

**CASE STUDIES OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS
WHO EXCEL AT WRITING IN ENGLISH**

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This study, which was carried out in Mdantsane township in the Eastern Cape, attempts to explain why some learners from the former Department of Education and Training, and whose mother-tongue is Xhosa, are more proficient English Second Language (ESL) writers than others.

As one who grew up as an ESL learner, and has taught as an ESL teacher in this area, my interest in this field of study has been triggered by the concern of one who has experienced educational disadvantage. My understanding of what it means to be an ESL writer, given the status that English enjoys in South Africa presently, has been the motivating force behind this study.

The study focuses on competent ESL writers. It is hoped that other researchers, teacher educators and teachers will learn something from the practices and strategies used by the learners in this study. In its investigation this study employs case studies. For purposes of triangulation, multiple sources of data collection have been used. The major areas of focus are on the learners and their ESL writing practices. Collection of data includes formal interviews with both ESL learners and their teachers, informal interviews with the learners' Xhosa teachers, observation as well as text analysis.

The findings of the study suggest, among other things, that more often than not, it is learners who are motivated extroverts, ambitious go-getters and uninhibited survivors who become excellent ESL writers.

Like any study, this has certain limitations. As a result the interpretation of data has been expressed in tentative terms. This does not mean that there is nothing to be gained from a study of this nature. Instead, the aim is to challenge more researchers to take up this issue, so that generalisability across case studies can be achieved.

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GLOSSARY

L1 - First Language

L2 - Second Language

ESL - English Second Language

I - Interviewer

T6/T7 etc. - Teacher teaching standard 6, 7, etc.

L6/L7 etc. - Learner doing standard 6, 7, etc.

IL - Interlanguage

DET - Department of Education and Training

MOI - Medium of Instruction

BICS - Basic Intercommunication Skills

CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

11. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Educational disadvantage in the Mdantsane township

This study has been motivated by an acute awareness, on my part, of the educationally disadvantaged context in which I teach English to second language learners, in the Mdantsane township.

Here, the chances for many learners to interact with native speakers of English, the nearest being about 20km away in East London, are next to impossible. Schools do not have sufficient textbooks or prescribed texts for all learners; libraries if they exist at all, are ill-equipped, and some of the teachers are not suitably qualified to teach the subjects and/or the classes they teach.

Not a single school in this township can boast of a language laboratory, while only a few schools have equipment like overhead projectors, computers or even libraries, which would be helpful in the teaching and learning of a second language.

In the home context, most of the learners are further disadvantaged through lack of exposure to media such as newspapers, books and television which would facilitate acquisition of literacy in English. This context is likely to affect learners both in terms of educational achievement and their future careers.

1.2 Statistical evidence of illiteracy in English among the black population

At high school level, part of empowering learners for the future, includes having to prepare them for education at tertiary level. Reid (1993:29), however, testifies to the fact that as writing placement examinations have become common for university admission, students who speak English as a second language have been found to be unprepared for those proficiency examinations, and for written work required in academic classes.

This could be one of the reasons why many institutions still see a need to incorporate 'English for academic purposes' courses for first year ESL students.

A statistical survey of literacy in English in South Africa discloses that in 1995, 80% of Africans were unable to read at Standard 5 level (Bot 1996:15). Of great relevance to the concerns of this study, is the fact that according to the literature (Reid 1993:15), reading and writing are seen as integrally linked, both as skills as well as 'makers of knowledge'.

1.3. The oral tradition - possible cause of the problem?

Mosala (in Cazden 1994:173) seems to suggest that the root of the problem for Black children lies with the long established oral culture in the Black community. She suggests:

'We are of the oral tradition and I believe that thousands of kids that fail the 12th grade fail not because they haven't put in sufficient work to enable them to pass; they fail because writing is not in their culture, as they are not able to write as lucidly as they want.'

1.4. Who should bear the blame?

What Mosala says above concerning the possible effects of the oral tradition could have something to do with some learners' inability to write well. Before we can conclude this, I feel it is necessary that the reader be given a full picture of what happens during writing exercises in some ESL classes, basing the discussion on my personal experience as an ESL teacher.

To try and improve learners' writing ability, teachers sometimes give learners writing tasks like essays to write at home. When this happens, the tendency for some learners is to get somebody else to write the essays for them. In essence, what this means, is that such learners do not get the opportunity to practise writing on their own.

In trying to circumvent the problem, some teachers insist on the writing exercises being completed in class, which is most probably why, according to Harran (1993:45), in some ESL contexts, more writing tasks were completed at school than at home, but this also has its own disadvantages.

The large classes and lack of sufficient furniture in my context result in cramped seating arrangements, which make it possible for some learners to copy from those nearby. This means that what some learners write is not of their own making.

A further disadvantage is that of time constraints, as learners have to have finished writing by the time the period comes to an end. In her study, Harran (1993:9) also quotes 'time' as one among a number of 'constraints' under which ESL writers compose.

There is also a tendency for some learners in my context to fail to hand in their books at the end of the period, with the excuse of having left them 'at home'. At the end of the day, the teacher will leave with only a few books, and in most cases it is those of the learners who are already proficient writers.

What this results in, is that when examination time arrives at the end of the year, some learners, the majority of these being the less proficient writers, get to attempt essay-writing for the second time in that year, the first time having been during the mid-year examinations. Also, as exam papers are not usually made available to learners except in special circumstances, this means they never get any teacher-feedback on their written exercises, and therefore no chance to write corrections and to improve on former mistakes and errors.

The more proficient writers, on the other hand, are usually more determined to work harder than their less competent counterparts. They show more dedication and commitment to their work, and seem to derive more pleasure from ESL writing classes.

It is situations of the kinds described above which, in my opinion, contribute towards poor writers becoming even poorer, while the good ones get even better. These could be the reasons why there

are so few excellent ESL writers in schools like mine.

1.5. The status of English in black schools and in South Africa as a whole

If one looks at the surface, things look promising for students who are speakers of African languages, because the policy of education currently in force in schools, promotes a bi- or multilingual medium of instruction (MOI), thereby reducing the emphasis on English. Not only that, but the present language policy permits learners to use their home language as MOI.

What this implies, is that South African students do not need to take English as a subject, nor do they need it to pass matric. In practice, however, English is becoming increasingly important, and in the world of work they will need to know English.

Within the school context, my concern stems from my perception of the status that English enjoys presently, as a MOI through which four out of seven subjects are taught, and examinations also written.

1.6. Views about English among black South Africans

English is fast becoming a de facto lingua-franca in the whole of South Africa. To black South Africans, and these include the educated ones, it is seen as a language of prestige, advantage, opportunity and of access to better things like wider communication, upward mobility and power.

I say so because in my observation, the educated are the very people who are sending their children to the former Model-C schools. They could be sending their children to these schools because they offer a better education, but there is no denying the fact that 'good English' is one of the reasons informing their choice. So intent are some educated black South Africans on their children learning English, that they use mostly English when conversing with the children even in the home context.

Black South Africans view the ability to write in English in this light, because in this country, it is proficiency in English which determines students' educational success, thereby affecting their opportunities later in life.

My experience of teaching in an educationally disadvantaged context leads me to believe that many learners will have difficulty in passing matric and gaining further education, because they do not have competence in written English. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to make literacy in English the focus of this study.

1.7. The concept of literacy

I have looked at various definitions of the concept of literacy; these differ in terms of the wording used, but they all seem to point to the concept as an elusive, relative and 'many-meaninged' concept, which has meant different things in different historical periods (Williams and Snipper 1990, Goldman 1987).

Rather than say what the concept means, Robinson (in Bloome and Green 1992:51) describes what it is not. According to him it will no longer do to consider literacy as:

'some abstract and absolute quality attainable through tutelage and the accumulation of knowledge and experience'

neither of reading as:

'a solitary act in which a mainly passive reader responds to cues in a text to find meaning';

nor of writing as:

'a mechanical manipulation of grammatical codes and formal structures leading to the production of perfect or perfectible texts'.

What I like about this definition, or rather non-definition, is that it seeks to establish literacy as both external and internal to the learner, it hints at the active participation on the part of the learners themselves, while not exactly dismissing the possible role of the significant others, and highlights the concept of writing as both a process and a product, just as the literature suggests.

In trying to define the concept of literacy, Scribner (in Goldman 1987:2) draws upon three metaphors, of literacy as 'adaptation', 'power' and a 'state of grace'.

While the concept of literacy as adaptation encapsulates the survival value of literacy, as power it is seen as a tool for socio-political and economic advancement. The third view of literacy as a state of grace captures the elitist status accruing automatically to one possessing reading and writing skills. As Goldman (1987:2) suggests, each metaphor captures a unique perspective on literacy, and when all are taken together, they reflect the mosaic of the concept.

The new literacy studies, on the other hand, see literacy as 'social practices' rather than technical skills to be learnt in formal education. According to them, language and literacy are to be studied as they occur in social life, taking account of the context and their different meanings for different cultural groups. This means taking account of the variation in meanings and uses that students bring from their home background to the formal learning (Street 1997:47).

Of the different definitions of literacy that I have come across, I have found Scribner's metaphors the most appropriate for the purposes of this study, as these articulate my own concerns about the perceived value of literacy in English among members of the Black community. For the purposes of this study, the concept of literacy will be used to refer particularly to competence in writing in English as a second language within the school context.

1.8. Why writing?

Of the four skills used in learning a language, that is: listening, talking, reading and writing, I have chosen to focus on writing. As has already been pointed out, this is the skill which largely determines

learners' life chances, because examinations are mainly in written form (De Beer 1961:19).

According to Savini (1992:50), one of the most difficult aspects of second language learning is writing. For ESL learners this means the ability to put thoughts down on paper, using not only grammatically correct and contextually appropriate sentence construction, but also an appropriate choice of words, idioms and expressions. These learners are confronted with the task of manipulating the language into discourse patterns recognizable and acceptable to literate, native speakers of the language.

This particular study was motivated by the good deal of attention which past research into ESL writing practices in South Africa, has given to the 'difficulties' and 'problems' experienced by ESL students with their writing tasks.

The intention of this study, is to adopt a positive outlook, and to try to look at what actually works for ESL writers.

1.9. The goal of the research

Despite the educationally disadvantaged context I have described above, there are some learners who seem to defy the prevailing circumstances, as is evident in their excellence in writing in English as a second language. It is the goal of this research, to find out why it is that some ESL learners are more proficient in writing than others, without losing sight of contextual factors which may impact on their excellence in ESL writing.

1.10. The structure of the thesis

The content of this thesis is arranged as follows:

Chapter 1 : establishes the context of the whole research project;

Chapter 2 : discusses the theoretical background to the research as given in the literature review;

Chapter 3 : focuses on the methodology of the thesis;

Chapter 4 : analyses the data; and

Chapter 5 : states the limitations of the study, tentatively discusses the interpretations, 'concludes' in view of these, discusses the educational implications, and suggests possible areas for future research.

12. THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:82), the literature review helps the researcher to locate the proposed research within a broader conceptual and theoretical framework. It makes it possible to broaden and refine existing knowledge; to highlight gaps and under-researched areas; to clarify theoretical, methodological and analytical issues; and to identify current debates, controversies and common themes. After identifying the common themes, the researcher can then relate these back to the research questions.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:92) differentiate between three kinds of reviews: substantive, theoretical and methodological reviews.

2.1.1. Substantive reviews

These focus on substantive concerns and issues relevant to the general theme, focus or topic of the research (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995:92). For this particular study, 'good ESL writers' is the substantive concern. Theories on how learners become good ESL writers will have to be explored.

2.1.2. Theoretical reviews

These arise from substantive reviews. These kinds of reviews help to identify the many different theoretical viewpoints, how these have influenced thinking and what the key debates surrounding the substantive concern are (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995:93). The various theories on what facilitates the ability to write well in ESL will be explored. The idea is to determine whether these theories help to explain the findings of this particular study.

2.1.3. Methodological reviews

Researchers have to locate their chosen approach to research in the debates about research methodology; it then becomes essential for them to use the literature review to develop a rationale and argument for their own particular choice of methods. Such a literature review helps to identify strengths, weaknesses and practical issues surrounding the chosen techniques (Hitchcock and Hughes 1982:92).

A methodological review will be provided in the methodology chapter, that is in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

2.2. Identifying the ‘gap’ in research on ESL writing

In South Africa a lot of research has been done on writing in English as a second language. The ‘gap’ as far as I can see, is that the main areas of focus have been on ways of teaching writing, especially the ‘process approach’ to writing (Meyer 1989; Cornell 1989; Angelil-Carter and Thesen 1990; Makuleke 1990; Pratt 1990; Rodseth 1992; Lombard 1993; Reid 1993; Claude 1994; Harran 1994; McKellar 1995; Geysler 1996); bridging courses which prepare particularly students from the former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools for academic literacy at the tertiary level of education (Angelim-Carter and Thesen 1990; Angelil-Carter 1993; Meyer 1993; Paxton 1994; Angelil-Carter 1994; Boughey 1994; Kapp 1994; Moore 1994; Morphet 1994; Swart 1995; and Olivier-Shaw 1996); as well as on how teachers evaluate ESL writing (Gannon 1985; Paxton 1994).

A large portion of the research that has been conducted so far, has been informed by the ‘deficit model’, that is looking at ‘problems’ (De Beer 1961; Dison 1989; Hubbard 1989; Pienaar 1989; Barkhuizen 1991; Makuleke 1991; Roos 1991 and Johnston 1993), rather than what some learners can actually do.

So far, little research, if any at all, has focused on ‘good’ ESL writers within the high school context, with both the good language learners and their teachers being the focus of the investigation. It is the

aim of this study therefore, to explore what some students from former DET schools are capable of in the area of ESL writing.

2.3. Acquisition of good writing skills in a second language

Good writing ability in English as a second language, which appears to be a product of competence in English as well as well-developed writing skills, forms the focus of this study.

In view of this, I shall first consider the concept of 'good language-learning' followed by that of the 'good writer', and all that both of these entail.

Rodby (1992:19) is of the opinion that it is highly unlikely that anyone could write well in a second language without having acquired the language first. She asserts that to learn to write is to acquire the language. It is for this reason that I have given priority to a discussion of factors which play a part in L2 acquisition.

The ability to write well in English seems to result from a number of factors which, when put together produce the good language learner and writer already mentioned above. Some of these are the learners' motivation and attitudes to the language, their personalities, the kind of family and home background they come from, other contextual factors like input and exposure to conditions which favour good writing ability, certain practices on the part of the learners, as well as the possible transfer of skills from the L1 to the L2.

2.4. Factors which influence second language acquisition

There appear to be different beliefs pertaining to whether good writing in the first language is linked to good writing in a second language. One theory, called the separate underlying proficiency (SUP) theory, maintains that under certain conditions, the content and skills learned in the first language cannot be transferred to a second one. The common underlying proficiency (CUP) theory, on the contrary, posits the idea that the first language does facilitate the acquisition of the second language

(Cummins and Swain 1986:81).

The latter viewpoint (CUP) seems to enjoy credence over the first one (SUP), as research conducted into second language acquisition seems to support the latter viewpoint. Kroll (1990:109), suggests that learners lacking writing strategies in the first language, are bound to lack the same strategies in the second language.

As the learners in this study were found good at writing in their L1 which is Xhosa, the question is whether their ability to write well in English stems from this or vice versa?

2.4.1. The role of skills acquired in the home language

Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992) support the idea that writing behaviours and strategies acquired in the first language generally operate in second language writing. It is also Ellis' (1994:347) belief, that L2 learners make strategic use of their L1 in the process of learning the L2, and also in the process of understanding and producing messages in the L2, of which writing is an example.

2.4.2. The role of 'input'

Apart from the behaviours and strategies that the good learner is said to use as mentioned above, Cook (1985) suggests that humans acquire language only in one way, by receiving 'comprehensible input' and understanding messages. According to this, the condition for acquisition is that the learner should hear or read meaningful speech, and endeavour to understand it.

Of the four kinds of input identified by Spolsky (1989:228), i.e. 'simplified', 'negative', 'sufficient' and input that is 'comprehensible', the latter is said to be the only one without which language can be acquired (Horning 1987:4; Spolsky 1989:228).

The relevance that the input discussion has for this study, is that it addresses the role played by both the contextual factors like input from the significant others in the lives of the learners, the ESL writing

environment, as well as the active role that proficient ESL writers play in acquiring good writing skills.

The important question here is whether the input hypothesis (Krashen 1985) could be used to explain how the ESL learners in this study come to produce such good texts, or whether this ability is purely a matter of other learner and/or social variables.

2.4.3. Variability in second language acquisition- socio-cultural factors

According to Ellis (1994:48), 'no two learners learn an L2 in exactly the same way'. Variability in language-learner language is said to be the result not only of contextual factors, but of individual differences, in the way the learners learn an L2, and the way they use their L2 knowledge.

Gardner and MacIntyre (1992:211) and Larsen-Freeman (1991:333) use the socio-educational model of second language acquisition to explain how a learner can contribute to the learning of a L2. They outline four major parts of the model as the 'socio-cultural milieu', 'individual differences', 'language acquisition contexts' and 'language learning outcomes'.

According to this model, a high onus is placed on 'social adjustment' factors of the learner, particularly attitudes and motivation (Larsen-Freeman 1991:334). According to this viewpoint, languages are acquired in order to facilitate communication with some cultural community. Adjustments which are emotional in nature are involved in the process, and these are socially based.

2.4.4. The affective domain

Naiman (1987:4) suggests that personal factors like affective variables do have a bearing on what and how ESL learners learn. The affective domain is said by Brown (1980:77) to include several variables that can either enhance or hinder second language acquisition and possibly good writing ability in the L2, depending on whether they are positive or negative, the degree to which they are present, and on the combination in which they are found.

Krashen, according to Horning (1987:5) believes that for acquisition to take place, the 'affective filter' which taps all the learner's feelings and attitudes about the language under study, has to be 'down' or 'not operating'. What this means, is that the learners have to lower their anxiety levels in order to be receptive to the target language, before acquisition can take place.

According to Brown (1980:78), attitudes, motivation and level of anxiety are central to the affective domain, and these are strongly influenced by certain personality variables which are discussed below. This study seeks to establish the extent to which affective variables impact on learners' writing proficiency.

2.4.4.1. **Attitudes**

Language learners are said to manifest different attitudes towards the target language and/or its speakers, the target language culture, the social value of learning the L2, particular uses of the target language, themselves as members of their own culture, and towards the classroom environment and the teacher (Brown 1980:78; Ellis 1994:198; Richard-Amato 1996:78).

According to Baker (1992:10), in the life of a language, the status, value and importance thereof is most often and most easily, though imperfectly, measured by attitudes to that language. The attitudes some black South Africans adopt towards the English language are discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Whether a possible connection exists between the positive attitudes the ESL writers in this study have towards English, and the proficiency with which they write, or not, is one of the areas that this study seeks to uncover.

2.4.4.2. **Motivation**

Gardner and MacIntyre (1992:213) claim that both formal and informal language acquisition contexts have both 'linguistic' and 'non-linguistic outcomes'. According to this reckoning, successful, positive

experiences result in improved linguistic outcomes.

According to Gardner and Lambert's (1972:3) socio-psychological theory of second language learning, the successful learner of a second language must be prepared to adopt various aspects of behaviour characterising members of the target linguistic-cultural group.

Brown (1980:81) and Gardner and Lambert (1972:2) differentiate between two kinds of motivation for the learning of a second language: 'integrative' and 'instrumental' motivation. The former type is defined as a desire to integrate and identify with the target language group, while the latter is a desire to use the language to obtain practical goals such as getting a job.

Research (Gardner and Lambert 1972:5; Richard-Amato 1996:81) indicates that of the two kinds of motivation, the integrative approach is seen to be generally stronger. In a later study, Gardner, according to Ellis acknowledges that instrumental motivation can also result in successful learning (1994:511).

Also, research into the influence of the home on integrative motivation, suggests that parents with positive attitudes towards the other language community more actively encourage their children to learn that language than parents with less favourable attitudes. The former type of family is known to engage its children in conversing, reading books, and writing in the target language (Huss 1995:772).

2.4.4.3. **Self-esteem**

This is a feeling of self-worth that an individual cherishes. Shavelson et. al., according to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:184), differentiate between three levels of self-esteem. The one occupying the highest position in the hierarchy is the 'global' or overall assessment that learners undertake; the one in the middle is 'specific' and pertains to how one sees oneself in various contexts like education; while the lowest one is 'evaluation' one gives oneself on specific tasks. In second language learning contexts, student performance was found to correlate significantly with all three levels, with the task self-esteem obtaining the highest correlation.

What the foregoing argument suggests, is that excellent writing ability is possibly the result of a positive self-esteem. In other words, it is the learners with a positive self-esteem who are likely to excel in ESL writing, due to their 'I can' attitude.

