 'Orientalism'. *Social Identities* 11(4): 301-314.

Morton, J., and Storch, N. (2019). Developing an authorial voice in PhD multilingual student writing: The reader's perspective. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 43: 15-23.

Motlhaka, H. (2020). Blackboard collaborated-based instruction in an academic writing class: sociocultural perspectives of learning. *Electronic Journal of e-Learning* 18(4): 336-345.

Motlhaka, H. A. (2018). *Crossing boundaries in L2 writing development: A study of first-year academic writing students*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. University of the Witwatersrand.

Muringani, B. (2021). *Citation, stance and engagement in postgraduate and published academic writing*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. University of South Africa.

Nappi, J. S. (2017). The importance of questioning in developing critical thinking skills. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* 84(1): 30.

Nelson, K., and Fivush, R. (2004). The emergence of autobiographical memory: A social cultural developmental theory. *Psychological Review* 111(2): 486.

Ngangbam, H. (2016). An analysis of syntactic errors committed by students of English language class in the written composition of Mutah University: A case study. *European Journal of English Language, Linguistics and Literature* 3(1): 1-13.

Nikolenko, O., Rebenko, M., and Doronina, N. (2021). Academic literacy: the analysis of first-year Ukrainian University students' errors in essay writing. *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala.* 13(1Sup1): 279-298.

Nondabula, N., and Nomlomo, V. (2023). Learners' experiences of creative writing in English First Additional Language: Pedagogical implications. *Journal for Language Teaching* 57(1): 1-21.

Ntombela, B., Ngubane, N. I., and Govender, S. (2020). Writing approaches and strategies used by teachers in selected South African English First Additional Language classrooms. *Reading and Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa* 11(1): 1-8.

Nuruzzaman, M., Islam, A. B. M., and Shuchi, I. J. (2018). An analysis of errors committed by Saudi Non-English major students in the English paragraph writing: A study of comparisons. *Advances In Language and Literary Studies* 9(1): 31-39.

Oshchepkova, T., and Alkhaldi, A. A. (2018). How to develop writing skills in a foreign language? *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching* 3(4): 174-185.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.

Pearsall, J. (1999). *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. 10th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peng, J. E. (2019). Authorial voice constructed in citation in literature reviews of doctoral theses: Variations across training contexts. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 37: 11-21.

Pennebaker, J. W., and Beall, S. K. (1986). Confronting a traumatic event: toward an understanding of inhibition and disease. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 95(3): 274.

Pfeiffer, V., and Sivasubramaniam, S. (2016). Exploration of self-expression to improve L2 writing skills. *Per Linguam: A Journal of Language Learning / Per Linguam: Tydskrif vir Taalaanleer* 32(2): 95-108.

Pineteh, E. A. (2014). The academic writing challenges of undergraduate students: A South African case study. *International Journal of Higher Education* 3(1): 12-22.

Postma, D. (2019). Decolonial pedagogical practices: Engaging with Rancière. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 33(5): 7-24.

Prior, P. (2006). Sociocultural theory of writing. In *Handbook of Writing Research,* edited by MacArthur, C. A., Graham, S., and Fitzgerald, J. New York and London: The Guilford Press.

Rabab'ah, G., and Al-Marshadi, A. (2013). Integrative vs. non-integrative citations among native and non-native English writers. *International Education Studies* 6(7): 78-87.

Rahimivand, M., and Kuhi, D. (2014). An exploration of discoursal construction of identity in academic writing. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 98: 1492-1501.

Rohmah, N., and Muslim, A. B. (2021). Writing anxiety in academic writing practice. In *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Conference on Applied Linguistics (CONAPLIN 2020).* Amsterdam: *Atlantis Press*: 348-354.

Roodt, Z. (2007). *"The self on the page": the therapeutic value of writing.* Bloemfontein: Department of Communication Science, University of the Free State.

Rubin, D. C., and Umanath, S. (2015). Event memory: A theory of memory for laboratory, autobiographical, and fictional events. *Psychological Review* 122(1): 1.

Ruini, C., and Mortara, C. C. (2022). Writing technique across psychotherapies from traditional expressive writing to new positive psychology interventions: A narrative review. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* 52: 1-12.

Ruma, M. B. (2016). Autobiography as objectification: re-presenting the subaltern in Gandhi's the story of my experiments with truth. *Asiatic* 10(1): 198-212.

Scott, D., and Morrison, M. (2006). Key ideas in Educational Research. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Scott, M. (2013). *A Chronicle of Learning: Voicing the Text*. Tilburg: University of Tilburg.

Scott, N. (2015). Academic writing and culture: A study of Austrian tertiary-level EFL learners. *AAA: Arbeiten Aus Anglistik Und Amerikanistik*, 40(1/2): 75-97.

Scott, S., and Palincsar, A.S., 2013. Sociocultural Theory. Michigan: The Gale Group: 1105905507-1575925767.