2.4.4.4. Personality

Larsen-Freeman (1991:331) quotes self-esteem, extroversion, risk-taking, reaction to anxiety, empathy, sensitivity to rejection and tolerance of ambiguity as some of the various personality traits thought to facilitate or inhibit second language acquisition.

Brown (1980:86) is of the opinion that willingness to take risks and a relative lack of inhibition are qualities which can lead to proficiency in the target language. In so far as empathy makes ego boundaries permeable by lowering the 'affective filter', and extroversion and assertiveness encourage more output and hence more input, these qualities are seen as good for language learning.

The good ESL writers, according to this, should be those learners who are not only extroverts and risk-takers, but also those who are assertive, have positive self-esteem, as well as lowered affective filters towards the English language.

2.4.5. Aptitude

Richards (1992:215) maintains that achievement in a second language is facilitated by an aptitude for languages, that aptitude is not a unitary dimension, but that there are a number of independent variables that go to make up language aptitude. It is his belief that learners who developed faster in their first language, who had superior vocabularies as children, and who came from better educated homes, tended to score higher on indices of language aptitude than learners lower on these first-language advantages.

According to Richards, there is an aptitude for languages which would be expected to have its effect in any type of language learning context, and which is traceable to early environmental and possibly

genetic factors (1992:216). The concept of aptitude is also said to relate only to learning and not to acquisition (Larsen-Freeman 1991:330), presumably because learning is an intellectual process while acquisition is 'natural'.

Contrary to these viewpoints, Gardner and Lambert (1972:2) regard the issue of language aptitude as a 'myth' for two reasons. According to them, one of the reasons is that research in which measures of aptitude were correlated with grades received in language courses, the relationship was sometimes very high, while in others it was very low.

Gardner and Lambert base their argument on research carried out in France (1972:2). According to their findings, if there is a strongly compelling need for people to learn a second language, they do it irrespective of their aptitude. This viewpoint implies the value of instrumental or extrinsic motivation.

Though difficult to determine, it would be interesting to discover whether it is general aptitude, an aptitude for languages, an aptitude specifically for the English language, general intelligence, or whether it is a combination of some or all of these which makes the learners in this study excel in ESL writing.

2.4.6. Intelligence

Ellis (1985) defines intelligence as the general factor or 'g' factor which underlies people's ability to master and use a whole range of academic skills. It is a general academic or reasoning skill. Care should be taken not to mistake this capacity to learn for the contents of the mind.

When applied to language learning, the concept of intelligence can be explained by looking at two kinds of linguistic abilities: the 'cognitive academic language proficiency' or CALP, which is strongly associated with overall cognitive and academic skills; and the 'basic interpersonal communication skills' or BICS, which is necessary for basic oral fluency.

This distinction between BICS and CALP suggests a connection between 'intelligence' and CALP, whereas BICS is likely to be dependent on other variables. Writing of the type required in school probably has more in common with CALP than BICS. Ellis (1985) proposes that intelligence influences the acquisition of some skills associated with L2 acquisition, and is therefore a powerful predictor of success in L2 classes.

Carroll, according to Gardner and MacIntyre (1992:213), sees intelligence as influencing how well and how quickly a learner will learn linguistic skills, of which writing is an example.

As the learners in this study are successful ESL writers, the implications here are that this might possibly be because they are also intelligent children.

2.4.7. Gender

Women are said to be more sensitive to new forms and are more likely to incorporate them into their speech than their male counterparts. However, when females become aware of the new forms, they are more inclined to reject them than males. The implications this has for L2 acquisition, is that women might be better at L2 learning than men. It is because women are more likely to be open to new linguistic forms in the L2 input, and also to rid themselves of interlanguage forms that deviate from target-language forms than males, that the former are better L2 learners (Ellis 1994:202).

As this study comprises of only five cases, who happen to be two males and three females, it is rather difficult to infer anything from the 'sex' factor.

2.4.8. Age

There is a lot of controversy regarding the effects of age in second language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman 1991:329 and Ellis 1994:484), i.e. whether the age at which someone is first exposed to English, naturalistically or in class (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:154), affects their writing ability in the language in any way.

The source of the controversy hinges on whether it is children or adults who make the better ESL writers. The proficient writers in this study are all adolescents who, incidentally, according to the foregoing debate, are said to have a linguistic advantage. The problem with applying the age factor to this research, is that although they are adolescents, the learners in this study began learning English at an early stage.

2.4.9. Learner strategies

Naiman (1978:3) defines strategies as 'general, more or less deliberate approaches' and techniques as 'observable forms of language-learning behaviour'. According to Oxford (1990:547), strategies are particular behaviours that learners employ, usually intentionally, to enhance understanding, storage, retrieval and ultimate use of information.

Richards (1994:63) refers to strategies as specific actions or techniques that individual learners use to enhance success with the learning tasks. According to her, the following are some of the features of language learning strategies: problem-oriented; flexible; often conscious though not always observable; and more importantly for the ESL teacher, can be taught. Roen (1998:199) suggests that there is plenty of scholarship to indicate that language learners use quite a variety of strategies.

Stern (in Naiman 1978:3) lists ten strategies used by good L2 learners, and which, in my opinion, should be helpful as they write as well. These strategies are: active, empathic, formal, experimental, semantic, practice, planning, communication, monitoring and internalisation. To this list, Richards adds memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social strategies (1994:63).

For Oxford (1990:547), in the L2 area, examples of strategies that learners use include note-taking, seeking conversation partners, developing empathy with the target culture, previewing, skimming, and guessing to understand what is read or heard. Successful learners are said to think in the L2, and to use affective or emotional strategies to cope with the strains of language learning.

Good language learners are also said to guess willingly and accurately, want to communicate, to be uninhibited about mistakes, focus on both structure and meaning, take advantage of all practice opportunities and monitor their work and that of others (Naiman 1978:46).

To the strategies already mentioned, Zamel (1982:201) adds 'inner dialogue' which she defines as 'conversation with an invisible person', 'jotting down', 'translation', 'outlining' and 'sketchy notes'.

As proficient writers are said to combine a variety of strategies when writing, the logical thing to do would be to look at the effect such strategies have on the writing process as well as the 'written product', through an analysis of the concept of 'good writing'.

2.5. Research in L2 writing and 'good writers'

Some linguists seem to agree on the point that good writing does not necessarily mean 'perfect' or 'flawless' texts. Taylor (1981:9) argues that 'good writing' should not be equated with writing that is 'error-free' or 'correct'.

ESL writing programmes, on the other hand, are said to concentrate primarily on form and correctness, what Roen (in Johnson and Roen 1987:200), calls 'the table-manners' of writing. According to linguists, this has a demotivating effect on ESL writers.

Gungle and Taylor (in Johnson and Roen 1989:235) argue that grammatically perfect sentences have little power if they do not clearly and forcefully express intelligent ideas. This confirms the idea that intelligence does play a part in writing. It is their opinion that there is:

'no reason to expect the study of grammar or mechanics to have any substantial effect on the writing process or on writing ability as reflected in the quality of the written products'.

According to Taylor, 'if we can pick out in red all the mistakes we can find within a piece of writing, we shall be doing the writer harm by showing interest solely in the product and not in the process of

writing' (1981:8). To emphasise the point Zamel (1982:207), warns against the danger of 'cutting off' learners' impulse to 'say something'.

Although, according to Towell and Hawkins, most L2 learners stop short of native-like success in a number of areas in the L2 grammar, this does not necessarily mean they cannot write well (1994:14).

Santos (1988:70) names three criteria according to which good writing can be assessed. These are 'comprehensibility', which is the degree to which readers understand what is written; 'irritation', which appeals to the subjective reactions of the reader, that is whether the reader derives pleasure from reading the text or not; and lastly 'acceptability', which is the degree to which the reader regards the writing as approximating the target language.

Krashen (1985) sees 'writing competence' as the 'abstract knowledge' of the 'code' that the proficient writer has about writing. According to this viewpoint, competence is the 'tacit knowledge of conventions or formal features of reader-based prose' which include a set of images of 'what a text can look like'.

'Good' writing is said to presume that writers have something to express, which the readers will be able to understand. It is writing which has 'content' and 'substance' (Oster 1984:viii). Good writers, on the other hand, are said to be those who know socio-linguistically related conventions, i.e. those related to audience (e.g. interest group) or those to purpose and the choice of appropriate discourse forms like amusement, argument, information, persuasion, ridicule or titillation (Cooper and Odell 1977:3).

Effective writers know how to modify the message according to those whom they wish to influence or affect and, according to Hawisher and Soter (1990:237), consequent linguistic choices are related not only to that audience, but also to the form selected (e.g. different forms of persuasion).

For Cox (in Brindley 1993:171), the good writer is one who understands the nature and functions of the written language; has personal creativity, can write in different forms for different purposes and

audiences; writes coherently about a range of topics, issues, ideas etc.

Jenkins (1986:18) maintains that 'effective' writers are able to convince the reader that their ideas are 'reasonable', 'valid' or 'true'. Such writers are said to keep their reader in mind when writing, to write good paragraphs which link with one another by using paragraph 'bridges', to organize by time, among other skills.

Other important features of good writing are those proposed by Rosen (in Brindley 1993:199). These are: economy of words, good dialogue, clear individual wit, etc. To this list could be added: originality; emotion or feeling; imagination; and many more (Kress 1982:14).

What Zamel says concerning the production of perfect essays, about these not being achieved in 'one sitting', suggests that acquisition of this skill takes time, effort and commitment on the part of the learner.

2.5.1. The 'process' and 'product' approaches to writing

The process approach to writing includes the task environment (i.e. the conditions under which the writing is done); the writer's long term memory including content knowledge; knowledge of genre and that of audience; and the writing process (Benson and Heidish in Belcher and Braine 1995:317). The product approach looks at the forms of writing or the finished product (Dudley-Evans in Belcher and Braine 1995).

According to the process model of writing (Harran 1993:14), the stages that any writing process 'should encompass' include the 'pre-writing'; 'free-writing'; 'feedback'; 'planned writing outline'; 'major revision'; 'minor editing or polishing' and 'assessment' stages, respectively.

In the product approach, on the other hand, emphasis is mainly on 'neat' and 'error-free' texts (Leki 1991:10). According to Leki, error-free writing that is without substance is not as good as substantive

writing, even if this has errors.

Much of the literature on ESL composition has tended to support one of the two major approaches to writing: free and controlled composition in which 'quantity' and 'correctness' of form respectively, are seen as measures of success (Zamel 1982 and McKay 1984). According to McKay, a balance between these two aspects of writing has to be maintained (1984).

2.5.2. Practices of skilled writers

Zamel (1982:195) maintains that past research on composition has been concerned with the written product, with teacher-markers being obsessed with essay length and freedom from spelling errors, thereby overlooking syntactic maturity and the mechanics in the learners' writing. The whole notion of how writers write, where the ideas come from, how they are formulated and developed and what the various stages of composing entail, was ignored. Rather than focus on real communication, ESL teaching practice as a whole was said to focus on usage (Grove 1981:75).

According to Reid (1993:15), there are research findings which suggest that correlations exist between effective readers and effective writers. Oster (1984:ix) also suggests that good reading is an important step towards good writing.

The proposition, which is an assumption of the product and genre approaches to writing as well, is that reading and writing are 'integrally linked' as skills, and that the two have common cognitive processes. The genre approach proposes that writing is very different from talk and needs to be taught as pupils 'cannot' simply pick up the 'specialist linguistic structures' involved. According to this approach, written genres tend to be more 'condensed and abstract' (Maybin 1994:192).

Student writers are said to read, to read about writing, to read the writing of others and more importantly, they are said to read and reread their own writing as they write. This reciprocal relationship between writing and reading suggests that good readers are often good writers, and vice versa.

According to Reid (1993:64), better writers read more than poorer writers, while better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers. ESL writing proficiency is said to occur only through comprehensible input provided by 'extensive' (i.e. reading for leisure and pleasure outside the classroom), and 'self-motivated' reading. Krashen proposes the concept of 'input +1' to describe a situation whereby second language acquisition is facilitated by 'immersing' or 'exposing' the L2 learner to the target language in a 'naturalistic setting' (1985). Krashen, according to Rodby (1992:18), is said to support the idea that writers achieve competence through the process of reading for pleasure, rather than through writing itself.

When it comes to the question of choosing one topic among a number of given topics, Hamp-Lyons (1991:52) believes that writers create a 'fit' between their world and the world of the essay topic. According to her, this is because each writer is a complex of experience, knowledge, ideas, emotions and opinions; and these are what the writer brings to the essay test. Hartog, according to Hamp-Lyons, suggests that the 'familiarity' or 'unfamiliarity' of a topic affects writers' performance.

According to Murray and Johanson (1990:27), studies into the writing process have shown that good writers spend more time planning, pause more during writing to read and reread what they have written, tend to revise more, use a 'recursive' and 'non-linear' approach (Zamel 1982; Roen in Johnson and Roen 1989; Grabe 1990; and Silva 1993) when writing. According to Smith (in Harran 1993:17), good writers were said to produce 'multiple drafts' and to revise drafts constantly as they go through cycles of revision.

Skilled writers are more concerned with the reader or audience than their less skilled counterparts. On the issue of 'audience', Urzua (1987:283) states that the audience for a writer is generally not present, but is removed in terms of time and space. Recognition of the fact that someone other than the writer must read and understand the message is therefore not an easy task, so she argues. This could be one of the reasons why Flower and Hayes (in Murray and Johanson 1990:29) see this kind of ability as characteristic of 'expert' writers.

Before beginning to write, skilled writers are said to spend time thinking about the task and planning

how they will approach it; they gather and organise information; they use note-taking (Oxford 1990:547); lists and brainstorming to help generate ideas.

In the introduction to their essays, skilled writers are also known to capture their readers' interest in their very first sentence, by employing a number of attention-seeking devices like cataphoric references (i.e. a reference item which does not refer to the preceding text, but which refers to text which follows); interrogatives (interrogatives directly related to the theme); direct assertions (declaratives which contain predicate adjectives that underscore the importance of the theme); structural repetition (two or more phrases, clauses, or sentences which are similar in rhythmic pattern and grammatical function); short abrupt elements (abrupt elements for emphasis, including exclamations and deliberate sentence fragments); sentence initial adverb + verb sequence (adverb immediately followed by a verb) and establishing historical contexts (a description of past events to set the theme in its historical context) (Oxford 1990:548).

Urzua (1987:289) introduces the notion of 'voice' in writing. Although she finds the concept rather elusive, she defines it as 'the imprint of ourselves on our writing'. According to her, voice is that part of the self that pushes the writing ahead, the 'dynamo' in the process, and is often reflected in the amount of space that a writer devotes to a subject. The writer whose rating on the concept of voice is 'high', is, according to Cooper (1977:22), one who states what he/she really feels, who 'comes through as an individual' and whose work seems like his/hers 'alone'. According to him, the voice we hear in the piece 'really interests us'.

Learners are also said to write with greater fluency and satisfaction when their writing involves them personally (Zamel 1982:197).

2.6. Summary

To try to explain ESL writing proficiency in the learners in this study, this chapter gave substantive and theoretical reviews which possibly inform this ability. The possible contribution of contextual factors as well as learner variables were also explored.

In the following chapter, i.e. Chapter 3, methodological concerns: instruments, methods of data collection and ethical issues pertaining to this study are discussed.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I am going to discuss in depth the third type of review as mentioned in the introduction to the literature chapter, that is methodological review.

3.2. The goal of the research

This research seeks to explain why it is that some learners from former DET schools, are more proficient writers than others. This I hope to discover by looking at the individual learner qualities, the activities they engage in, the role that the significant others like members of the family, peers and teachers may play, and other contextual factors which might impact on their writing ability.

3.3. Methodological framework

As has already been stated above, this enquiry took the form of case studies which were located within an ethnographic framework. Defining a case study seems to be rather difficult because according to Anderson (1990:159), what the case is, is determined by its focus. The case studies in this study focus on ESL learners who excel at writing in English.

Rist (1975:86) defines ethnography as:

'the research technique of direct observation of human activity and interaction in an ongoing and naturalistic setting'.

I have chosen a combination of ethnography and case studies due to certain qualities that these are said to share (Nunan 1992:52). Both are suitable for investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, as neither require tight control or experimental manipulation.

When one is interested in detailed information specific to the particular subject of study and the particular context, when one cannot draw a random sample from a population as was the case with this study, when one needs analyses based on close observation of a few examples, and when the interest is not necessarily in statistical evidence and generalisation, ethnography and case studies seem to be an ideal combination (Yin 1984:12).

Both techniques are inherently qualitative, with emphasis being placed on describing what things 'mean', how and why they happen (Anderson 1990:149).

3.4. Subjects

Five ESL learners, one each from standards 6-10 who will henceforth be referred to as L6, (a boy aged 13); L7 (a girl aged 14); L8 (a girl aged 15); L9 (a girl aged 16) and L10 who is a boy aged 17, respectively, formed the subjects of the study. The letter 'L' in each case stands for 'learner', and the corresponding number stands for the class. To facilitate ease of interpretation of data, similar codes have been used with the teachers as well, with the letter 'T' standing for 'teacher' and the number representing the class taught. Thus L6 is the learner taught by T6. T9 does not form part of this study, because she is the researching teacher.

The learners had been chosen by the English teachers responsible for the classes in question, myself as the standard nine teacher also included. The choice was based on the teachers' knowledge of the learners. Records of assessment, an analysis of the learners' written work, as well as interviews were conducted with both teachers (see Appendix B for interview questions), and the learners (see Appendix A). My knowledge as an ESL teacher who had also taught one of the learners was also used. These multiple sources of data collection were implemented in order to effect triangulation.

3.5. Data collection

Bryman (1988:72) outlines three problems encountered in qualitative research, which I feel have relevance for this study. These are the ability of the investigator to see through other people's eyes and to interpret events from their point of view; the relationship between theory and research in the qualitative tradition; and the extent to which qualitative research deriving from case studies can be generalised.

Interviews were the major data collection instruments for this study, and as the researcher I cannot help wondering whether I have not misrepresented what the interviewees were saying. It is possible that, in the process of smoothing over rough spots in an attempt to present a coherent account of the data under examination, some details were left out or others added. That I was not a disinterested part of the study should not be a problem, as a study of this kind allows for researcher subjectivity. This kind of study is by nature 'subjective' (Lynch 1996).

There is a possibility that as the researcher I may have given an inadequate description of the characteristics of the learners under observation, moreso because it is not possible to directly observe certain personal factors like motivation and aptitude; features of the tasks written by the learners; and of the conditions under which the learners' writing took place. There is also the possible problem that I may have overintepreted some of the details.

Concerning these possible problems, Ball (in Bryman 1988:73) adds:

'Access to a world of fleeting, overlapping, contradictory, murky, incoherent realities demands selective attention from the field-worker. For everything that is noticed, a multitude of other things go unseen, for everything that is written down a multitude of other things are forgotten. Great parts of the real world experienced by the participant-observer, probably the greater part, is "selected out".'

Added to this is the problem of interviews, about them being viewed as being context-specific, being invented to fit the demands of the interactive context of the interview, and therefore of being representative of nothing more or less. Contrary to this viewpoint, Miller and Glassner (in Silverman 1977:99), argue for the achievability of information about social worlds, through in-depth interviewing.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:105) identify 'three across the board criteria' by which a piece of research can be evaluated and around which researchers ought to develop their studies. These are 'reliability', 'representativeness' and 'validity'. According to them, these concepts apply equally to the research methodology, the data collection strategies used, the kind of analysis made, and explanations offered.

For the sake of clarity and 'completeness', I have thought it best to deal with these concepts at length in two sections of this thesis. The reader is referred to paragraph 3.6 which precedes the discussion of methods of triangulation. The concepts are further explored when discussing the limitations of this study, i.e. in paragraph 5.2 of this thesis. This is because it is at the winding up stage of the study, that I think a discussion of this kind is most appropriate, and therefore most effective. It is at this point that I as the researcher, have been able to reflect on the study as a whole.

3.5.1. Instruments

As Anderson (1992:152) suggests, the major data collection instrument in ethnographic study was myself as the researcher while the methods used were direct observation, analysis of documentation and interviews. As a teacher in the school where the interviews were conducted, I was in an advantageous position, because I had taught one, and was still teaching one of the subjects of the study. Because of this teacher-researcher relationship, I was able to observe the one subject in my class, as well as draw from my knowledge of my former learner.

Both the teachers and the learners were interviewed. The questions asked ranged from yes/no, closed-ended questions to open-ended questions in the case of the teachers. Every effort was made not to ask leading questions. I also had an informal 'talk' with the learners' Xhosa teachers, to find out how the learners performed in their mother tongue, so that I could later try to establish whether a possible

link existed between L1 and L2 writing ability, as suggested in the literature.

According to Mishler (1986:14), the aim of interviewing is to ascertain respondents' 'true' opinions and to minimise possible distortions and biases in responses, and to gain an understanding of the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of those experiences. For an in-depth interview, it is suggested that the interviewer should talk less and listen more.

Although I was aware of Mishler's advise on this issue, there were instances during both teacher and learner interviews, where I did more than my 'supposed' share of talking. This was when I sensed that if I remained tight-lipped for long, my subjects would remain even more tongue-tied. Whenever I felt this to be the case, I would try to establish some teacher-to-teacher 'solidarity' with the teacher in question, or establish some hypothetical contexts in the case of the learners, giving examples to try and draw them out of their shells.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:164) warn about the tendency with 'peer' interviews, of the respondents giving responses that they think the researcher wants. Interviewers are further advised to ask open-ended questions while avoiding leading ones (Walker 1985:86). The intention with open-ended questions is to get underneath the surface of things, so that the richness and wealth of information could resurface (see Appendices A and B for learner and teacher interview questions respectively).

The interviews in both cases were semi-structured, face-to-face and individual encounters. In the case of the teachers, the interviews were conducted in the informal environment of their homes. With four of the learners, who were not happy at the idea of being interviewed at home, for fear of being disturbed, the interviews were held within the school premises, but after school hours.

The flexible nature of the interviews made it possible in the case of L10, for me to diverge from the questions already asked of the other learners. Thus, to get him to explain his writing practices in depth, I established three phases in the writing process, i.e. the pre-writing, actual writing and post-writing phases.

With the learners, the interviews were designed to elicit the kinds of English-learning practices they engaged in, and the strategies they used as indicated in their advice to poor language learners, when writing in the language. To achieve this I would establish contexts and probe, so that they could give an in-depth explanation. The learners responded to 25 questions, 13 of which were open-ended and 5 requiring 'yes'/'no' responses. The idea behind the first question in the learner interviews was to establish the level of confidence they had in their ability to communicate in English, while this seemingly casual question also served to 'warm' things up (O'Malley et. al. 1985:561).

For the teachers I had prepared 10 questions, all of which were open-ended. Of these, the first two were calculated to 'break the ice', while at the same time determining the extent to which the teachers were aware of the linguistic concerns affecting the ESL learner in this country. Before tackling the issue of writing in ESL, it was felt proper to consider how the language could best be acquired (ques. 3). The rest of the questions focused on what the concept of good writing meant to them, what factors they thought were responsible for this, what their perceived role was in the acquisition of good writing practices, and what remedies they could suggest in order to try and improve the situation .

3.6. Evaluating the study

Alfers (1994:49) identifies lack of reliability, generalisation and validity as the 'three biggest sources' of criticisms leveled at single case studies. According to her, these are 'potential threats' to the effectiveness of this kind of research, which researchers must guard against.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) identify the above- mentioned concepts as 'across the board criteria' by which a piece of research can be evaluated, and around which researchers ought to develop their studies. According to them these concepts apply equally to the research methodology, the data collection strategies used, the kind of analysis made and explanations offered.

3.6.1. The concept of ‘validity’

This has to do with the extent to which description of events accurately captures events, that is, the extent to which the material collected by the researcher presents a true and accurate picture of what it is claimed is being described (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995:105). When applied to the context of ESL writing, one of the issues raised by this concept is whether the selection of learners by the teachers, for example, is appropriate to the purposes of this study or not (Henning 1991:285).

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:105) identify six different kinds of validity namely ‘descriptive’, ‘explanatory’, ‘instrument’ or ‘technique’, ‘criterion’ and ‘respondent’ validity. All of these have relevance for this study (see paragraph 5.2.1 for an indepth discussion of the concepts).

As this qualitative study is located within a naturalistic and non-positivistic paradigm, in which reality is seen as ‘relative to our mind and the particular historical and cultural settings within which we are attempting to make our knowledge claims’ (Lynch 1996:53), the study was evaluated according to the criterion of ‘trustworthiness’ or ‘credibility’.

According to these criteria, a study is trustworthy if it is ‘credible’ i.e. there is a match between the constructed realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to the various stakeholders; ‘transferable’, i.e. the degree of similarity between the original evaluation or study, and the context to which the generalisation is desired; and ‘confirmable’, which is as close as one could get to objectivity (Lynch 1996:57).

3.6.2. The concept of ‘reliability’

Reliability refers to the extent to which any particular research project is replicable. The question to ask here is whether another researcher using the same research methodology, would get similar findings.

According to Cooper and Odell (1977:xi), for example, a reliable rank ordering of a group of writers could be achieved only by asking for more than one piece of writing on more than one occasion, and then involving two or more people in describing or rating each piece. I did comply with the first condition, as the learners' writing proficiency was determined by looking at a number of written pieces of work. Inter-rater reliability does not exist here as only one teacher rated the pieces, and that was the ESL teacher concerned.

3.6.3. The concept of 'representativeness'

The extent to which the situation, individuals or groups investigated are typical or representative of the situations, individuals, or group as a whole, is a measure of the representativeness of the study. By its very nature, ethnographic enquiry focuses on single cases or at most, a limited setting or action. Because of this, the act of choosing the learners was deliberately non-representative, because the learners had to be 'the best ESL writers'.

The foregoing discussion is an indication of threats to the validity of the study. A means of enhancing validity was achieved through triangulation.

3.7. TRIANGULATION

As different methods can reveal slightly different facets of one problem, it becomes necessary that the researcher combine different methods to obtain a fuller and more substantial understanding of the issue being researched. It is for this reason that methodological triangulation, otherwise known as 'qualitative cross-validation' needs to be effected, to see if some sort of concord exists in the information collected (Wiersma 1986:246).

'Multiple sources of evidence' (Yin 1984:37) were used to ensure triangulation in this study. These included teacher and learner interviews, observation and analyses of learners' written work.

The number of written pieces collected varied from learner to learner. Some of them had more written work than others, as copies of work they had written in the past were still available, in addition to the work they had done during the course of the year 1996. Others had only the year's written work, the extent of which depended on the teacher in question. For those who had previous records of work, (i.e. L6, L9, and L10), this enabled me as the researcher to measure growth particularly in one learner's writing ability.

One subject got motivated and produced more pieces of work after being interviewed. Auster (1996:210), refers to this phenomenon as the 'Hawthorne effect'. According to her, the concept applies to any situation where research has an impact on the experimental group, as in changing the latter's behavior.

As the exercise of text analysis is time consuming, intricate as well as specialised, it was not possible to analyse all of the learners' written pieces. The only 'consistent' criterion I could think of for deciding on which piece of the learners' written work to analyse, was that of 'the best piece of writing in the learners' eyes', so that I could end up with five texts for analysis, one for each learner.

To analyse the texts, I used 'general impression' evaluation, through which, according to Cooper and Odell (1977:12), no detailed discussion of features and summing up of scores is given to separate features, and by which raters follow a rubric worked out in advance. This 'rubric' (Leki 1995:239) is concerned with the relevance of the answer to the essay question, and with the content of the answer. I chose to employ this form of holistic evaluation because I know from personal experience, that this is the most commonly used form of evaluation that ESL teachers use when marking learners' essays.

The learners were each further subjected to interviews which varied in duration from forty-five minutes to an hour-and-a-half, depending on the type of learner (e.g. uninhibited or inhibited), and on the rate at which the learners' responses encouraged follow-up questions.

3.8. Procedures

Interviewing researchers are advised to build into their proposal a pilot venture in which they try out the interviewing design. Siedman (1991:29) warns that the unanticipated twists and turns of the interviewing process and the complexities of the interviewing relationships deserve exploration before the researcher plunges headlong into the thick of the project.

How I handled this research then was largely a function of a pilot venture I had conducted in 1996. The subject of my study then had been a standard 10 learner who satisfied my definition of a competent ESL writer. Both this learner and his ESL teacher were individually interviewed, and the learner's work analysed. The idea behind the pilot study was a recognition of the extent to which my success with this present study hinged on my ability to conduct good interviews. The pilot study was intended to prepare me for the unforeseen, with the hope that the experience gained would shape the interviews of this particular study.

There are several things that I learnt from the pilot study. One of these was that good timing is of great importance, which is why I was careful not to use school hours the second time around. I made it clear to the subjects of the study that I was prepared to take them home after the interview, in case they became anxious about getting home.

Since the school premises seemed to be the only place in which I could conduct the interview with four of my subjects, care was taken this time, to ensure that the formal atmosphere of the school was transformed into a more relaxed one. This was achieved by trying to establish a friendly relationship with the learners long before the day of the interview, as a first step. Added to this, I dressed and behaved in a very casual manner, and provided some snacks over which we discussed the interview questions.

The seating arrangement was not the one typical of an 'interrogation', in which the interviewer and respondent sit across from each other; I sat side by side with the interviewee, on cushions on the school veranda, with the two of us in each case facing the tape-recorder.

From the pilot study I had also learnt to be very careful with the use of the tape-recorder. My experience with using the device is that it is very difficult and disappointing trying to recreate a conversation which has been lost through careless handling of the device. Even if the participants and questions asked are still the same and the conditions kept similar, no two interviews are alike. For some reason, during the second interview, the respondents just do not give the same responses that they had given in the first interview.

Learners' written work could also help the researcher understand something about the subjects of the study sometimes. Some of the questions to ask during the interview could be gleaned from what they have written. This was the case with the learner in the pilot study, as well as with one of the subjects (L10) in this study (Appendix P). The pilot study really helped me to come to grips with the practical aspects of the interviewing process.

Also, as I had been aware of the purposes of this study, I took advantage of my being a researching teacher. I was in a position to observe at least once, just as soon as I had identified the best writer in my class, as she went about her writing task. This is something the other teachers had been in no position to do, especially in view of the large classes they teach.

Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted. For both the learner and the teacher interviews, a tape-recorder was used for the collection of data. As a device for data-collection, the tape-recorder has both advantages and disadvantages. Walker (1985:108) admits the inhibiting effect of the tape-recorder, but argues for the indispensable value of the device during interviews, in that it offers opportunity for the reconstruction of verbal exchange.

The other advantages of the device are that it makes it possible to obtain the fullest and most accurate record and maintains a personalised relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Not only does it do that, but multi-sensory communication is also sustained in the process. Other shortcomings of the device, which could have impacted on this study, are the fact that some individuals find it so intrusive and 'cumbersome', that it induces 'machine-phobia'. The device is said to also favour the articulate, while putting pressure on the interviewees to be 'interesting' (Walker 1985:108).

Learners had been warned prior to the interviews, about the need to use a tape-recorder. Despite this, the very idea of talking into the machine could have been intimidating, especially because all claimed it was the first time for them to be interviewed. Also, that I was a teacher with whom most of the learners were not familiar, could have put some kind of pressure on the learners. I have reason to suspect that in the case of teachers as well, problems of a similar nature were experienced by some. When I used to conduct interviews for my Masters course-work, some teachers used to own up to a fear of having their 'foolish' responses on tape. It is reasonable, therefore, to expect that this could have been the case with some if not all of them even now.

As the learners could choose whether they preferred to be interviewed in Xhosa or in English, the language of the interview was largely determined by the learners' choice. To make the interviewing atmosphere less threatening, for both the teachers and the learners, I code-switched between the two languages. This was to ensure that the respondents who did not feel comfortable enough expressing themselves in English, would not be hindered in their description of their language learning or teaching practices (O'Malley et. al. 1985:561).

As soon as the interviews were over, the information was transcribed. Siedman (1991:86) believes that in order to work most reliably with the 'words of the participants', the researcher has to transform the words from the tape-recorded sessions, which he refers to as 'naturally-occurring data', into a written text or transcript, to study. In this way, so he believes, the researcher gains access to the participants' consciousness, as each word they utter reflects this.

The transcripts were then analysed for trends, differences and similarities, and ease of interpretation was facilitated by direct translation where Xhosa had been used. The analysis was then viewed against what the literature says concerning good writing ability in a second language, and how it is achieved.

3.5.4. Ethical concerns

Whenever research deals with human subjects, care should be taken that their rights and interests are safeguarded, especially where there is a power differential between the researcher and the population

(Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee 1995). Because most research in the area of ESL is done with subjects who are either minority groups, though this is not the case here; students or children, or a combination of all three at once, I have tried to be as rigorous as possible regarding the ethical issues pertaining to this study. Things were done 'by the book'.

Before they could give consent, all the subjects were informed about the nature, purpose and usefulness of the research. A precise description of the procedures in which the learners would be expected to participate in, for example the need for the use of a tape-recorder, and the fact that their written work would have to be used, was given.

I was in no position to guarantee the subjects' complete anonymity without this affecting the credibility of my study, as names of some of the subjects appeared in some of the work. As the Tesol Research Committee report (1980:386) suggests, where possible, the codes 'L' for learner and 'T' for teacher were coupled with numbers to indicate classes being done and taught respectively. I also highlighted the anticipated personal benefits of the subjects' involvement in the study to them, that if anything, the fact that they were chosen as the subjects of a study of this kind should be seen as a compliment on their writing ability. They were not concerned as to whether their real names would be used or not.

As all the subjects of the study were children still under legal guardianship, a scrupulous description of the study was given to the parents, and oral consent was obtained. Both the subjects and their parents were not deceived in any way. They were promised that as soon as the project was completed, immediate debriefing would take place.

As a teacher I was in a position of power in relation to the learners, who are referred to as the 'captive audience' (Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee 1995). That position of power was not exploited as far as possible. It was made perfectly clear to the learners that they were free to withdraw from the research at any given moment, and that this would in no way lead to them being victimised. Teaching time was not used for the research, as the interviews were conducted after school hours.

Research of this nature requires one to be constantly vigilant about and to be on guard against one's subjectivity. Nonetheless, it does well not to lose sight of the virtues of subjectivity. In view of this, I took care to constantly examine my assumptions, to avoid biases whilst at the same time being reflexive (Ellis 1993:186).

3.6. **Summary**

This chapter begins with a justification of the methodological framework thought to be most appropriate in view of the goals of this study. This is followed by a short description of the subjects of the study, and an in-depth discussion of the methods of data collection. The researcher has drawn largely, from both the literature and a pilot study she had conducted in the past, specifically for the purposes of informing this study.

Following from this is the analysis of data, in Chapter 4 of the thesis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

According to Gilbert (1993:168), good qualitative analysis is able to document its claim to reflect some of the truth of the phenomenon by reference to systematically gathered data. Through 'sequential analysis' the researcher analyses data as he or she gathers it. 'Hunches' and hypotheses are gradually refined as 'provisional analysis' gives way to further observation. The data are read for analytic themes which are listed, and the list ordered by placing related items together in compounded items. These are then condensed, put in order according to an overall theme which seems to relate to the individual items.

In this study I have made repeated returns to the transcripts to reread and examine the data, searching for recurring and salient themes.

Analytic induction (Leki 1995:240) was also used to identify the methods that these learners used to approach and complete the writing tasks assigned them. Each approach or strategy that a learner mentioned in the interview was noted. The group of specific strategic moves was then repeatedly analysed for possible logical groupings that might suggest themselves. The data was then analysed into descriptive themes, and individual strategies grouped under similar rubrics as a means of managing the masses of data (Anderson 1990:162).

To achieve a broad overview for ease of comprehension, the widely varying strategies that the learners used were finally subsumed under some of the categories of strategies mentioned in the literature. The reader is advised not to lose sight of the fact that for any given assignment, the learners might use several strategies either at once or in sequence, to complete it.

4.2. The learner interviews

As suggested above, the data obtained from the study was analysed for emerging trends, though this was not exactly as smooth as I imagine would have been the case if structured interviews had been used. The semi-structured nature of the interviews made grouping somewhat difficult. It was from this analysis that certain categories were developed.

Analysis of the data started off with a direct, word for word transcription of the pupil interviews followed by translation thereof into English, where this was necessary, in order to facilitate understanding (see Appendices C to G) . The direct transcription serves to indicate the degree to which the interviewees were seen as either comfortable or uncomfortable in their use of English. The transcripts were also analysed as to the extent to which learners code-switched between their L1 which is Xhosa, and English.

‘Code-switching’ is the term used ‘when speakers make more extensive use of two varieties and switch between them purposefully’ (Rampton 1995:275) or, ‘the alternative use by bilinguals, of two or more languages in the same conversation’ (Milroy and Muysken 1995:7).

4.2.1. Confidence in English-speaking ability

As English had been established by the researcher as an optional language, besides Xhosa, in which the learners could respond during the interview, it became difficult to infer anything, as the researcher had initially set out to do, when the learner in question chose to respond in either of the two languages. This was due to a sudden realisation on the part of the researcher, that the choice of Xhosa did not necessarily mean lack of confidence in the learner's ability to speak English, rather than the learner possibly feeling more comfortable using Xhosa to another Xhosa speaker.

Of the five cases, only one learner (L10) used English only throughout the interview. One learner (L9), chose to be interviewed in Xhosa, although she preferred English only when writing, because when writing she had ‘time to think’. Two learners, L6 and L8, used Xhosa when unsure about the meaning

of certain words. The choice of language for these two learners depended on the level of 'difficulty' of the question (L8) and on whether the meaning of words was 'known' or not (L6). Though she would not say whether she wished to respond in English or Xhosa, L7 code-switched between the two languages.

Another possibility is that for competent bilinguals like the ones in this study, who have both languages at their disposal, opting to respond in either language could be just a matter of choice. This was the case with L9, who claimed that she 'could' respond in English but since she was 'not compelled' to do so, she 'chose' to respond in Xhosa.

4.2.2. Literacy in the home language

Although Xhosa was the L1 of all the subjects, L6, L8, L9 and L10 claimed they did not do any reading in it; the feeling seemed to be that there was nothing new to learn from using the language, presumably because it was the language most commonly used at home, at school and in the community.

Added to this could be the fact that there is very little that is written in Xhosa that learners would find interesting enough to read. According to Ntshangase (1998:30), who gives a detailed discussion as to how it came about that interesting reading material in the African languages should be lacking, 'it is in the next few years that better works will become available in African languages'.

L6, claimed a responsibility for the writing of grocery-lists as well as telephonic messages at home. He reported that even if the content of the messages had been in Xhosa, he would write it down in English. One possible explanation for this could be that as English is the 'language of school' the learner viewed it as the language of literacy. Other than this could be the learners' oral background rearing its 'proud' head. I say so because two of the learners preferred Xhosa to English when speaking, while English was the language preferred when writing.

Apart from the Xhosa books prescribed for the various classes, no other Xhosa books are available in this school's ill-equipped library. With English on the other hand, not only are there lots of materials

that learners would find interesting, but there are also many dictionaries which could be consulted any time one needed to (L8 and L9).

As standard written Xhosa differs considerably from the colloquial language that learners normally use when talking among themselves, that there is a lack or scarcity of Xhosa dictionaries further aggravates the problem. This is possibly why Xhosa terms were found to be rather 'difficult to understand' and to 'guess' the meaning thereof, as well as 'confusing' (L8).

L10 found the Xhosa language a 'bit heavy', 'harsh' as well as 'lacking' as far as words suitable enough to 'console', 'advise' are required in the field of counselling, which is an area on which his eyes were set for the future. English, on the other hand was, according to this learner, 'pure' and 'simple'.

Despite the foregoing claims about Xhosa from the learners, during informal interviews, their Xhosa teachers owned to being particularly impressed with the learners' performance in the language. According to the literature, this implies a possible link between the learners' home language and English, what Cummins and Swain (1994:56) refer to as the CUP. As far as this concept is concerned, the learner's first language can facilitate the acquisition of a second language. The opposite is also true, that being good at writing in English might facilitate good writing ability in Xhosa.

4.2.3. Overall performance at school

Whether these learners are indeed good language learners or just intelligent beings, and whether their competence is not partly a motivational and partly an IQ issue, is debatable. While in the process of trying to find out as much as possible about the learners, I learned that they were in fact intelligent and motivated 'all-rounders', judging by their performance in the June 1997 examinations. L6, L7 and L8 had obtained first position, while L9 and L10 had obtained positions 2 and 5 respectively in their classes. Perhaps this was because most of the examination subjects were written in English.

4.2.4. Attitudes towards learning English

All the learners had positive attitudes towards learning English at school, the reasons thereof varying from English being the 'main language' for communicating with faraway countries (L6), it being a communicating tool for people from different linguistic backgrounds (L7, L8 and L9), to plain 'love' of the language (L10), the latter being an indication of intrinsic motivation.

4.2.5. Motivation

All the learners demonstrated an awareness of how limiting an ability to speak only Xhosa could be, and how this could impact on their choices of careers. With their ambitions to be a paediatrician (L6) and doctor (L7) in future, these two learners foresaw problems if they could not converse in English, in case some of the patients, doctors and people in the work-place did not know Xhosa. As her eyes were set on becoming a chartered accountant one day, L8 envisaged that she would need to relate to non-Xhosa speaking business-people, and that communication with them would be impossible without a good grasp of English. Because of these and other reasons, learners felt an urgent need to learn and be conversant in English.