Seddik, M. (2023). Error Analysis in EFL Students' Writing Skill. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* 5(4): 163-172.

Seidensticker, E. 1999. Autobiography. *Biography* 22(1): 46-56.

Shabani, K. (2016). Applications of Vygotsky's sociocultural approach for teachers' professional development. *Cogent Education* 3(1): 1252177.

Shank, B. (2016). The voice in memoir. *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 28 (3): 381–389.

Simeon, J. (2016). Learner writing strategies of Seychellois ESL (English as a second language) secondary school students: A sociocultural theory perspective. *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction* 8: 1-11.

Simon, M. K. (2011). *Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success*. Dissertation Success, LLC.

Slavkov, N. (2015). Sociocultural Theory, the L2 Writing Process, and Google Drive: Strange Bedfellows? *TESL Canada Journal* 32(2): 80-94.

Smythe, S., and Toohey, K. (2009). Bringing Home and Community to School: Institutional Constraints and Pedagogical Possibilities. In *Culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms: new dilemmas for teachers,* edited by Miller, J., Kostogriz, A., and Gearon, M. New Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters: 271-290.

Snauwaert, M. (2021). Grief memoirs and the reordering of life: on resilience, loneliness, and writing. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 49(6): 866-875.

Songxaba, S. L., and Sincuba, L. (2019). The effect of social media on English Second Language essay writing with special reference to WhatsApp. *Reading and Writing-Journal of the Reading Association of South Africa* 10(1): 1-7.

Stock, I., and Eik-Nes, N. L. (2016). Voice features in academic texts: A review of empirical studies. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 24: 89-99.

Storch, N. (2019). Collaborative writing as peer feedback. Feedback in second language writing edited by Hyland, K., and Hyland, F. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 143-162.

Sun, Q., Kuzborska, I., and Soden, B. (2022). Learning to construct authorial voice through citations: A longitudinal case study of L2 postgraduate novice writers. *System* 106: 102765.

Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Setting*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tang, R., and John, S. (1999). The 'I' in identity: Exploring writer identity in student academic writing through the first-person pronoun. *English for Specific Purposes* 18: 23-39.

Thomas, G. (2011). A typology for the Case Study in Social Science following a review of definition, discourse, and structure. *Qualitative Inquiry* 17(6): 511-521.

Tight, M. (2022). Designing case studies. In *The SAGE handbook for qualitative research design*. 6th ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Ltd: 399-413.

Vygotsky, L. S., and Cole, M. (1978). *Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes.* Yale: Harvard University Press.

Wa-Mbaleka, S., and Rosario, A. H. (2022). Introduction to qualitative research in the Asian context. In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in the Asian Context*, edited by Wa-Mbaleka, S., and Rosario, A. H. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication: 3-15.

Warsah, I.; Morganna, R.; Uyun, M.; Afandi, M.; and Hamengkubuwono, H. (2021). The impact of collaborative learning on learners' critical thinking skills. *International Journal of Instruction* 14(2): 443-460.

Whitlock, G. (2004). Consuming passions: reconciliation in women's intellectual memoir. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 23(1): 13-28.

Williamson, T. (2019). Authoring selves in school: Adolescent writing identity. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice* 68(1): 250-270.

Wilmsen, E.N., Dubow, S., and Sharp, J. (1994). Introduction: ethnicity, identity and nationalism in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20(3): 347-353.

Xavier, K. K. (2018). Resilience of the human spirit as observed in the autobiographical work of Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom. Language in India* 18(9): 105-111.

Yee, L. Y., and Yunus, M. M. (2021). Collaborative tools in enhancing ESL writing during Covid 19: A Systematic Review. *International Conference on Business Studies and Education (ICBE)* 10(19): 10-19.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research design and methods*. 5th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications: 282.

Zembylas, M. (2018). Decolonial possibilities in South African higher education: Reconfiguring humanising pedagogies as/with decolonising pedagogies. *South African Journal of Education* 38(4): 1-11.

Zhao, C. G. (2019). Writer background and voice construction in L2 writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 37: 117-126.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS

Date: 15 July 2022

Title: Creating Space(s) for Voice in English Academic Writing through Memoir Writing: A Case Study of first-year students at an ODEL university in South Africa.