In addition, the ability to converse in English was seen as 'helpful' (L7 and L8), 'important' (L9) and causing a feeling of 'pride' (L6) when there were non-Xhosa speaking people around. To achieve this, L9 was motivated to the point of even buying her own copies of EBONY. L10, on the other hand, claimed to 'love' the language.

Except for L10, whose love for English suggests an 'integrative' approach to the learning of English, all the other reasons stated here suggest a 'utilitarian' approach, what Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:173) call an 'instrumental motivation' for language-learning. This is the approach that a learner wishing to further a career, improve social status or meet an educational requirement, usually adopts.

Such was the extent of the learners' motivation to learn the language, that the approval of being 'corrected' came up thrice (L6, L8 and L10) during the interviews. They (L6, L7, L8 and L10) were

also prepared to risk looking foolish as it was common for them to converse in English to other members of the family, who could not even answer back in the same language.

For L10, one of the major sources of motivation had been his primary school English teacher, who he claimed had taught him the format of good essay writing including the skill of introducing a topic, the concept of coherence and how to conclude an essay. Also, the apparent interest this learner has in languages generally as evident in his thirst to learn French and German in the future, together with his involvement in church, seem to be other motivating factors.

In church this learner belongs to a musical group one objective of which is 'to develop' themselves. Though the membership of this group is all black, they use English to converse among themselves and when conducting sermons.

A study conducted by Dison (1996:6) into the acquisition of literacy among ESL learners, suggests a positive relationship between the church and the acquisition of literacy for some learners. The influence of the Christian missionaries could be responsible for this ability as Moropa and Tyatyeka (1990:vii) claim it was they who had taught the Xhosa people how to write. Mawasha (1982) also confirms this as he states that literary education among black South Africans started with the arrival of the missionaries. According to him, the Bible and other religious reading material were translated into certain indigenous languages. This was one way for the missionaries to propagate the Christian religion, as well as comply with the western concept of education (Mawasha 1982).

4.2.6. Association with native speakers of English

Two learners (L7 and L9) did not associate with non-Xhosa speaking people at all. For these learners there were few instances in the informal context of the home, where they conversed in English, such as when there was the occasional telephone call requesting to speak to a member of the family (L9), and when L7 voluntarily addressed the younger members of her family in English. During the latter occasion, the talk would be a one-way process, with the child in question being in no position to respond in English.

Three learners (L6, L8 and L10) had English-speaking friends, two of whom were white and native-speakers of English (L10 and L8), while one had a black English-speaking friend from Australia (L6). The kind of contact they maintained with their friends was mainly of an oral nature; none of them ever wrote to each other. Other than English-speaking 'friends' (L6, L8 and L10) and 'neighbours' (L6), there was a 'cross-racial marriage' between an aunt and a white man (L8). All of these points about communicating in the target language, and with its native speakers, seem to confirm what the literature suggests about good language learning practices and/or opportunities for language learning.

4.2.7. Favourite radio and television programmes

Save for L6, all of the learners tuned in to mainly English-medium radio channels, the most popular station being Radio Metro. Upon discovering the kind of interest the learners had in this channel, I decided to pay some attention to the kind of English that is used here. Was it interesting when one of the presenters expressed his state of health as being 'together!

For many ESL teachers, whose wish is that ESL learners be exposed only to standard English, this kind of language could be reason enough for concern. The concern could stem from the fact that, for our young and impressionable learners, continuous exposure to 'deviant' input like this can only be detrimental. Learners might see this kind of language usage as a 'cool' way of expressing themselves, moreso because they see these presenters as role models.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:129) think it is reasonable to expect that an L2 acquirer exposed only or predominantly to ungrammatical input will acquire at best a substandard and marked variety of the target language. According to them, there is some 'suggestive evidence' that this is indeed the case.

Another way of looking at this issue would be for ESL teachers to look at this kind of language usage as a register appropriate for a pop station like Radio Metro. More importantly for language learning, if the learners really like listening to it, this might turn out more useful than detrimental in the long run, in that it could motivate learners to learn the language.

On Radio Metro, which is essentially a musical channel, the most popular programme seemed to be ‘The Power Breakfast Show’(L7, L8 and L10). L7 listened to ‘The Pepsi Power Play’ while L9 tuned in to ‘The G. S. Connection’, all of these being musical programmes. Only one learner seemed to hunger for factual knowledge as in listening to English news, either through the radio or watching television, and that was L10.

Other radio stations tuned in to were Radio Algoa (L10) and Radio Umhlobo Wenene, formerly known as Radio Ciskei (L6). The former is largely an English-speaking channel, while the latter uses both English and Xhosa. The programme L6 listened to on Radio Umhlobo Wenene is entitled ‘Good morning, Good morning’, which, according to the learner is an educational programme designed for younger children.

In the case of television, all the learners claimed to tune in to English-medium channels. The ‘Felicia Mabuza-Suttle’ talk-show seemed to be the most popular, with L9 being the only one not watching it. The popularity of the show could be a result of the kind of topics discussed. Not only are they interesting, but they deal with current day to day issues like teenage pregnancy, abortion and cross-racial marriages, which teenagers might find worth watching.

Except for L7, the soap-operas, ‘The Bold and the Beautiful’ and ‘The Days of our Lives’ were watched by all the learners. For L9, a series with biblical connotations, ‘Touched by an Angel’ and another drug-busting series, ‘New York Undercover’ were the favourites. Other programmes the learners found interesting were ‘Tele-school’ which is an educational programme (L6); ‘Two-Way’ (L7) and Oprah (L8 and L9) which are talk-shows; and a musical quiz entitled ‘Jam Alley’ (L8).

4.2.8. Instances of writing in English outside the classroom context

Not all of the learners practised writing in English outside the school context. L8 only helped a younger sister with her writing exercises, but hardly ever took part in the writing exercise herself. The only instance in which L9 claimed to have written something down, which she took seriously enough not to lose, was a letter she and a friend had written to Oprah Winfrey, and to which they had received a reply

(see Appendix K), otherwise, like L6, this learner always lost track of the pieces that she had written.

L6 also claimed to have written letters to a friend in another school, as well as some to his brother. It was also this learner's (L6) responsibility to write grocery lists as well as telephone messages for members of his family. As was the case with L10, note-leaving was a practice in both L6 and L8's homes as well. L7 testified to having done some casual writing about herself (see Appendix D). None of the learners ever wrote notes in Xhosa at home.

Of all the learners, only L9 and L10 were part of the Telkom letter-writing scheme, a scheme open to pupils in all classes, and whereby Telkom had arranged pen-pals between interested pupils from the various schools involved, for them to correspond with one another. As a member of the scheme, although confident in her ability to write in good English, L9 chose to write in Xhosa in the one letter she had written to her pen-friend, because she did not want 'to confuse' the pen-friend who might not be as competent as she was in writing in English. L10, on the other hand, claimed to express himself only in English when writing to his friends, presumably to other Xhosa-speaking friends, because he had earlier asserted that he never wrote to his white friend .

Of all the subjects of the study, L10 had done the most self-motivated writing, this motivation driving him to attempt pieces of poetry, which he had not done prior to his being interviewed. This learner also had a small 'book' of seven short chapters, entitled 'The Basics of Fruitful Living' to his credit (see Appendix L).

4.2.9. The role played by reading

Contact with native-speakers of English did not seem to be the only means to proficiency in ESL writing. L9's case seems to suggest that it is not only interaction with English-speaking people that can facilitate good writing ability. Since this learner was not much into conversing in English either, this seems to suggest that the role played by reading, of which, like the other learners, she did a lot, cannot be underestimated. Research referred to in the literature (Reid 1993:15) also supports the viewpoint concerning the positive influence of reading in improving language competence.

The only reading material L9 mentions are the copies of EBONY that she bought herself, otherwise she was not exposed to other material like the newspapers that the other learners were. It would have been interesting to compare the kinds of topics mainly featured in this magazine, and to see how these possibly impacted on her writing style, choice of topic and register. Unfortunately, because of time constraints, this was not possible.

All five learners enjoyed reading in English, which Naiman (1978:3) refers to as an 'active approach' to language learning. They read mainly magazines, these ranging from the DRUM (L6); TRUE LOVE (L7); YOU (L8 and L10) and EBONY (L9) magazines, newspapers like THE DAILY DISPATCH (L6) and THE SUNDAY TIMES (L10) and books prescribed for standards six and nine (L6). What constituted interesting reading material differed from learner to learner, and depended on what the material in question had to offer.

For L6, for example, newspaper articles concerned with issues pertaining to South Africa as indicated by the 'heading' were found attractive. Apart from this the learner also read from Advance with English, which is a textbook for standard six. Interestingly, this he did not do as a class exercise, but read ahead of his teacher and classmates.

All learners had some interesting stories that they had read, with each of them in a position to relate what the story was all about. This attests to a certain level of comprehension on their part, whilst also suggesting possible reasons why they were such good writers. Their being such avid readers seemed to pay off when it came to choice of topics for their writing exercise and in equipping them with ideas for both their oral and written tasks. The 'familiarity' most of them (L6, L7, L8 and L10) looked for when choosing topics was a result of their reading and listening endeavours.

4.2.10. Choice of topics

From my personal experience as a language teacher, I know that learners are not always given a range of topics to choose from when they write. More often than not, teachers come up with one topic of their own, and expect the learners to write on it. On such occasions learners have no option but to compose

on what the teacher has decided. A study conducted by Harran (1993:74) confirms this point, and suggests that learners prefer a 'free choice' to the 'boring' and 'stupid' topics that teachers choose for them. According to Harran's study, the lack of freedom to choose their own topics resulted in some learners adopting a negative attitude to the whole writing exercise. At times, however, the writers would be given a range of topics to choose from, this happened especially at exam time.

For the ESL writers in this study, choice of a topic to write on, when a range of topics had been given, was determined by a number of factors, depending on the learner in question.

The topics had to be 'easy' (L6 and L8); 'familiar' (L7, L8 and L10); based on a 'past experience' (L6 and L7); 'interesting' (L7 and L9); arousing interest in the reader (L7 and L10); 'important' (L9 and L10); 'serious' and 'challenging' (L9); elicit many ideas that one can discuss (L8, L9 and L10); and 'factual' (L10).

Topics also had to 'be about things which are alive'. In the same way that 'Shakespeare was not for an age but for all time', L10 chose topics about which his feelings were unlikely to change, like those on 'abortion' and 'how a president should be'. Choice of topic was also affected by whether the learner had written on one of the given topics before, in which case they would opt for the familiar topic (L6 and L8).

The mass media - television, newspapers, magazines and the radio - seemed to provide a resourceful background which informed the learners' choice of topics when writing. The talk-shows on television, which normally deal with current issues facing South Africa like crime, abortion and others were quoted as having facilitated the choice of 'easy' and 'familiar' topics.

4.2.11. The home background and the role played by the family

It is also worth noting the role that the home circumstances and other contextual factors play, as well as which qualities in the learners themselves actually contributed to their becoming competent English writers.

According to Benson and Heidish (in Belcher and Braine 1995: 324), research on the writing process revealed that:

'Writing is a functional ability that begins well before the school years as stories, messages, and greetings are drawn and written - and that ways in which young children approach writing are related to the language and literacy tasks to which they were exposed in their home and community environment'.

L6's family seemed to be one of those families which motivates and encourages their children. The father was said to buy the Daily Dispatch newspaper on a daily basis, which would explain the importance this learner attached to newspaper 'headings' when trying to decide which article was interesting enough for him to read. Since discovering their son's interest in English, this learner's parents also used the language when conversing with him at home.

In this household, English was also used as a language of exclusion, to exclude younger children from certain pieces of conversation. Added to this, is the possible influence of an educated family background, for example a lawyer and a teacher in the extended family in L6's case, who take an active interest in the education of their children.

Like L6, L10 also came from a literate background. The late father used to encourage the writing of notes in English, and the mother continued to buy The Sunday Times from which the learner claimed to read a lot. Except for the copies she bought herself, nobody in L9's home bought any other form of reading material.

At L7's home there used to be a dictionary, though she could not say what had happened to it. It was at this point that an 'elder sister' came into play. The sister assumed the role of the dictionary as she had to explain some unfamiliar terms to the learner.

With L8, in addition to the assistance offered by an 'elder brother' in times of need, a younger sister also depended on her for her language learning exercises. This role demanded that she be the source of

knowledge as it was her responsibility to help her younger sister with the writing of her essays.

4.2.12. Outstanding personality traits in the learners

Concerning the nature of the learners themselves, certain characteristics stand out in some or all of them. These are: a willingness to take risks (L6), to make mistakes and to be corrected (L6, L8 and L10), not being troubled if the rest of the class laughed at him (L6) as he ‘bursts out’ in English, and asking from others.

L8's statement, ‘nobody is perfect’, and her claim that there was nothing that she did that ‘another person could not do’ suggest both a ‘never-give-up’ and a ‘go-getting’ attitude to language learning.

During his higher primary education, L6 claimed to have had to ‘fend’ for himself as they were hardly ever taught anything except grammar. He had had to rely on the knowledge that he had obtained from his standard two teacher to keep himself going.

In offering advice to poor language learners, L8 claimed that there was nothing that she did that ‘another person could not do’, thereby suggesting a ‘go-getting’ attitude to language learning.

L10 saw it as a ‘fortunate’ thing that as pupils they had both English teachers as well as books, because according to his positive outlook, this put them in a good position to learn the language. Unlike most learners who are always ready to put the blame on someone else like the government and/or the education department, he placed the onus on himself. He was happy with what was made available to him. This suggests an attitude which says ‘it is up to me, I have to make it happen’.

Another key trait, that of the confidence they seemed to have in their ability, came to the fore in various ways. L6 was so confident in his competence in English that he wished his friends could come to him when they needed someone to translate for them; he wanted people to know that he understood English and stated that when it came to class groups, the group knew that he was ‘the only one’ who could translate originally Xhosa ideas into English.

Though confident in her ability to write in good English, L9 would rather use Xhosa in a letter to a pen-friend, because she fears that the other might not understand English as well as she does. Even in her choice of career she is willing to dare where most women have never dared before, in the field of 'civil engineering'. She seems to thrive on challenges.

As for L10, this learner oozed confidence in more ways than one, starting from his choice to respond in English throughout the interview, in the manner in which he responded to the questions, and in his eloquence.

An analysis of this learner's interview transcript, revealed that not once during the interview did he refer to the interviewer as 'Miss', not that he meant to be rude or disrespectful as far as I could see, but I construed it as part of his confident nature. The other learners on the other hand, had seemed so aware of the researcher's being their teacher, that the word 'Miss' appears many times in their interview transcripts.

In a nutshell, the key trait to language learning seemed to be the learners' being 'little survivors' who, despite coming from sporadic teaching environments, if I may refer to the picture already painted in Chapter 1, seem bent on making it on their own, regardless of the situation. Their resilience shines through as they seem to take responsibility for their own learning.

4.2.13. Decisions on the 'best' piece of writing

Criteria used in the selection of the best piece of writing among those that a learner had written varied from learner to learner and from teacher to teacher. For some, the emphasis seemed to be on the process (L8 and L10), whereas for others the product was seen as more important (L6 and L9).

For L7 it was both the process and the product that she considered in her choice. How she had felt while writing her essay, 'the ideas just came easily', and also the end-product 'I think I have been able to express myself well' and 'I have used good English' determined her rating.

The learners who seemed process-oriented in their choice (L8 and L10) considered the fact that though there had not been an opportunity to 'practise' writing the essay, yet she had managed to produce a good piece (L8). That he had been able to produce a good piece without much of an effort, as the topic had been about himself, a topic he enjoyed writing on immensely as he had had no need to do any kind of research, was for L10 a decisive factor.

Because he had not used 'broken English' L6 believed that a letter he had written to a friend was well-written. L9, on the other hand, believed that her writing had improved with time since the last time she had written an essay similar to the one she had chosen as her very best essay. The emphasis in both cases was on the 'product'.

Two learners (L7 and L8) had the same topic in mind as their teachers (T7 and T8) regarding the choice of the best piece among those that they had written. I think the reason which could possibly contribute to this is that these learners had the fewest written pieces compared to the other learners, so there were not many pieces to choose from.

L6, on the other hand, differed from T6 in his choice. What I found impressive about T6's choice was that she seemed to have looked beyond the mark that the boy's standard five English teacher had allocated, which was 8/20 in her choice. What seemed appealing about the essay entitled 'My Township' to T6, was the fact that at standard five this learner had been able to put together such an impressive piece of writing. The criteria she used in her assessment, as well as L6's reasons for his choice, appear in Appendices C (L6) and M (T6).

4.2.14. Learners' concept of 'good writing'

Some of the ideas mentioned in the paragraph above apply here as well, at the risk of being redundant I have seen fit to include both sections, as these are not necessarily the same areas of focus.

For L6 good writing meant not writing in 'broken English' The latter, according to him, involved improper use of tenses and misspelling of words. L7's idea of good writing was determined by the fact

that she thought 'the reader' would find the topic 'the most interesting' as she had been able to express herself well through the use of 'good English', plus the fact that the flow of ideas had been easy for her. This learner shows an awareness about a reader out there. Flower and Hayes (according to Murray and Johanson 1990:29), identify this as one of the qualities of 'expert writers'.

The fact that she had been able to write easily despite a lack of opportunity to practise beforehand was seen by L8 as equivalent to good writing. L9 had chosen as her best topic, one similar, content-wise, to another she had written the previous year, because according to her, time had elapsed since the writing of the first essay. For this learner, this suggested that the second essay was an improvement on the first one.

For L10, on the other hand, that the writing experience had been 'effortless' as has already been explained, means that it was 'good' in his eyes.

4.2.15. Learner strategies and techniques

Out of the ten strategies that Naiman (1978:3) identifies, learners used different strategies and techniques for their well-written essays. The choice of strategies was geared towards the learners' particular context, as it is the context that shapes their actions. A brief explanation of the impoverished context in which these learners write and their writing practices in class, is given in the introduction to this thesis. The reader is advised not to lose sight of the fact that all of these differ from teacher to teacher and from situation to situation.

L6 used the term 'practice' to describe what sounds like a 'pre-translation phase' in his writing practices. According to him, before he could put his ideas down on paper, he first 'practised' in Xhosa. This meant 'thinking' and 'expressing' ideas in Xhosa, before actually translating these into English. Naiman (1978:3) identifies translation as one of the strategies used by language learners.

As Flower and Hayes (1980:51) suggest, L7, like L10, always had the person who would read her work in mind. As most of what she wrote was to be read by her English teacher, this made her careful to

choose 'interesting words' so that her teacher would be encouraged that he was doing 'a good job' in teaching them English.

L8 was so conscientious about what she wrote that if she had been told beforehand which topic she would be writing on, she would 'practise' and prepare for it prior to the lesson. Before actually writing, this learner relaxed for about five minutes, concentration was of such great importance at this point that she would not want to look around in case something distracted her attention. She would therefore focus on her script so that the facts might not 'flush out'. Other strategies that the learner used were the 'monitoring' and the 'planning' strategies.

L9 also thought concentration important. She used her powers of imagination and engaged in some 'internal dialogue', whereby she posed certain questions to herself. The responses to these questions then led to facts for the piece of writing, which she would begin to write down. The ideas would then come flowing, especially if she could relate well to the topic.

The strategies L10 used when writing included 'closing eyes', thinking carefully about what he was about to write on, 'picturing' it and then formulating ideas based on what he had 'seen' in his mind. Contrary to what the literature suggests about good writers, this learner thought the idea of first jotting down ideas a waste of time, as there were always time constraints when he wrote. To save time, it was seen as best to jot the ideas 'in the mind'. L10 thought in terms of 'important words' and not in full sentences. These key-words were then fleshed out as he would decide whether to put 'is or are' afterwards.

Advice offered to fellow-learners who were less-gifted writers seemed to hinge mostly on all the skills involved in the learning of a new language. 'Reading' was seen by all as important, while the other skills got equal weighting from the learners: three (L7, L9 and L10) thought 'talking', 'listening' (L7, L8 and L10), and 'writing' (L8, L9 and L10) important too. Only L8 mentioned the question of practising writing as a means to good writing ability, without being prompted.

It is difficult to say whether the learners took the skill of writing in English for granted or not, but it was

the least spontaneously-mentioned by both learners and teachers. It would seem as if some took the skill as automatically linked to avid reading, hence the oversight. Horning (1987:23) claims that established professional writers rarely recount and proclaim the influence of writing courses they may have taken, instead they cite the influence of other writers.

Added to these, 'asking' (L6); consulting a 'dictionary'(L6 and L8); expressing ideas 'in Xhosa' first and then 'translating' these into English (L6); 'bursting out' in English from time to time (L6) and laying oneself open to 'correction'(L6, L8 and L10), were encouraged.

For two learners (L6 and L9), the concept of improvement and 'growth in writing ability' emerged. This was seen as a result of 'continuous reading'. According to these, time coupled with constant practice brought about a mature writing ability. L6 claimed he no longer used the 'broken English' that he used initially when he 'first arrived' at high school and when he was still 'not used to talking and writing in English'.

Compared to an essay she had written in 1996, L9 also believed that the one she wrote in 1997 was 'better written', though the content was essentially the same. Because of the time factor, she thought her writing ability had improved. Learners were also advised to choose topics they were 'interested in' and on which they could 'write a lot' (L7).

Another interesting contribution, one made by L8, was to the effect that language-learners should make good use of the 'library'. Our township, though rated the second largest in the whole of South Africa, does not have a library. The nearest library, which is in the Gompo Town area, about 12km away, has just recently been built. The well-established one which is in East London, allows membership only to students residing in and nearby the town.

As the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed some degree of flexibility, I exploited the opportunity. Thus, with L10, who I thought to be the most mature of all the learners, and who I was sure could cope with the demanding questions, I established three phases in the writing process. These were the 'pre-writing', the 'actual' writing and the 'post-writing' phases respectively.

As a devoted Christian, L10 did not seem to look at writing as being just a skill, but he approached the writing exercise from a 'moral' point of view. He was interested in the 'message' in the written word, which is something teachers often lose sight of, though he seemed to be realistically in touch with the different tastes and preferences that readers have. This 'reader-based' kind of writing, which takes cognisance of reader needs is, according to Leki (1995:9) indicative of a 'mature' writer.

He seemed concerned with imparting good values and standards to the reader, which seems to explain the reason behind his book of seven short chapters entitled 'The Basics of Fruitful Living' (Appendix L). According to L10, to be a good writer one had to be a 'good person', to have 'standards' and 'values', because 'what you write about is what you are'. For one to learn English, one had to love it, to adopt a positive 'I can' attitude towards it, to have confidence in oneself and be willing to learn and to be advised.

When it came to the actual writing exercise, he was of the opinion that good writing hinged on a good grasp of English grammar which one could learn from one's English teachers and books. For him, extensive reading was important in the sense that it was through this that the learners could familiarise themselves with the different writing genres, which would later determine the style they adopted as their own. He also mentioned punctuation as affecting one's style of writing.

If there was still time after a piece had been written, learners were further advised to look out, in a 'cool' and 'relaxed' manner, for all the 'basic' mistakes like spelling, grammar and punctuation (L10). He referred to these errors as 'things that a student should know', which suggests an active approach to language learning.

4.3. The teacher interviews

Four teachers (T6, T7, T8 and T10) were interviewed, and where necessary their responses compared with those of their learners, to check for different and similar ways of looking at ESL writing issues between the two groups, as in the choice of the best piece of writing. In conducting the interviews I was aware of the methodological concern regarding 'peer' interviews, that in cases like these, respondents

were prone to give responses that they think 'the researcher wants' (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995:164). The categories were developed in the same manner already mentioned above.

4.3.1. The problem of linguistic diversity in South Africa

All four teachers were of the opinion that English was the answer to the problem of a linguistically diverse country like South Africa. The reasons for the choice of English varied from it being an 'international' (T6 and T8) and 'universal' language (T10); it being a language that almost everybody in the country had studied (T7) and in which the majority of the people could communicate (T8); and it being the 'language of work' (T8).

4.3.2. Views on the communicative approach

In that the communicative approach 'reduces anxiety', thereby allowing the child to become 'an active participant' in class, T6 thought the approach was good. According to this teacher, the negative side to this approach was its 'emphasis on quantity at the expense of quality' in that if it were to be the only approach teachers used when teaching English, the ESL learners would become even poorer than they were, as far as grammar was concerned.

T7 thought the approach favoured learners in that it facilitated understanding as it helped them to speak the language.

Like T6, T8 outlined a positive and a negative side to the approach. The negative side arose from its lack of emphasis on rule-formation (grammar) which she felt was necessary for second language learners. The approach also required a lot of teaching aids, which were not always available, in order to be effective (L8). That it is suitable for the teaching of certain aspects of English grammar like the reported speech and the passive voice, plus the fact that it encourages learners to speak, was seen as good (L8).

T10 also found fault with the fact that grammar was being sacrificed in the approach, the feeling being

that ESL learners still needed the 'formal' approach to language learning and teaching. She felt it was through such an approach that the problem learners had with certain aspects of grammar like tenses and concord, could be tackled. Added to this, learners needed to be equipped for the examinations. During exam time, learners are expected to express themselves in full and well-constructed sentences, especially in the first paper. In so far as it facilitated communication, the approach was said to be 'okay'.

Some of the teachers seemed to harbour certain misconceptions concerning the communicative approach. This could be because according to Kroes (1997:36), who refers to the approach as not being the 'holy cow' it is purported to be. He claims that in 'black education' the communicative approach is 'not practised', as the 'vast majority of teachers' continue to teach 'grammar for the sake of grammar'. He raises some pertinent questions regarding the approach which could account for some of the reasons why the approach is not fully popular in black schools. According to Maartens, one concern black teachers have regarding the approach, is whether the 'spontaneity' that is stressed in oral communication equips learners for professional roles where 'ungrammaticality' leads to 'adverse social judgements' (1995:18).

4.3.3. The acquisition of English

The teachers listed a number of factors which they thought could promote the acquisition of English. T6 saw age as a determining factor in the acquisition of any new language. According to this viewpoint, adults would need to 'have interest in' and 'be curious about' the language. They would need to involve themselves with speakers of the target language, and through 'asking questions', 'talking in', 'listening to' and 'reading' as much as possible in the target language, they would learn it. For young children on the other hand, language was acquired 'naturally' through 'play'. Children were seen as being gifted in as far as 'picking up' a language. According to T6, because children are generally not shy and inhibited, they also like to 'imitate', and that was how they learned languages.

Reading, use of cassettes as reminders of what had been read, interacting with and talking to people who spoke the target language, and listening to the television were seen by T7 as a means to a speedy acquisition of a language.

Exposure to speakers of the language and the media, an interest in and a positive attitude towards the language, and reading were, according to T8, factors and strategies which contributed to good language learning. Speaking in the language was seen as a good indicator of how much of the language had been acquired.

T10 advised that as much exposure to the language in question would be ideal. For her this included joining language classes, use of media, reading and communicating in the language. Writing in the target language seemed to confirm one's proficiency in the language.

4.3.4. Choice of the best ESL writer among learners

T6 had chosen L6 as the best writer among all the 180 standard six learners. This was because he never wrote 'out of content' (i.e. off the topic), had sense and logic in his writing, wrote interesting pieces and had 'coherence' which Connor and Johns (1990:14) define as 'the quality that makes a text conform to a consistent world picture', in his writing.

L7 was said to 'think' before doing anything. Not only was her handwriting 'neat', but she also had 'imagination' (T7). The ability to put a message across, to answer in full sentences with a few grammatical mistakes, to talk, to use imagination and be creative, had earned L8 the title of best writer among all the 102 standard eight pupils in the school. The learner was also said to be able to 'argue a fact' and to come up with facts to support it. Like L7, L8 was also seen as a 'thinking' being. The language she used was seen as being rather advanced for a learner of her class. She adopted an in-depth and systematic approach to a topic.

L10 always produced outstanding work when compared to his 145 classmates. This was so because he was creative, good at English, used expressive language, managed to keep his teacher interested in what he had written and could write at length. This had the effect of raising 'gooseflesh' on his teacher (T10) at times. According to T10, his very conduct in class showed his love of the language. He was always prepared to give T10 an answer in class. He worked hard, listened and asked questions. T10 felt motivated in having a learner like L10 in her class, as he was one of a kind.

I had also had the pleasure of teaching this learner while he was doing standard eight. The impression I had formed of him from my observation, was of a self-motivated pupil who took his school work very seriously, who would let nothing get in his way and was anxious to get somewhere in life. Though he was part of a large class, he made his presence felt. Even if one were to try one's level best not to notice him, failure to do so would have been guaranteed.

To paint a clear picture of the kind of learner I am writing about here, I feel I need to mention incidents which took place at least twice because I was held up and could not make it in time to my English period with his class. On arrival I found the class quiet, with him standing in front reading from the prescribed source 'Comfort Herself'. The tone of voice he used when reading would send the rest of his classmates roaring with laughter at first, because he would sound just like a Model-C pupil. Soon enough, the class would stop laughing and start listening as they realised that no amount of ridicule could deter him. He was an exceptional learner who always stood out from the rest of his classmates.

It seemed to be a trend with all the teachers, to consider the learners they had chosen as their best writers against the backdrop of generally poor language-learning and therefore writing ability in English, of their classmates. In other words, the learner who got the highest mark for a written task, as compared to the other learners, would be seen as being 'the best'. In my experience, even when marking essays, some teachers at times allocate good marks to certain learners, not because the content of what they have written is good as such, but because it was the best 'considering what other learners in the same class had written'. This point has great significance for this study, especially as the main area of concern lies with the identification of 'excellent ESL writers'.

The Xhosa teachers in the school thought the learners identified as good writers in this study 'very good' at the Xhosa language as well.

4.3.5. Choice of the best piece of written work

L6 thought the letter he had written to his friend, Luthando, (Appendix H) was his best piece for reasons already stated. His teacher (T6) saw things differently. For her the essay entitled 'My township' for

which he had been awarded 8/20 by his standard five teacher, was the best. This was so because although the boy had made a few grammatical mistakes, these were 'not serious' enough to negatively affect the 'sense' of what he had written. His interest-arousing introduction, the way he structured his essay as evident in his paragraphing ability, the linking up of ideas which prepares the reader for what is to come next and the manner in which the essay was wound up, were factors which had impressed T6 tremendously, moreso because the essay had been written in 1996 when the learner was still doing standard five. For 'a child his age', T6 felt he had done 'very well'.

T7 and L7 agreed on 'When a stranger gave me a lift' as the best piece that L7 had written, but for different reasons. For T7, who had taught English from standard six up to ten, the feeling was that the standard of her work could only be expected of a senior learner. T7 was particularly impressed by her ability to captivate the reader's attention, the sequential arrangement of ideas, her 'mature' style which lent credibility to her story, thereby invoking 'empathy' on the part of the reader, and the fact that she had made few mistakes.

According to T8, how well or badly learners wrote was largely a function of the writing conditions; a line was drawn between two extremes: a relaxed atmosphere at home, and a tense examination situation at school. Regardless of the circumstances underlying the writing, both teacher and learner thought the essay entitled 'Crime in our country is escalating at an alarming rate' good. The reason put forth for the choice was the learner's deep understanding of the argument as she had been able to come up with reasons why crime was being committed. Because of this, T8 felt there was 'deeper meaning' in the essay. T8 and L8 seemed to have approached the question from two different angles, one being writing as a process (T8) and the other being writing as a product (L8), hence the difference.

Contrary to L10's choice of 'What I like about myself' as his best written piece, T10 had difficulty deciding which of L10's work was the best piece. As the learner had a 'special' way of expressing himself, he managed to produce a 'unique' piece every time (T10).

4.3.6. Teachers' concept of 'good writing'

Good writing meant different things to different teachers. For one (T6), this means being concise, i.e. the introduction of characters and themes and the conclusion being done within the specified length and time, and without the different phases of the essay being adversely affected by this. According to T6, a story had to show progression, and choice of 'appropriate words', expressions and tenses were to make the story appealing to the reader.

'Attractive' and 'interesting' pieces of writing in which ideas 'flow' satisfied the definition of good writing for T7. T8 believed that 'effective communication', a 'systematic approach', the establishment of 'links' between the various sections in the writing, the presentation of a 'complete picture' and 'creativity' were indispensable to good writing.

T10 did not equate good writing with 'faultless' writing. A 'few inconsequential' grammatical mistakes which did not necessarily rob readers of 'enjoyment and understanding', were not an issue with T10. For her, as long as the writer used 'expressions' effectively to 'paint a picture' in readers' minds so that the reader could 'visualise' what the writer intended, and if what was written made 'sense', then T10 was happy. L10 was seen as capable not only of these things, but he could 'conceptualise' the topic. To T10, only a learner who loved English, read novels and watched films in the language could write on the level that L10 was capable of doing.

4.3.7. Outstanding qualities in the learners

L6 'captured the attention' of his teacher (T6). His 'enthusiastic' nature and 'eagerness to learn' caused him to 'ask questions', to 'venture opinions' and 'not to be shy' to 'volunteer' when something needed to be done. He always expressed himself and was not embarrassed by the mistakes he made, he liked to be corrected. He portrayed leadership qualities as characterised by his determination, the initiative and the confidence he had in his ability (T6).

Because of the large number of learners in his class, T7 felt in no position to say much about the language and writing behaviour of his learner (L7). According to him, had he known beforehand about the research, he would have tried to observe her.

Though she had not been in a position to observe L8 over a sufficient period of time, T8 had noticed the relaxed manner in which L8 approached her work. The learner had struck her as being 'good' and this had led to the teacher asking her questions regarding her language-learning habits. Through the exchange which followed, T8 had discovered that L8 'had a flair for the language'. This learner did not just watch English programmes on television for the sake of watching, but she was in a position to relate what she had seen.

What also transpired during the interview with T8 was the whole question of attitude and motivation. She claimed she had been in the company of Sotho-speaking people for a period of four years while at university, and that because of her attitude had learnt nothing about the language. Gardner and Lambert (1972:135) suggest that an ethnocentric and hostile attitude makes learners perceptually insensitive and unwilling to modify or adjust their response system to approximate the new linguistic responses required in the other language.

T10 described L10 as a learner who had a 'drive'. He initiated things like the establishment of both the school magazine and an English debating society in the school. He was driven both in and out of class.

4.3.8. Facilitation of good writing ability in ESL learners

To facilitate good writing ability, learners should not be overwhelmed with lengthy and threatening chunks of work initially. It would be a wise thing to allow them to practise the skill of introducing a topic first, followed by how to tackle the body of the essay, and then lastly learners should be shown suitable ways of concluding (T6). The choice of topic should be left to them, so that they could write on interesting issues based on day to day experiences in their immediate surroundings. Groups of mixed ability could help the less confident before individual tasks could be introduced.

Though difficult to implement in big classes, teachers should mark learners' work in the presence of the latter. Learners, on the other hand, should be encouraged to read as much as possible (T6 and T8). Three teachers (T6, T8, and T10) claimed to encourage learners to read as much as possible. The concern was that they could not determine whether the learners were really taking their advice seriously or not.

The point of departure to good writing ability as far as T7 was concerned, was through encouraging learners to 'talk'. Teachers had the task of motivating learners and one way of doing this was starting them off on 'easy topics' which would require them to construct 'simple sentences'. Teachers would do well to correct the work there and then (T7).

Apart from extensive reading, T8 felt learners needed to be encouraged to practise writing as well. Writing had to be made interesting by asking pupils to write on any article they had read, as long as it was something familiar to them.

According to T10, learners should be given frequent writing exercises, on interesting topics. Though it would be a difficult thing to do, teachers were advised to focus on a single aspect of the writing exercise at a time. Gannon (1985:81) agrees with the idea that 'not all linguistic features need be regarded simultaneously' when a piece is marked. The reason for this, according to T10, was that writing with only a few red marks would be encouraging to the learners, though they could also misconstrue it as error-free writing, which would raise yet another problem. Learners with writing problems could be encouraged to write short pieces on topics of their choice, outside the classroom situation (T10).

4.3.9. Possible reasons why some learners write well

Learners differ in their writing ability, even if they share the same class and have been exposed to more or less the same teaching and learning conditions. Teachers had different explanations for this.

Learners who read a lot were seen as bound to become good writers, because exposure to the different writing styles enabled them to tackle different topics (T6).

T7 felt that the significant others in the child's life, like parents and teachers sometimes played an important role in the progress or lack thereof, that children made with their school work, through the support or lack of it. Gardner and Lambert (1972:6) support the idea by suggesting that parents with positive attitudes toward another language community more actively encouraged their children to learn that language than parents with less favourable attitudes. Love of the language on the part of the pupil also helped (T7 and T8).

T8 believed in the concept of a 'flair for a language', which could be further developed through reading and conversing in English. A discussion ensued regarding the role that the family background and the significant others played in learners' lives. Despite educationally sound backgrounds and encouragement from members of learners' families, some learners just did not make it. On the other hand there were learners who excelled despite impoverished and deprived backgrounds. This brought about two possibilities, motivation and aptitude. The two concepts have been discussed at length in the literature chapter.

T10 reiterated the possible role that a good English teacher could play already mentioned by T7 above, in addition to love of English, and a favourable family background which 'valued' reading. T10 thought aptitude also had everything to do with good writing ability, and contrasted this with love of English. According to her, learners with a high aptitude were likely to do well in a language simply because they were intelligent. It was unlikely, on the other hand, to find pupils who, though they loved the language, performed poorly in it. T10 believed it was only love of a language that made learners good at it. The 'need' to learn a language, that is the instrumental approach (Gardner & Lambert 1972:3) to language learning was seen as also contributing to language learning and therefore to good writing ability.

4.4. Text analysis

Text analysis describes and evaluates the quality of texts and can help teachers, language learners and researchers identify rules and principles of written or spoken texts at a variety of levels: sentences, sentence relations and complete texts (Connor 1994:682).

As effective student writing is said to exhibit essential features characteristic of particular genres, metadiscoursal analysis looks out for the use of text 'connectives' like 'first', 'next' and 'however'; 'illocution markers' like 'to sum up' and 'to give an example'; 'hedges' like 'might' and 'perhaps' and 'emphatics' like 'clearly' and 'obviously' which good writers are said to use effectively (Connor 1994: 683). The texts were also analysed for other qualities like 'cohesion', 'sense', 'coherence', 'syntactic complexity', 'creativity', 'voice' etc.

Some of the good points that I have outlined in each script, apply to the others as well, so to guard against redundancy, I have thought fit to look at the outstanding qualities in each piece. As the focus of the study is on 'good writing ability', attention has been given to the good rather than the bad points in the learners' writing.

4.4.1. L6's letter to Luthando : Appendix H

This is an autobiographical piece of writing as one would expect of a learner of L6's class. Learners of this age group usually find the personal style appealing. L6 wrote the letter to a friend telling him about his (L6's) sister's birthday.

The good points about the letter include the fact that: he has found an appropriate way of introducing the letter by establishing a hectic scene as could be expected whenever there has been a function like his sister's birthday party in this case, thereby also accounting for reasons why he had not been able to write sooner, which to me suggests a creative ability. This has the effect of making the experience seem real (Cooper and Odell 1977:5).

Apart from this, the ability to write effective introductions is seen by Scarcella (1984:671) as very important, because such learners can present their ideas clearly in the beginning of their essays. This has the effect of engaging the readers' attention as well as orienting them as to what the essay can be said to be about, whereas if the essay had been badly introduced, the readers would be unable to read past the learner's opening statements.

What he writes makes sense in that the reader can easily understand the message he wishes to put across, without much of an effort. There is good chronological arrangement of facts. He starts off with the 'bigger picture' by giving the date on which the party was held, and also mentions where it was held. He then proceeds to the finer details like the starting time and the opening prayer. Each step shows progression as he builds towards the real crux of the matter.

He establishes time frames through use of phrases like 'at one o'clock' and words like 'Saturday' and 'Sunday', with the events which took place on the former day preceding those that happened on the following day. He has also made use of what Connor (1994:682) refers to as a 'text connective' like 'after'. He has an appropriate way of winding up, with his father thanking the guests and the family cleaning up. He concludes by expressing his overall feeling, as he sums up the weekend as having been 'enjoyable'.

Where most learners would have written 'pass my regards', he shows a good command of English idiomatic expressions, and has written 'give my regards' instead. Not only is his handwriting legible, but he has made no spelling and very few insignificant grammatical errors, one of which is the omission of the conjunction 'and'. As for tense usage, he has cleverly woven his way between the past and the present. Note the correct use of the past perfect tense in the line where he has written 'after the people "had"'.

Regarding punctuation, he has all the apostrophe's, commas and full-stops in the right places. The teacher has awarded him 39/50.

4.4.2. L7's 'When a stranger gave me a lift': Appendix I

Some of the good points already mentioned in L6's case also apply here, like the sequencing of events, clarity of ideas, and use of connectives such as 'when'. The kind of language L7 uses somehow differs from that of L6 in the sense that where the latter uses 'formal' language, L7 uses colloquial language as evident in her mention of words like 'guy'. She also uses adjectives as in 'white BMW' and 'black guy'; and the adverb in 'crying loudly'. She has also been accurate in her use of the direct speech, skilfully opening and closing inverted commas.