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is **Sydney Maluleke**, and I am doing research with **Mirriam Lephalala**, a professor, in the Department of English Studies towards a **Doctorate Degree**, at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Creating Space(s) for Voice in English Academic Writing through Memoir Writing: A Case Study of first-year students at an ODL university in South Africa.**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study aims to examine how memoir writing can help enhance first-year students' development of voice in English academic writing. It also intends to explore their perceptions of voice in academic writing and the extent to which such perceptions have influence on their writing.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You were chosen to participate in the study because you are registered for ENG1010 module. The project intends working with a group of fifty students from BEd English module ENG1010.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves writing memoirs. In the project, the students will attend sixteen writing workshops virtually using online platforms in which they will produce memoirs as a way of enhancing their development of academic writing voice. They will also participate in focus group discussions and individual interviews, which will be based on their reflection of how the writing workshops and their English module helped them develop voice in academic writing. The writing workshops will be conducted at times that are convenient for the participants.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawal from participating in the study will not result in any form of penalty.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participation in this study may help enhance your development of voice and ownership in academic writing. It will enable you to understand the different ways of constructing voice in academic writing. However, there is no financial benefit from your participation in the study.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

As part of writing your story, you may encounter triggering memories. In the study students write their own stories to develop their own voices – a prerequisite for academic writing.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no-one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research or connect you to the answer you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Review Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

The data collected in this study will be utilized for various purposes, such as a research report, journal articles, and presentations at academic conference proceedings.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years for future research or academic purposes in a password protected computer. Future use of the

stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Raw data files will be destroyed/deleted permanently from the hard drive of the computer through relevant software programmes after five years of completing the research report.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?
There is no payment or incentive offered for participation in this study.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?
This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Human Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Sydney Maluleke, on 012 429 6219 or malulsf@unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible for five years after the completion of the researcher's PhD.
Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Prof MMK Lephalala(lephammk@unisa.ac.za; 0124296396) or Prof DC Byrne (byrnedc@unisa.ac.za; 0124294940).

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof MMK Lephalala(lephammk@unisa.ac.za; 0124296396) or Prof DC Byrne (byrnedc@unisa.ac.za; 0124294940). Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson of the College Ethics Review Committee, Prof Khatija Khan (khankb@unisa.ac.za; 0124296549).
Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.
Thank you.

Kind Regards,
Sydney Maluleke

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname…………………………………… (please print)

Participant Signature…………………………………………..Date…………………

Researcher's Name & Surname…**Sydney Maluleke**…………………(please print)

Researcher's signature………………………………………..Date…15 July 2022……

APPENDIX C

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

14 December 2021

Dear Mr. Sydney Fetsie Maluleke

| Decision: |
| Ethics Approval from 14 December 2021 to 14 December 2026 |

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # :
48890464_CREC_CHS_2021

Researcher(s): Name: Mr. Sydney Fetsie Maluleke
          Contact details: 48890464@mylife.unisa.ac.za
          Name: Prof MMK Lephalala
          Contact details: lephammk@unisa.ac.za
          Name: Prof DC Byrne
          Contact details: Byrnedc@unisa.ac.za

Title: Creating Space(s) for Voice in English Academic Writing through Memoir Writing: A Case Study of First-Year Students at an ODEL university in South Africa**.**

Purpose: PhD

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for five years.

The *medium risk application was reviewed by* College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

Open Rubric

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date **(14 December 2026)**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **48890464_CREC_CHS_2021** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature:PP

Prof. KB Khan
CHS Research Ethics Committee Chairperson
Email: khankb@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature: PP

Prof K. Masemola
Exécutive Dean: CHS
E-mail: masemk@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 2298

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The Memoir Writing Project

Interviewer: Why did you decide to join the Memoir Writing Project? What attracted you to join this project?

Interviewer: Before joining the Memoir Writing Project, did you have any prior experience of writing or reading memoirs? Please elaborate.

Interviewer: What were your highlights of the Memoir Writing Project?

Interviewer: Did you write a memoir as part of the activities in the project? If yes, what was your memoir about?

Interviewer: As the project progressed. Did it help you to gain an understanding of voice in writing? If yes, elaborate. If no, elaborate.

Interviewer: Describe or explain how you approached or went about writing your memoir. What memories did the process of writing your memoir awaken in you? Were some of these experiences pleasant, unpleasant or traumatic?

Interviewer: Did you manage to express your emotions and memories in your memoir? Please elaborate.

Interviewer: What is the title of your memoir and why did you choose to write about this specific event in your memoir?

Interviewer: While participating in the project, did you notice any changes in your academic writing? Please elaborate.

Interviewer: How would you describe your personal voice in writing your memoir? Please elaborate.

Interviewer: Now that you have attended the project, do you now feel confident to express your voice in academic writing?

Interviewer: Do you think there is a link between the skills you developed in the memoir writing and those of academic writing? Can memoir writing benefit academic writing?

Writing in the ENG1010 Module

Interviewer: Does ENG1010 teach academic writing and does such teaching focus on the use of voice? Please elaborate.

Interviewer: But when you explored the Units, is there anywhere in the study guide where they focus on academic writing?

Interviewer: How many assignments did you write for ENG1010?

Interviewer: What type of questions are asked in these assignments? Are the question open to using your voice in writing?

Interviewer: What type of questions are asked in these assignments? Are the questions open to using your voice in writing?

Interviewer: How did the English ENG1010 define the academic writing voice?