Her definition of the concept of a 'stranger' as being someone she 'did not know', the fact that she justifies her need for the lift, and her use of the expression 'to let go of me' are other impressive aspects in this learner's chosen piece of writing. Considering that she is only doing standard seven, I think something has to be said about her vocabulary as well. She uses words like 'response', 'suspicious', 'sympathy', 'relieved' and others.

Her vow 'never to do a stupid thing like that' at the end of the essay, forms a good conclusion in that it shows that she had learnt a good lesson. This, I think, is an appropriate way to end an essay of this kind. It also serves the purpose of lending credibility to the whole story. She got 35/50 for the essay. Of interest is the fact that her teacher had not seen fit to comment on the essay, even though he had found this piece the best among all those that she had written.

Length-wise I would say both narratives were sufficiently long. The reader does not get a sense of being 'left hanging' as might possibly have been the case if certain details had been left out.

4.4.3. L8's 'Crime in our country is escalating at an alarming rate : Appendix J

This choice of topic is a definite step away from the personalised type of writing I encountered with the learners in the lower classes (L6 and L7). It is an interesting piece in that it shows progression as the pupil now concerns herself with problematic issues facing the society, like crime. To me it indicates a

mature mind.

L8 echoes the topic as her introduction, and gives it the status of a 'topic sentence' which Rodseth (1992:10) defines as the 'main idea' of a paragraph and 'a full declarative sentence'. The echoing of the topic has the effect of strongly emphasizing the point. She then backs up her claim with statistical evidence (60% employment against 40% unemployment), to highlight the predicament facing the South African nation. She identifies the causes of crime as 'abuse', being without 'jobs' and an 'education', and then establishes crime as the only way in which criminals think they can 'solve' the problem.

There is logic in what she writes: first she identifies the problem of crime in the country, then she looks at the possible causes of the problem like unemployment, and concludes by suggesting 'education' and 'negotiation' as the solution to the problem. She has structured her paragraphs in such a way that each communicates a fully-developed thought, while it is also directly linked to the preceding and following paragraphs. The 'you' she refers to in the second paragraph suggests that she has the reader in mind, and that in fact she is addressing that reader as she writes. She has managed to adopt an 'observer stance' throughout the essay.

4.4.4. L9's 'God loves me' : Appendix K

The reader's attention is drawn to the essay entitled 'I am blessed' which this learner wrote in 1996. Here the learner has written on a topic very similar to the one to be analysed here (entitled 'God loves me') and which she wrote in 1997, in terms of the content, though the two titles are phrased differently.

As the learner in question was convinced that the quality of the 1996 essay would be inferior to the 1997 one because of the time that had elapsed since the writing of the first one, I have analysed both texts, to see if there has been any 'growth' in the learner's writing ability.

Cooper and Odell (1977:128) find a powerful method of measuring students' growth in writing through analysis of 'intellectual processes' of which 'syntax' provides a few clues. Some examples of intellectual processes quoted are coordinate conjunction cues to contrast like 'but' and 'however'.

According to them there is growth if the revision explores the experience mentioned in the original essay much more fully than does the original, which is the case here; and if the former reflects more effective use of several intellectual processes. The learner's reference to physical context, sequence, and contrast should increase markedly in the revision. There should also be relevant information in the revision, that was not there in the original.

In both essays L9's object of affection is her mother. In the original essay she approached the idea of being blessed in a more 'general' way. Her mother is the 'blessing' in her life because she is 'very kind', 'supportive', 'has always been there' for her, and many others. Consequently, she believes that there is nothing in this world that they 'could not conquer together'.

In the 1997 essay, on the other hand, she gets underneath the surface of things, she states 'specific' reasons why her mother is the 'special' person mentioned in the original. In the first paragraph she mentions the fact that they are four children with different fathers, which by implication is reason enough for the mother to want to 'abandon' them in the same way that their fathers had. That she had not abandoned them convinces L9 that God really loves her.

She gets down to the business of counting her blessings. She draws a contrast in the second paragraph by comparing her family which has 'a roof over [its] head', a 'plate every night' and 'bread every morning', against those who do not have such blessings. She maintains that although they may not have a lot of money, the 'love' they have for each other is 'the most important thing' that gets them 'through the day'.

While the mother seemed to be the one given credit for most of the good things happening in L9's life in the original essay, in the revision she seems to hint at God as being 'behind' every thing. She concludes by saying that without His love she does not even want to think where she would be today.

When reading the revision, one gets a sense of a 'deeper feeling', a more 'mature' way of looking at things as well as syntactic progression. Length-wise, the original (about 175 words) is about thirty-five

words longer than the revision which is approximately 140 words long. Regarding the issue of 'quantity versus quality', Cooper and Odell (1977:129) argue that what determines quality is the number of intellectual processes reflected in the essay, and not the number of words per se.

For both essays the teacher has given the same comment, that is 'V. Good' for 'very good'. If anything can be inferred from such a comment, it is that both have the same weighting in her eyes.

4.4.5. L10's 'What I like about myself': Appendix L

L10 is a learner who really likes himself, has confidence in his ability, and is happy with who he is. Anyone reading this particular essay of his will get a sense of all of these. The overriding theme of the whole essay is his confidence. His confidence is brought forward through his 'voice', which is full of life and which the reader should find interesting. As a writer, L10 comes through as an individual, his ideas are 'his and his alone' (Cooper and Odell 1977:22).

He believes there is no need to 'compromise' one's life for the sake of imitating a role model, and that there is no need for one to like a role model more than one likes oneself. He is very proud and will not be swayed, even by 'tricky parents' who impose ideas on their children, from what he believes in.

The type of essay is autobiographical in nature, and would under normal circumstances not be expected of a senior learner. What distinguishes it from other personalised pieces of writing is the style in which it is written. According to Gannon (1985:59), 'style' is basically concerned with grammatical structure, with organisation of thought and material, with effective use of the orthographic uses and conventions of the writing system, and with the choice of words.

He employs a relaxed and uninhibited style when writing. He really talks to the reader has confidence in his ability to 'counsel' not only other people, but himself as well.

For better insight into these learners writing ability, the reader is referred to Appendices H to L, where more of their interesting written work appears.

4.5. Summary

In this chapter, the analysis of data has been divided into three major areas, learner interviews, teacher interviews as well as text analysis. Teacher and learner views regarding good ESL writing ability have been developed into themes to facilitate analysis. Learners' written work has also been analysed. From time to time, references from the literature have been brought to bear on all these areas of focus.

The chapter following this one, Chapter 5, discusses the interpretations made from the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

As with any body of empirical research, the study examined here, although generally sound, exhibits some limitations. The knowledge acquired from this study is not definitive. As such one cannot make any statements and predictions with confidence. What this study can do for the ESL language learning community though, is to sensitize teachers and students to differences in the predispositions with which different language learners approach writing in a second language, and will hopefully equip both teachers and learners with skills with which they can approach this exercise in the future.

Before discussing the interpretations of this study, I think it necessary and fitting therefore, that I start with its limitations, so that whatever emerges from it can be viewed against this backdrop. The interpretations and conclusion follow immediately after the shortcomings of the research have been dealt with.

5.2. The limitations of the study

In discussing the limitations to this study, methodological concerns are addressed. This is so because in order for research findings to be 'trustworthy', the methodology used in order to get to the interpretation of the study, as the end-point in a study, has to be an appropriate one.

A discussion of the methodological concerns appears relevant at this point, as it is the soundness or lack thereof, that directly affects the interpretation of the study. After all, what good is a study of this nature if it cannot fulfil its aim to either 'explain', 'describe', or 'interpret' the phenomenon of 'proficiency in ESL writing'?

The three 'across the board' criteria identified by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:104), i.e. 'representativeness', 'validity' and 'reliability', have been used to evaluate the study. The reader is referred to paragraph 3.6 of the methodology chapter, i.e. Chapter 3, for an in-depth discussion of the

measure of reliability and validity in this study. The concepts here are discussed in so far as they affect the interpretations of the study.

5.2.1. Validity

As has already been pointed out in the methodology chapter, there are reasons to suggest that this study cannot be said to be entirely valid, even though 'triangulation' as a means of increasing validity, as suggested by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:106), was effected.

As a starting point, the reader is referred to the methodological concerns already mentioned in the introduction to Chapter 3 on methodology. These include use of interviews, observation and learners' written work as 'instruments' of data collection. One of the problems with peer interviews, is the tendency among respondents, to give answers which they think the researcher 'expects' to hear (Anderson 1990:153).

The same could be said of the learners as well, in that most respondents will do almost anything to 'be interesting' (Walker 1985:108), which I fear could have been the case here as well. The threatening atmosphere of interviews generally, although in this case efforts had been made to make this less so, could have resulted in a lot being left unsaid.

Also, whether or not the learners can or do give accurate accounts of their writing processes is not easy to ascertain. Even if an accurate description of the writing procedure in one essay has been given, the process will undoubtedly differ from writing task to writing task (McKay 1981:1). Also of great concern here, is the question of interpretation, whether the interviewees would interpret things as has been done by the researcher. Taking the research back for confirmation would not serve any purpose either, as not all of the learners are still available.

The second problem, that of observation, is that there could have been a lot that had gone unnoticed, because one sees what one wants to see. The problem with the choice of the ESL learners as the best in their classes, by their teachers, could be problematic. As there was no way for me to determine

whether the chosen pupils were indeed the best in the school or not, there can be no certainty about this point.

Also, more important and relevant to this study, is the fact that 'writing ability' is a construct that is not directly observable, but which is inferred to be present in the writer on the basis of performance on an appropriate writing task (Henning 1991:283).

This problem is further aggravated by lack of universally agreed upon objective standards for rating texts. Because of this, no single text can receive the same rating from all its readers. This is because what constitutes good writing for one individual, is not necessarily the same for all readers. Added to these, is the fact that the conditions under which the writing took place, were also overlooked, as not all of the writing occurred under controlled conditions. These and the following points could have affected the validity of my study.

5.2.2. Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which any particular method of data collection is replicable. The question to ask here is whether another researcher using the same technique would come up with the same findings (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995:107).

According to Cooper and Odell (1977:xi) at least two raters should rate learners' work. In this case, all the learners' work was rated by just one teacher, and that was the subject teacher concerned in each case. I merely took the teachers' assessment of the learners' work to be 'accurate', and then went about looking for the good aspects in the learners' texts. This, to me, implies a possibility that another rater could have found these learners' writing ability 'not so good', or could have chosen totally different learners for the study.

Whether the informants of the study can be said to be 'reliable' is another source of concern. According to Anderson (1990:154), the informants' particular personalities and their relationship to the researcher all tend to colour the interpretation of the data. Because of this, the reliability of ethnographic study is

difficult to quantify, and the results rely entirely on the astuteness of a reliable observer.

5.2.3. Representativeness

By its very nature, ethnographic inquiry focuses on single cases or at most, a limited setting of action. The act of choosing the learners was deliberately non-representative, because the learners had to be 'the best ESL writers', and there are not too many of them.

Cooper and Odell (1977:x) claim that 'there is no mechanical or technical solution to the problems posed in evaluating writing'. They suggest that as writing is an expressive human activity, the best response to it would be a 'receptive, sympathetic human response'. In view of the factors mentioned above, the language used to report the findings and the conclusion will be 'tentative' in nature (Silva 1993:660).

5.3. Interpretation of the learner interviews

The learners forming the subjects of this study were chosen as the best ESL writers in their classes by their teachers. As the majority code-switched between English and Xhosa during the interview, it became difficult to decide whether this was an indication of a 'lack of fluency in English' or a 'lack of confidence in their English-speaking ability', or whether, as competent bilinguals, the learners consciously chose to make use of both the languages at their disposal; after all, they had a choice and the interviewer was Xhosa-speaking.

Assuming that lack of fluency was the reason behind the code-switching, this would indeed suggest a possible gap between writing and speaking ability, i.e. that being a good ESL writer does not necessarily guarantee fluency in English.

It would then seem to be the case also, that fluency not necessarily be linked to the standard a learner is doing, as one would normally expect. Put simply, being a standard 9 learner does not mean being more fluent in English than a standard 8 learner, if one may just give an example.

Fluency seemed to be a matter of interaction with English-speaking people, as well as exposure to the media. It also seemed to be influenced by personal characteristics, the more outgoing and uninhibited and confident of their ability to speak in English the learners are, the more likely they are to be eloquent.

When lacking the appropriate vocabulary, or when they found the question too difficult to respond to in English, code-switching between English and Xhosa seemed to be a convenient communicating tool for the learners.

All of the learners, except L8 engaged in some English writing exercise of one kind or another outside the classroom context, though to differing degrees. As suggested in the literature, the kinds of writing exercises good writers engaged in ranged from grocery-list-writing, note-writing, message-writing, letter-writing, poetry-writing to book-writing, depending on the demands of the learner's particular situation, as well as on the level of interest and motivation of the learner concerned. Whether it was the learners' motivation which gave way to positive feelings about learning English, or vice versa is difficult to say.

That the learners were not equally motivated could be argued as 'evident', though very difficult to measure, in the time each learner seemed to devote to the practice of writing. L10 seemed to devote the most time to writing as evident in his record of work. He is the only one who seemed motivated enough to write further, by making an attempt at poetry-writing. The motivating factor this time being his involvement in this study. It would appear as if research generally, has some motivating as well as awareness-raising effect on some subjects. While working on my M. Ed. course-work assignments, some of the subjects of the various research projects would comment on how the research had changed their way of seeing things.

Added to these, L10 is the only one portraying an integrative approach to the learning of English, and this to me seems to suggest that he was the most motivated of all the learners.

Motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, instrumental or integrative; intelligence; an aptitude for languages; a positive self-esteem and attitude; seemed to form the cornerstone to good writing ability. These seemed to be informed by the learners' ambitions and the perceived role of English in the learners' particular future career.

The ability to write well in ESL also seemed to be a product of verbal interaction, especially with native speakers of English; exposure to media like newspapers, magazines, radio and television; avid reading; and support from the significant others like the family, teachers, and peers; as well as certain qualities in the learners themselves, like an aptitude for language-learning, motivation, interest and many others.

Radio Metro seemed to enjoy the greatest listenership of all the radio channels that the learners listened to. While the choice of reading material involving magazines was wide and varied, all the learners claimed to read magazines. Newspapers seemed to be the least popular, and were read by only two of the learners, perhaps because of the lack of bright colours, coupled with the 'sea' of words, if one compares it to the magazines. All of these media provided the exposure or input necessary though not sufficient for good writing ability in English.

Although the learners were good ESL writers within the school context, not all of them practised this skill as one would expect them to do, outside the classroom context. One of the things that all the learners had in common, is that they read in English. This suggests a positive relationship between reading and good writing ability, that the more one reads in English, the more likely one is to improve one's writing ability.

When a range of writing topics is given in the classroom context, the ultimate choice seemed to be determined by what the learners had read, and also programmes they had watched on television, in that such topics were not only easy for the learners to write on, but were familiar to them as well.

The learners' ideas concerning the best piece they had written highlighted the concept of writing as both a product and a process. The two who were process-oriented concentrated on how the writing experience had been for them, whereas the other two favouring the product were more concerned with the finished

product. Only one learner seemed to have considered both aspects of the writing exercise when choosing the best piece among all the ones she had written.

In a nutshell, for the learners the concept of good writing meant proper usage of 'tenses', correct 'spelling', good use of idiomatic expressions, 'interesting' writing, and a smooth flow of ideas or 'effortless writing'.

The strategies, used to produce such pieces of writing, included 'practice', which meant preparing or 'rehearsing' before the actual writing took place; 'translation' of originally Xhosa words or ideas into English; 'internal dialogue' which included asking oneself questions as well as responding to these; 'asking' significant others for assistance when the need arose; laying oneself open to 'correction', 'conversing' or 'bursting out' in English from time to time, carefully 'thinking' and 'concentration'. Use of powers of 'imagination', 'brainstorming' and 'visualising' which also led to the formulation of ideas in learners' minds were also cited as important strategies.

The involvement of all four language-learning skills in attempts to acquire better writing skills, was also seen as strategic. 'Reading' was the most highlighted skill of all, while 'writing' was interestingly the least mentioned. This, perhaps, could be explained by drawing from what the literature says about reading and writing being integrally linked as skills.

'Love' of the English language, the adoption of positive 'I can attitudes' towards it, constantly 'practising' writing in the language, consulting English 'dictionaries', use of 'libraries', and having 'confidence' in oneself were also encouraged. The choice of topics that were both 'interesting' as well as on which they would not run short on ideas, was seen as important.

After a piece of writing had been finished, and if time still permitted it, looking out, in a cool and relaxed manner, for spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes, was a good thing to do. It would seem as if the learners saw general competence in English as playing an important role in being a good writer.

Whether it is the learners' motivation which led to the positive feelings they had about learning English at school or the other way round, is difficult to say. Nonetheless, the learners cited a number of reasons for their feelings. One of these could be the problematic power English seems to have over the learners' L1, that is Xhosa.

Compared to Xhosa, it seemed as if English enjoyed a higher status among the learners. There could undoubtedly be any number of reasons for that. Recognition and acceptance of English as fast becoming a de facto lingua franca in South Africa could be one reason. Black South Africans view the language as one through which their children could become 'empowered'. Assuming that this is indeed the case, the literature also suggests that the attitude that the family adopts towards the target language, its people and culture, is bound to communicate itself to the children of that particular home, which would account for the learners' positive attitudes towards English.

If the learners' claims concerning Xhosa are anything to go by, the implications of those claims are of great relevance to this study. Some of the reasons which emerged as to why English seemed so popular among the learners, were the fact that English had lots of interesting written material, and there were also many English dictionaries that one could consult if and when the need arose. The same could not be said about Xhosa on both counts.

Also, as Xhosa is the mother-tongue of all the learners, the tendency seemed to be to take the language for granted, the general feeling being that there is nothing new to gain from paying a lot of attention to the language.

Despite the apparently careless attitude the learners adopted towards Xhosa, they were found to be just as good in this language as well. As things turned out, one has to wonder if these learners were just good language learners or determined and intelligent all-rounders, as suggested by their good performance in the other subjects as well?

As a last note to many parents who, by sending their children to school, take it to be the duty of the teacher alone to see to the education of their children, this study seems to suggest that the learners,

teachers, family members and the department of education, each has a big role to play.

5.4. Interpretation of the teacher interviews

As an international and universal language, a language of work and one which everybody in the country had studied, all four teachers saw English as the answer to the problem of linguistic diversity in South Africa.

The teachers' feelings regarding the communicative approach to language learning and teaching in the ESL class were two-fold. In that the approach facilitated communication on the part of the learners among other things, it was good.

But, in the sense that it lacked emphasis on rule-formation or grammar, while emphasizing 'quantity at the expense of quality' and required a lot of teaching aids in order to be effective, one teacher seemed to feel that the approach was not entirely suitable for the ESL class in our impoverished context.

The acquisition of a language was seen as a function of various factors, one of which was age. Other factors included reading, use of cassettes, interacting with speakers of the target language, exposure to media, an interest in and a positive attitude towards the language in question, joining language classes and writing in the language.

The reason some learners were chosen as the best writers in their ESL classes ranged from the fact that they: thought before writing, never wrote out of context, made sense in their writing, wrote interesting pieces, used imagination, wrote coherently and neatly with a few grammatical mistakes, had an in-depth and systematic approach to a topic, could argue out facts, used language that was advanced for their ages, were creative, used expressive language, could write at length, and wrote good pieces.

On the whole, the various definitions of the concept of good writing that the different teachers gave, seem to suggest that this is the kind of writing which, according to Zamel (1982:199), is free of

language related errors that can obfuscate meaning, and demonstrates almost total control of organizational skills.

According to the teachers, good writing encompassed being concise, that is an ability to skilfully introduce the various phases in the writing, while also keeping within the prescribed length; establishing good links between these phases; a good and appropriate choice of vocabulary, tenses and expressions; writing attractive, interesting and creative pieces with ideas that flow from one another; and writing that effectively painted a picture in the reader's mind and moreover made sense.

Possible reasons why the learners excelled as ESL writers in their teachers' eyes were that they were not only eager but were also enthusiastic to learn the English language; were not shy to volunteer an opinion in class, whether correct or wrong; laid themselves open to correction; had confidence in their ability; portrayed initiative and leadership qualities, and stood out in their classes because of the flair they had for the language. Not only this, but these learners in question loved, had a positive attitude towards and an interest in English, tuned in to English channels on the radio and television, needed to learn the language, and were driven.

Other possible reasons why some learners write better than others, according to the teachers, are that as avid readers, they are more exposed to different writing styles, which not only broadens the scope of topics on which they can write, but also equips them with different ways of tackling a topic. Also, the possible role played by the significant others like the family, friends and teachers in their lives, as well as backgrounds where there is input + 1 for the learners, seemed helpful to the learners.

5.5. Interpretation on text analysis

The assessment of the learners' written pieces was done on different genres, and because of this no common evaluation criteria were used. The length of the different pieces of writings vary. According to the literature, there is nothing to suggest that a good piece of writing has to be a lengthy one. What is important, though, is that it presents a well-balanced picture, with all the necessary parts in their proper places.

As the focus of the study is on excellent writing ability, attention was given only to the good aspects of the learners' written work. Although the pieces were individually analysed, this is not to say that the qualities found in one text do not exist in the others. Because of the demanding nature of text analysis, the researcher thought it best to analyse one piece of writing per learner. The analysis was based on the good aspects in each piece.

The 'general impression' form of evaluation which ESL teachers generally use when assessing student writing, and which was used to evaluate the texts in this study, suggests that well-written texts are those that exhibit a variety of qualities.

The texts that the learners chose as their best pieces seemed to be indeed good pieces of writing, although not necessarily for the reasons that the learners had given. This was so because they exhibit a combination of some of the following conditions:

The essays satisfied the rubric of 'relevance to the essay question'. The next thing that any good writer needs to achieve once the expected content of the essay has been determined, is the skill of introduction. A well-introduced essay has the effect, not only of capturing the readers' attention but also of orienting them.

The appropriate establishment of time frames and sequencing of events ensures that each paragraph, though a unit, is also inextricably linked to the ones preceding and /or following it. This adds the flavour of coherence to the essay as a whole as it builds toward the climax. There is nothing as fulfilling to the reader as a proper ending to a good and well-told story. The catch here is in the ability of the teller to wind things up such that there are no loose ends, with all of these being achieved within the stipulated essay length.

Other qualities which seem to have made these learners' essays both interesting and a great pleasure to read, are the use of appropriate vocabulary; mechanical devices like text connectives, expressions etc.; language that not only adds colour to the writing, but also activates the powers of imagination and many others.

The ability to write convincingly, this being achieved through the creative use of devices like statistical evidence as well as effective concluding remarks, are some of the factors which lent credibility to the pieces of writing. Individual voice and a vibrant style of writing were also some of the qualities that came through from the texts that the learners had written.

The findings from this study suggest that it is possible to measure growth in a learner's writing ability. In the case of this study this was made possible by a comparison of an original piece against a revised version of the same topic.

Though the ability to write at length on a particular topic could be said to be indicative of having sufficient facts to write on it, no positive relationship exists between lengthy pieces of writing and good writing ability. My experience as an ESL teacher also suggests that this, indeed, is the case.

5.6. Implications of the research for ESL learners and teachers

The findings of this study seem to indicate that a piece of writing can be good even if there are errors, just as long as these do not distract from the meaning and sense in the writing. The many and varied strategies used by the learners in the study also suggest that skillful writing is not something that can be achieved overnight, but demands a lot of time, effort and commitment on the part of the learner.

The literature (Zamel 1982) suggests that writers do not produce perfect essays in one sitting, and that certain features of composing are focused upon before others. According to this reckoning, content and organisation are of primary importance, and editing the province of the last stage of composing.

As far as personality traits are concerned, certain traits in the learners, like not being shy, being uninhibited and others could be beneficial to any learner wishing to learn to write in ESL. It also appears that there are other factors, external to the learners themselves, which can facilitate good writing ability. These include support and motivation from the significant others, as well as providing the learners with maximum exposure to the media.

What comes across from all of these factors, is that good writing ability is a skill which can be learned as well as taught.

To avoid redundancy, I would recommend that both ESL learners who wish to improve their ability to write in English, and their teachers, will do well to take heed of advice rendered by the excellent writers and the teachers in this and other research of a similar kind.

For the learners, it has been suggested that there are certain qualities that an ESL learner aspiring to improve writing ability needs to have in order to excel in this skill. From the point of view of the excellent ESL writers and the teachers in this study, ESL learners are advised that love, motivation, an interest in and a positive attitude towards the language, form the first step to better writing ability in English as a second language. These coupled with maximum exposure to media like newspapers, radio and television; interaction with native speakers and others will help facilitate language learning. The kind of exposure is likely to result in good writing ability in the end.

The teachers also seem to have a major role to play in improving the learners' ability to write. This includes motivating and encouraging learners in their attempts at good writing ability, by not concentrating solely on their written mistakes, but rather on the good points in their writing; starting learners off on smaller pieces of work at first, building on their confidence, giving them interesting topics to write on and sometimes allowing them to choose their own topics, etc. Learners seemed to write more and with greater fluency and satisfaction when their writing involved them personally.

Teachers could also make reading materials like books and magazines available to learners. The former could then link topics to issues raised in the material or on other media like the radio and television.

On a concluding note, something has to be said about the comments that teachers write on learners' work. According to McKay (1984:165), teachers read learners' texts with preconceptions and preoccupations, expecting to find errors, and this comes out in the comments they make. In this study, only a few teachers have commented on learners' work, and as the learners are proficient ESL writers, the comments are mainly positive.

Pertaining to comments generally, what is needed is the kind of thoughtful commentary that shows whether learners have really communicated ideas or not, which raises questions from a reader's point of view that may not have occurred to the writer. This is the kind of comment that creates a motive for doing something different in the next draft (McKay 1984:166).

5.7. Conclusion: Suggestions for further research

As has already been suggested, the findings of this study need further comparison. As a result, it seems as if the appropriate way to conclude a study of this kind, is to suggest possible areas for further study.

Silva (1993:668) points out that there is at present no coherent and comprehensive theory of second language writing, as this is a relatively new field of inquiry. This, to me, implies a need for more comparative research to corroborate and enhance present findings, and to fill in gaps.

This need is enhanced by the fact that much of what is read about ESL writers and their teachers in township schools presents a very depressing picture. Generalisations are also made, giving the impression that all learners are the same.

This study reveals interesting differences and similarities between learners learning in the same context. It also reveals that both some learners and teachers are thoughtful and knowledgeable about writing. Many of the teacher and learner responses in this study coincide with the themes that appear in the literature, concerning research on writing.

Further research therefore, should aim to improve design, reporting and interpretation (Silva 1993:669). In order to achieve these, more case studies or larger samples will be necessary, to enhance generalisability. One way to achieve this would be by reporting on writing conditions, writing task features and subject characteristics more fully.

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APPENDIX A : LEARNER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

- 1. Would you like us to conduct this interview in English or in Xhosa?**
- 2. Is there any particular reason for your preference?**
- 3. Do you ever associate with non-Xhosa speaking people?**
- 4. If your answer to Ques. 3 is yes, please explain.**
- 5. Which language do you converse in when you are together?**
- 6. Are there any instances in your life, other than at school, where you actually express yourself in English?**
- 7. If your answer to Ques. 6 is yes, please explain.**
- 8. Do you ever listen to the radio or watch TV in English?**
- 9. If yes, which is/are your favourite TV/radio programme/s?**
- 10. How do you feel about learning English?**
- 11. Why?**
- 12. In your opinion, how can one learn English?**
- 13. Do you enjoy reading?**
- 14. Which is the most interesting book you have read over the past year?**
- 15. Which language do you feel most comfortable reading and writing in?**
- 16. Do you do any writing outside the classroom context?**
- 17. What kind/s of writing do you do?**
- 18. Your essays are well-written. How do you go about writing them?**
- 19. What kind of topic do you enjoy writing on?**
- 20. If you were to choose the best piece of writing from your essays, which one would it be?**

21. Why?

22. Suppose you were to advise your classmates who are poor writers, what would you tell them?

23. What is your ambition in life?

24. Do you think English might affect your life-chances?

25. How do you think this could possibly happen?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!!

APPENDIX B : TEACHER INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS

- 1. In a linguistically diverse country like South Africa, how do you think we could possibly facilitate communication among the people of the country?**
- 2. The English syllabus favours a communicative approach to language teaching and learning. What do you think of the approach?**
- 3. In your opinion, how can a language best be acquired?**
- 4. You have chosen this pupil as the best writer among your pupils. What is it about this writing that makes it so special to you?**
- 5. Looking at this pupil's written work, which piece, in your opinion, is the best she/he has written so far?**
- 6. What makes you say so?**
- 7. What, in your opinion, constitutes good writing?**
- 8. Have you noticed anything peculiar about this pupil's personality or behaviour, in or out of class, which you think might account for his/ her outstanding ability to write?**
- 9. What do you think ESL teachers could do to facilitate good writing ability in their pupils?**
- 10. Given the common background of poor writing ability among most ESL pupils, why do you think some are able to make it as excellent writers?**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!!

APPENDIX C : TRANSCRIPTION OF L6'S RECORDING.

I stands for Interviewer.

L6 stands for a standard 6 learner.

I : Sizakuqalisa ke ngoku Likho, ufuna ukuphendula in English or in Xhosa? (We are now about to begin with our interview. Would you like to respond in English or in Xhosa?)

L6: Ndibawela khe ndixube, Miss. (I would like to mix both languages, Miss.)

I : Kutheni ufuna ukuxuba nje? (Why do you want to mix the languages?)

L6: Ndifuna ukuqhela ukuthetha i-English, Miss. (I want to get used to talking in English.)

I : So, uzakumana usebenzisa isiNgesi, umana usebenzisa isiXhosa? Uza kusisebenzisa xa kutheni isiXhosa? (So, that means you are going to use the languages interchangeably. When are you going to use Xhosa?)

L6: IsiXhosa ndizakusisebenzisa xa igama ndingaliqondi kakuhle. (I'll use Xhosa when I am not sure about the meaning of a word.)

I : Okay. Bakhona abantu abangathethi isiXhosa okhe udibane nabo? (Do you ever associate with non-Xhosa speaking people?)

L6: Bakhona, Miss. Kukho uLuthando nabazali bakhe. (Yes, Miss there are, it is Luthando and his parents.)

I : Abasithethi isiXhosa, neh? Basuka phi? (They don't speak Xhosa, huh? Where do they come from?)

L6: Abasithethi, basuka e-Australia. Bahlala e- town e-Parkridge. (They don't. They come from Australia. They live in town, at Parkridge).

I : Ubazela phi wena? (How did you meet them?)

L6: U-auntie wam uhlala nabo, bendithanda ukuya khona. So ke xa sithetha nabo sisebenzisa i-English. (My aunt lives with them, I used to visit them. So when we talk to them, we use English.)

I: Utsho njani ukuba u-auntie wakho 'uhlala nabo'? Niyazalana? (What do you mean by 'living with them'? Are you related to them?)

L6: I- Parkridge yi-village, so basondelelene. (Parkridge is a village, and they live close together as neighbours.)

I : So, xa uye phaya ke ngoku kufuneke uthethe isiNgesi. Ayikho enye indawo ahandle kwalapha esikolweni apho uye ethethe ngesiNgesi? Awukhe uncokole ngesiNgesi? (So, it is when you visit your aunt that you converse with them in English. Are there other instances, other than at school, where you use English? Maybe through conversation?)

L6: Yes, Miss, sikhe sincokole ngesiNgesi ekhaya. Beva ukuba ndiyasithanda isiNgesi, so naxa sifihlela abantwana abancinci into, Miss, sisebenzise sona. (At home we sometimes converse in English. They learned that I was interested in English, so sometimes we use the language when we want to keep my younger brothers and sisters in the dark about something.) ('younger brothers and sisters' refer to cousins.)

I : So, niyenza loo nto xa nifihlela abantwana abancinci, nanini mhlambi? (So you use the language when you want to exclude the younger children. Is that the only time in which you use the language?)

L6: If uyaqonda ukuba hey khakhe ulibize ngesiNgesi, ufuna ukulungiswa mhlambi akuqinisekanga ngeli gama, bakulungise kwi-mistakes zakho. (I also use it when I am unsure about some English word and need my parents to correct me, and they correct my mistakes.)

I : Baphangela phi abazali bakho? (Where do your parents work?)

L6: Umama akaphangeli, but utata uphangela kwenye i- garage e-town. (My mother does not work, but my father works at a garage in town.)

I : Usisi lo wakho umkhulu bendithetha naye? (What about your elder sister, the one I was talking to?)

L6: Usisi omnye uya- teacher eNobhotwe, omnye akaphangeli une-degree ye-law. (She teaches at Nobhotwe, and my other sister does not work, though she has a degree in law.)

I : So, ngabo aba bamana bekufundisa isiNgesi? Okay, ukhe umamele ii-programmes zesiNgesi ze-TV? (So, those are the people responsible for helping you to learn English? Do you ever listen to English programmes on television?)

L6: Yes, Miss.

I : Eziphi? (Which programmes?)

L6: Ngu-'Teleschool' no 'Felicia Mabuza-Suttle'. (It's 'Teleschool' and the 'Felicia Mabuza-Suttle' show.)

I : And then i-radio yona? Uyayimamela nge-English? (What about the radio, do you listen to English programmes?)

L6: Kwi- Radio Umhlobo Wenene ndimamela laa nkqubo yabantwana ithi ‘Good morning, good morning, how are you?’. (On Radio Umhlobo Wenene, I listen to the children's programme, the one that says: ‘Good morning, good morning, how are you?’ (sings to mimick the title song).

I : So, yinkqubo yabantwana leyo, but i-conduct(wa) ngesiNgesi? (So, that is a children's programme, is it conducted in English?)

L6: Yes Miss, it is.

I : Alright. Tell me how you feel about learning English.

L6: I am proud of it because in these days kusetyenziswa i-English nee-countries ezikude, mandithi i-English yi-main language. So, ndiyavuya ndifunda i-English. (I am proud of it because it is the main language these days used even in faraway countries. So I am happy that I am learning English.)

I : Do you enjoy reading in English?

L6: Ndiya-enjoy(a) Miss, very much. (Yes Miss, I enjoy it very much.)

I : Yeyiphi incwadi enomdla, okanye i-story obukhe wasifunda ngoku-ngoku? (Which interesting book or story have you recently read in English?)

L6: Bendisifunda apha esikolweni ku ‘Advance with English’. (I read it here at school from ‘Advance with English’.)

I : Benisenziswa ngu-Miss eklasini? (Were you reading it as a class exercise with your teacher?)

L6: Akakasifundisi sona, Miss, qha mna bendizifundela. (No, Miss, we were not reading it as a class exercise I was reading it on my own, for myself.)

I : Okay, sithini esi-story? (Okay, so what was it all about?)

L6: Sibalisa ngomntana owayedlaliswa emanzini ngumama wakhe, wathi wakukhula naye wafumana umntana. Naye owakhe umntana wamdlalisa emanzini, so ebengasokoli xa etshona kuba ukhule equbha. (It is about a woman who was playing in the water with her child. When this child grew up and got married, she did the same thing with her children. Her children were not afraid of drowning, because they had learnt to swim from an early age.)

I : Ekhaya awukhe ufunde iincwadi zesiNgesi? (What about at home, do you ever read English books?)

L6: Ndikhe ndizifunde, Miss. Ikhona incwadi ka- standard nine ebendikhe ndayifunda, qha ndiyilibe igama layo. Inezitory ezifundisayo, siyacetyiswa, siyanqandwa thina bantwana. Ndiyazifunda nee-magazines and newspapers. Utata uthenga i-Daily Dispatch, so ndiyayifunda ke. (I do, Miss. There is a standard nine book I once read, but I have forgotten its title. In this book we are being warned and advised as children. I also read magazines and newspapers. My father buys the Daily Dispatch, so I read from it.)

I : I- newspaper mos iba nezinto ezininzi ethetha ngazo, wena yintoni ekunika umdla? (The newspaper has many different articles, which articles do you find interesting in the it?)

L6: Into endiyifundayo nendiyifunayo kwi-newspaper si-sport, nento nje ke mhlambi eqhubekayo apha e-South Africa. Okanye mhlambi ndandingekho kuthethwe into eyakhe yenzeka. Ndithanda loo nto kwi-newspapers. (I like to read about sport, and to know what is happening in South Africa. Sometimes the newspaper discusses things which happened when I was not there. That is what I like about newspapers.)

I : So, uzikhetha njani ke ngoku iindawo omawuzifunde? (So what tells you that a particular article could be interesting?)

L6: Ndijonga i-‘heading’ yazo, Miss, mhlambi kuthwe ‘South Africa in trouble’, ndifune ukuqonda kutheni kusithwa si-‘in trouble’ nje? I- ‘heading’ kufuneka ithethe ikakhulu ngento elapha e-South Africa. Kufuneka ndiyazi into eqhubeka apha since ndingayifundi i-history and geography. (I look at the heading, Miss. Maybe the heading will read ‘South Africa in trouble’, then I want to know why we are in trouble. The ‘heading’ must be about something happening here in South Africa for me to be interested. I want to know what goes on here, since I don't study history and geography.)

I : Watsho kwavokotheka. So, umntu ofuna ukufunda isiNgesi ucinga ukuba angenza njani? (Well said. So, how do you think a person could learn English?)

L6: Makaziqhelanise nee- newspaper nee-DRUM magazine. Xa abona igama angalaziyo alibuze, azokwazi ke ngoku ukulisebenzisa xa ethetha nomnye umntu. Naxa afika apha esikolweni Miss uyabona ukuba u-Miss i-English uyibhala njani, uyibeka njani na, Miss. Soze angayazi. (He/she should read a lot of newspapers, and from the Drum magazine and when he sees an unfamiliar term, he/she should ask so that he can understand its meaning and be able to use it when talking to someone. When he/she comes to school, he/she will see how the teacher writes and speaks in the language. In that way, he/she will learn the language.)

I : Yeyiphi incwadi obukhe wayifunda yakunika umdla kodwa ingeyiyo yasikolo recently? Bekusithwani kuyo? (You say you read books other than the ones prescribed here at school. Which book have you read from recently, and what did you find interesting?)

L6: Yi- DRUM magazine Miss, bekuthethwa ngomntana o-chained like a dog. Uthathwe ngumLungu, ofundayo andazi noba e-Rhodes na, kodwa uhlala khona, une- law. Wayegqitha kuloo village yabo wambona wamthatha. Sibe nomdla kum esi-story because bendingayi-believe(i) ukuba umLungu uyamcingela umXhosa.(I read from the Drum magazine, about a child who was chained like a dog. A white student with a degree in law, I am not sure whether the student was from Rhodes or not, took him. He was travelling past the village, and saw the child in chains. I was surprised when I read the story, because I did not know a white person could feel for a black person.)

I : So, ngumntu omnyama lo u-chain(iweyo)? (So the chained person was a black person?)

L6: Yes, Miss. Umthathile wamthanda wamsa nasesibhedlele. Ndasithanda eso- story. (Yes Miss, he took him with him, took care of him, and even took him to hospital. I really enjoyed that story.)

I : Mhh. So, ukuze sibenomdla i-story, ngaske sibhalwe ngeyiphi i-language? (In which language would you prefer a story to be written, in order for you to enjoy reading it?)

L6: Ngaske sibhalwe nge- English, Miss. (In English, Miss.)

I : Utsho? (Is that so?) Why?

L6: Ndifuna ukuziqhelanisa ndiyazi nokuba ndizakubalisela umntu ndimbalisele nge-English, Miss. Hlambi nokuba ndimbalisele ngesiXhosa, ndimbalisele ukuba bendisifunda nge- English. Ayazi ukuba ndiyayi-understand(a) i-English, but ke ndimxelele nangesiXhosa angathi andi-understand(i), ndiya- understand(a). Ndifuna umntu othetha i- English azibizele mna ndizo kuba yitoliki yakhe. (I want to familiarise myself with the language. Even when I tell the story to someone, I tell it in English. Or if I tell it in Xhosa, I let the person know that I had read the story in English, so that he/she should know that I can understand English. I want him/her to know that I understand English, so that when he/she needs someone to translate for him/her, he/she should call me.)

I : (laughs) So, xa ukuthanda kangaka ukufunda, kutheni ungafundi izinto zesiXhosa nje? (If you like reading so much, why don't you read Xhosa material?)

L6: Ayikuba andikuthandi, ndiyathanda Miss, qha ezona zona ndizithanda kakhulu zeze-English. IsiXhosa sona ndisifunde kakhulu e- primary. I-English ndiyifunde kakhulu kwa standard two, khange ndiphinde ndiyiphathe. (It's not that I don't like reading in Xhosa. It's just that I like reading in English more because when I was at primary school, I read a lot of Xhosa. I was last taught in English in standard two, and not since then.)

I : But bekusenzeka ntoni e-higher primary? (But what was happening at higher primary?)

L6: Besingafundi nange-English. Into ebiba yi-English ibiba yi-grammar kuphela, i-comprehension qha, nakhona ingacaciswa. Ubuzibonela ngokwakho pha. (We never learned

English except for grammar, our comprehensions were in English and these were not even explained to us, so one had to fend for oneself there.)

I : Wancedwa yintoni wena kuloo-situation? (How did you manage in that kind of situation?)

L6: Ukhona u-Miss owayesifundisa kwa-standard two i-English, so mna bendingabinayo ingxaki, 'cause mna ndiyayazi i-English. Ndiphinde ndancedwa kwa-standard five, ngutishala ebephaya. Ebesinceda ke yena esifundisa kakuhle, kunotishala ka- standard four. (I relied on the knowledge that my standard two teacher had given me. My standard five teacher was better than my standard four one, he taught us well and he explained things to us.)

I : So, ubunzima ubufumene ku-standard four. (So, you only experienced hardship in standard four?)

L6: Ku-standard three naku-four, Miss. Utishala wesiNgesi ka-standard five waye-right. (In standards three and four, Miss. My standard five English teacher was okay.)

I : Okay. Ukhe ubhale nge-English? (Do you ever write in English?)

L6: Ndikhe ndibhalele itshomi yam efunda eWongalethu uThandisizwe i-letter. Nalapha ekhaya ndikhe ndibhale i-letter nge-English to u-brother wam, azifundele e-room(ini). Akugqiba uye azilahle. (I sometimes write letters to my friend Tandisizwe who is a student at Wongalethu. Even here at home, I sometimes write letters to my brother, in English. He reads them in our bedroom, destroys them thereafter.)

I : So kuphela kwezi-letters qha ozibhalayo? (So the letter are all you ever write?)

L6: Ndikhe ndibhale ngamanye amaxesha, qha ndithi ndakudinwa ndiyeke. (I sometimes write and then when I get tired, I just stop.)

I : Uzithini ezo zinto uzibhalileyo? (What do you do with those pieces of writing?)

L6: Ndiyazibeka phaya ekhaya. Xa ke ngoku kusenziwa i- thorough cleaning phaya ekhaya zilahlwe zonke. (I put them somewhere and when they do thorough cleaning at home, they destroy them.)

I : Awunayo tu ke ngoku into oyibhalileyo ekhoyo ekhaya? (So you don't have any written material at home?)

L6: Andinayo, Miss. (Not at all, Miss.)

I : Ayikho into edibene nokubhala enikhe niyenze ekhaya? (Is there no other writing exercise that you engage in at home?)

L6: Xa kusenziwa i-grocery, ndim obhalayo. Naxa mhlambi kufike i-call, ndiyibhala i-message nge-English noba ibingesiXhosa yona. (I am the one who writes the grocery lists at home. When someone calls, I also write the messages down. Even if the message was in Xhosa, I write it down in English.)

I : Ubhala ntoni kanye kanye? (What exactly do you write?)

L6: Ndibhala ndithi 'someone called', ndixele le nto ebeyithetha nge-English. Ukuba ebesithi umntu makaye e-Down Station ngoMvulo next week, ndibhale loo nto. Naxa ndifuna ukuxelela i-family yam into, ndishiya i- note etafileni. Senza loo nto sonke ekhaya. (I write 'someone called', and I say what it was all about. If the person said he should be met at Down Station on Monday the following week, I write that down. When I want to inform my family about something, I also leave a note on the table. That is what we all do.)

I : Utishala wakho uthi ungoyena mntana ubhala kakuhle kuzo zonke ii-standard sixes. Wenza njani? Kule veki izayo uzakube ubhala ii- first papers, zithathe ngokungathi uzakubhala i-exams, and sowuyikhethile i-topic. Uthini okulandelayo? (Your English teacher says you are the best writer of all the standard sixes, how do you do that? Next week you'll be writing your first papers, assume that you are about to write the exam, and you have chosen a topic, what do you do next?)

L6: Ndiqala ndi-'practise' ngesiXhosa, Miss. (I first 'practise' in Xhosa, Miss.)

I : U- mean(isha) ntoni ngoku-'practise(a)'? What do you mean by 'practise'?)

L6: Ndithetha ngesiXhosa. (I say it in Xhosa.)

I : Uthetha ukuba uyawathetha la magama? (Does that mean you actually mouth the words in Xhosa?)

L6: Ngamanye amaxesha ndiyawathetha, okanye ndiwathethele ngaphakathi ngesiXhosa, then ndiguqulele kwi-English. (Sometimes I say the words out, or do it in my mind in Xhosa. I think of a Xhosa sentence, then I convert it into English.)

I : Masithathe enye ye-essays zakho, umzekelo the letter to Luthando, uthi apha 'I thank God for giving me this chance. I write to tell you about my sister's birthday'. Ukuba ubuza kubhala le letter, yintoni eyokuqala obuza kuyenza? (Let's take one of your essays, for example, the letter you wrote to Luthando. You say here: 'I thank God for giving me this chance. I write to tell you about my sister's birthday'. Assume you were about to write the letter. What is the first thing you would do?)

L6: Ndiqale ndicinge ukuba ndizakuthini na. Ndithi oo ..., akakhange andibhalele letter mos yena, ndiqonde ukuba okay ndim ozakuqala ukubhala, ndifuna nje into yokuthetha. Ndithethe ke ngoku ngesiXhosa ukuba 'ndiyabulela ngeli thuba lokubhala le ncwadi, besisoloko sixakekile ekhaya, nasesikolweni ngokunjalo', then ndiyiguqulele kwi-English.

Ndibhale ndithi: 'I thank God for giving me this chance ...' (I first think about what I am going to say. He has not written me a letter, I'm going to be the first one to write. I want to say something, so, I say it in Xhosa first: 'ndiyabulela ngeli thuba lokubhala le ncwadi, besisoloko sixakekile ekhaya, nasesikolweni ngokunjalo', then I change over to English. I then write : 'I thank God for giving me this opportunity ...')

I : Lilonke ucinga ngesiXhosa, then ke ngoku le nto uyicingayo uyiguqulele kwi- English? (So you think in Xhosa, and then translate your ideas into English?)

L6: Yes, Miss nase-group(ini) senza njalo, bayayazi e-group(ini) yam ukuba ndim umntu okwaziyo ukuthetha i-English, so ke umntu athethe ngesiXhosa, mna ndiyiguqule, then sibhale ke ngoku. (Yes, Miss. That is how we do it even in our group. In my group they know I'm the only one who can speak English, so they say something in Xhosa, then I convert it into English. We then write it down.)

I : Xa nisenza i-group-work eklasini? (That is, when you do group work in class?)

L6: Yes, Miss.

I : Yeyiphi i- topic oba nomdla wokuba ngaske ubhale ngayo. Masithi mhlambi kwi- exam unikwe ii- topics ezininzi. Yintoni ebangela ukuba ukhethethile. Ukhetha etheni? (Okay. Which type of topic interests you most? In an exam situation for example, you are given various topics. What do you consider before choosing a particular topic among a number of topics?)

L6: Into ebangela ukuba ndikhethe le ndiyabona ukuba andizi kubhidakala xa ndikhethe lena, and ndinakho ukuyibalisa le nto, kuba ndakha ndayibona okanye ndakha ndayenza, so ke ngoku andizikubhidakala. Kanti ke enye ukuba andizange ndiyenze, okanye zange ndiyibone, njenga xa ndiyifunde encwadini, ndizokuphelelwa esithubeni. (I chose this topic because I knew I would not get stuck if I chose it, and I could write on it because it was something I had seen or done before, it was going to be easy for me to write on. But if it was something I have never experienced personally, as when I read about something from a book, I run short of ideas.)

I : If ubunokubona into on TV, awunakho ukubhala ngayo? (If you saw something on TV, wouldn't you be able to write on it?)

L6: Umhlambi bendinokwazi, Miss, kodwa ezi sendibhale ngazo zakhe zenzeka. (Maybe I could, but the topics I have written on so far, are from personal experience.

I : Kutsho ukuthi le birthday party ubhala ngayo, yenzekile nyhani. (Which means that the birthday party you have written about actually took place?)

L6: Yes, Miss.

I : Akuzange khe kwenzekke ukuba mhlambi ungazazi zonke ii-topics ezikhutshiweyo? (Have you never been exposed to a situation where you had experienced nothing related to the topics at hand?)

L6: No, Miss.

I : Ukuba ibinokwenzeka loo nto, ungathini? (If this happened, what would you do?)

L6: Ukuba ingenzeka, ndingabhala ngento endinqwena ukuba ndingayibona or ndiyenze. (If it ever happened, I would try to write about what I wish I could see or do.)

I : Kwezi essays sowuzibhalile, yeyiphi eyona ucinga ukuba uyibhale kakuhle kuzo zonke? (Of the essays you have written, which do you think is the best piece of writing?)

L6: Yila letter ka Luthando, Miss. (It is the letter to Luthando, Miss.)

I : Kuba kutheni? (Why is that?)

L6: Apha ndicinga ukuba khange ndisebenzise 'broken English'. Le nto yinto endandiyibonile, sendibhale kaninzi ngayo, so bendingena kukhetha enye i- topic. (Here I think I have not used 'broken English'. This is about something I had seen, I have written about it many times, so I wouldn't choose any other topic.)

I : U- mean(isha) ntoni nge-'broken English'? Wawulive phi elo gama? (And just what do you mean by 'broken English'? Where did you learn about the concept?)

L6: Kuxa Miss i-tenses ungazisebenzisanga ngendlela eyiyo, naxa amagama uwabiza wrong-o. Enye i-friend yam efunda e-John Bissecker yakha yathi sincokola mna ndisebenzisa i-broken English, and yindlela awayichaza ngayo leyo. (It is when tenses are not used in the proper manner, and when words are mispronounced. While conversing together, a friend of mine studying at John Bissecker once told me I was using broken English, and that is how he explained the concept to me.)

I : Ukhe ubhale i- English e- broken? (Do you ever write in 'broken' English?)

L6: Yes, Miss, yakhe ya-broken. Kwakukudala ngoko, ndisafika. (Yes, Miss, it was once broken. It was a long time ago, when I first arrived.)

I : Ucinga ukuba yayisenziwa yintoni loo nto? (What do you think caused that?)

L6: Ndandingekaqheli ncam ukusebenzisa i-English, ngoku noko ndiqhelile. (I was not used to using English. Now I am a bit used.)

I : Naningazibhali na kanti i-essays e-primary? (Didn't you write essays at primary school?)

L6: Sasizibhala, Miss, qha kwakungekho grouping. I-grouping yayisenziwa xa kulungiselelwa i- exams, so i-essays zam ndandizibhalela. (We did, except that there was no grouping. Grouping was only done in preparation for the exams. So I wrote my own essays.)

I : Zazinde kangakanani ii-essays zenu? (How long were your essays?)

L6: Zaziba yi-page egcweleyo. (About a full page.)

I : Ungandibonisa wethu? (Would you please show them to me?)

L6: Yes, Miss, if ndingayifumana laa ncwadi (Yes, Miss, if I can find the book.)

I : Ukuba ubunokucelwa ngoo- classmate bakho abazi-poor English writers, ukuba ubacebise ukuze babhale kakuhle, ungathi mabathini? (If you were asked by your classmates who are poor English writers, to give them some advice on how to become good writers, what would you tell them?)

L6: Ndingabakhuthaza ukuba bafunde iincwadi ze-English kuqala, xa kukho igama abangalaziyo babuze i- meaning yalo, or if bane-dictionary balijonge kuyo. Kufuneka bazi-express(e) ii- feelings zabo in Xhosa, then baguqulele kwi-English, ukuze bazokuyazi i-English. Soze bangayazi. Nakokwabo umntu makavele 'adubuleke' nge-English (snaps fingers as he says this). Abantu baza kufuna ukubakorekisha ukuba ba- wrong(o). Nam ndenza ngolo hlobo. (I would encourage them to read English books first. If they see an unfamiliar term, they should ask someone about its meaning, or if they have a dictionary, consult it. They should also express their feelings in Xhosa, then convert this into English, so that they may know English. That would never fail them. Even at home, they should just 'burst out' in English. People will want to correct them if they are wrong. That is what I do.)

I : Ewe? Ufuna ukufundela ukuba yintoni? (Is that so? So what is your ambition in life?)

L6: Ndifuna ukuba ngugqirha wabantwana. (I would like to be a paediatrician.)

I : Kuba etheni ugqirha wabantwana? (Why a paediatrician?)

L6: Ndiyabathanda abantwana kuba abakho ekhaya, ndiyi-last born. (I love small children, we don't have them at home as I am the last born.)

I : Okay, so ucinga ukuba i-English ingaku-affect(a) njani as ugqirha wabantwana? (So, how do you think English might affect you as a children's doctor?)

L6: Ngamanye amaxesha mhlambi ndingadibana nabantu abathetha i-English, Miss, nabanye oogqirha mhlambi bangasazi isiXhosa, so ndingakwazi ukuthetha nabo. (I would sometimes come into contact with English- speaking people, some of the doctors may not be able to speak Xhosa, so I would be able to talk to them)

I : Abantwana bathini bona? Bangamthini ugqirha okhumshayo? What about the children? (How would they deal with an English-speaking doctor?)

L6: Andizokusilahla isiXhosa, Miss, i-English ndoyithetha nabantwana abangasaziyo isiXhosa. (I would not desert Xhosa, Miss. I would use English with children who do not speak Xhosa.)

I : So ucinga uba ezinye ii-patients zakho zingangasithethi isiXhosa? That is interesting. (So you envisage that some of your patients might not be Xhosa-speaking?)

L6: Yes, Miss.

I : Well, sifike esiphelweni se-interview yethu. Enkosi kakhulu ngento yonke, L6. Please ungalibali ukukhangela laa ncwadi yakho ye-essays. (Well, we have come to the end of our interview. I am very grateful to you for everything, L6. Thank you very much. Please, don't forget to look for your essay book for me.)

L6: Yes, Miss.

APPENDIX D : TRANSCRIPTION OF L7'S RECORDING.

I stands for Interviewer.

L7 stands for a standard 7 learner.

I : Sizakuqalisa ke ngoku nge-interview yethu. I hope awuzukoyika because akukho nto yoyikisayo. Into endiyifunayo kukuba nje uphendule le mibuzo ndizakuyibuza kangangoko unakho. Uzakukwazi ukuyenza mos loo nto, neh? (We are now about to begin with our interview. I hope you are not afraid of anything, because there is nothing to fear. All I would like you to do, is to answer the questions that I am going to ask you to the best of your ability. Can you do that for me?)

L7: Yes, Miss.

I : So, ngaske sisebenzise eyiphi i-language for the interview, i-English or isiXhosa? (Would you rather we conducted this interview in English or in Xhosa?)

L7: Nokuba yeyiphi. (I do not mind whether we use English or Xhosa.)

I : Ukhe u-associate or udibane nabantu abangasithethiyo isiXhosa? (Do you ever associate with non-Xhosa speaking people?)

L7: No, Miss.

I : You don't have any white friends, for example?

L7: No, Miss.

I : So, ingaba kukhe kwenzeke ke mhlawumbi, outside apha esikolweni, ukuba ukhe uthethe in English, whether kusekhaya or kwezinye iindawo? (So, apart from here at school, do you ever converse in English? Maybe at home or in other circles?)

L7: No, Miss.

I : Tu- tu- tu? IsiNgesi usithetha esikolweni kuphela, nasekhaya akukho mntu ukhe uthethe naye ngesiNgesi? (Hardly ever? So you use English only at school and hardly ever at home?)

L7: Yes, Miss.

I : What about the radio? Ukhe umamele ichannels zesiNgesi? (Do you ever tune in to an English channel?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, ndimamela iRadio Metro mna. (Excuse me, Miss, I listen to Radio Metro.)

I : And iRadio Metro yi-channel yesiNgesi isikakhulu, andithi? (And Radio Metro is mainly an English channel, isn't it?)

L7: Yes, Miss.

I : Yeyiphi eyona programme uyithandayo on Radio Metro? (Which is your favourite programme on Radio Metro?)

L7: Yi-'Power Breakfast show' ne-'Pepsi Power Play'. (It's 'The Power Breakfast show' and the 'Pepsi Power Play'.)

I : Kwi-TV, ukhe umamele xa kudlala ii-programmes zesi-Ngesi? Zeziphi ii-favourite programmes zakho zesiNgesi kwi-TV? (On television, do you ever listen to any English programmes? Which are your favourite TV programmes?)

L7: Uxolo Miss, ndithanda ii-talk-shows, like i-'Felicia Mabuza' show no 'Two-way', ukuba into ndiyi-find(a) interesting ndiyimamele.(I like the talk shows, like the Felicia-Mabuza show, and 'Two-way'. If I find the topic under discussion interesting, I listen.)

I : Zeziphi ii-topics ezi-interesting to you? (Which kind of topic do you find interesting?)

L7: Zii- topics ezi- affect(a) i- youth ne-educational programmes. (It's topics on things which affect the youth, and educational programmes.)

I : Ungakhe undinike umzekelo we-topic e-deal(isha) ne-problems ze-youth owakhe wayibukela? (Could you give an example of a topic dealing with the problems of the youth that you have watched?)

L7: Yes, Miss. Sendikhe ndamamela kuthethwa nge-child abuse, i- teenage pregnancy ne-abortion. (I have listened to discussions on child abuse, teenage pregnancy and abortion.)

I : So, how do you feel about learning English?

L7: Here at school, Miss?

I : Ikhona mhlambi enye indawo ofunda kuyo isiNgesi, mhlambi ithi kanti ungena ii- extra lessons? (Is there somewhere else where you learn English other than at school? Like attending private classes, for example?)

L7: No, Miss.

I : So, how do you feel about learning English at school?

L7: Uxolo Miss ndiyayithanda, kuba iyanceda ukuba mhlambi akukho bantu bathetha isiXhosa. (I like it, because it helps when you come into contact with people who do not speak Xhosa.)

I : Njengaphi, mhlambi? Wakha waba kwi- situation apho kwakufuneka uthethe isiNgesi? (Like where, for instance? Have you ever been in a situation where you had to converse in English?)

L7: Yes Miss, ndandiseKapa e-Constantia. (I was at Constantia in Cape Town.)

I : Please, tell me about the experience.

L7: There were Jews, so I had to speak in English.

I : Yenzeke ixesha elingakanani loo nto? (For how long were you exposed to the situation?)

L7: Yaba yi-two weeks, ndandise-holiday(ini) ku-auntie wam osebenzela ii-Jews. (It happened for two weeks. I was on holiday, visiting my aunt who works for the Jews.)

I : Inokuba yayiyi-experience emnandi leyo. U-auntie wakho kwakukuphela komntu osaziyo isiXhosa? (That must have been quite an experience. So, your aunt was the only one with whom you could converse in Xhosa?)

L7: Yes, Miss and wayesoloko e- busy ixesha elininzi mna ndidlala nabantwana baphaya. (Yes, Miss, and she was busy most of the time, and I spent a lot of my time playing with the children of the house.)

I : Xa umntu efuna ukufunda isiNgesi, ziziphi iindlela anokwenza ngazo? Wenza njani wena? (In your opinion, how can one learn English? Tell me what you do in your case.)

L7: Ngokufunda iincwadi nokubukela ii-programmes e-TV(ini) siyayifunda i-English, nalapha esikolweni ke. Mhlambi Miss afunde ii- magazines amamele nee- talk shows mhlambi ne-TV nje, uve namanye amagama ongawaziyo e- English utsho uwazi, nantoni na as long as isisiNgesi. (By reading books and watching English programmes on TV. And also learning English at school. Reading magazines, TV, and listening to talk-shows helps a lot, anything as long as it is in English. You'll learn new vocabulary in the process.)

I : Masithi ke mhlambi umamele i- show ka- Felicia, then uve igama ongazange ulive, uthini? (Let's assume that you were listening to Felicia's show, and a term you have never heard before is mentioned, what do you do?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, mna ekhaya i-dictionary andinayo. Andiyazi ukuba yaya phi na, yayikade ikhona i- dictionary yesi- Ngesi. Ukuba andilazi igama, ukhona usisi wam, ndibuza kuye sometimes, sometimes li-sound(e) ngathi ndiyalazi, kodwa ndizakulibuza kuye ndifune ukuqiniseka. (Excuse me Miss, at home I do not have a dictionary. I don't know what

happened to it because we used to have an English dictionary. So, if I see or hear an unfamiliar term, I note it down and ask my sister when she comes home. Sometimes the word sounds familiar, but even so I make sure about its meaning by asking my sister.)

I : Ngaphandle kosisi wakho, ngubani omnye umntu obuza kuye xa unegama ongalaziyo? (Other than your sister, who else do you go to when there is a word whose meaning you do not understand?)

L7: Akakho, Miss. (Nobody, Miss.)

I : Akakho? Not notishara wakho lo? (Nobody? Not even your English teacher?)

L7: No, Miss.

I : Yintoni eyenye umntu anokuyenza ukuze afunde i- English? Yeyiphi indlela umntu angaqinisekisa ngayo ukuba ufunda le language? Umntu angenza njani ukuze aqinisekise ukuba uya-understand(a) le language ebeyifunda? Ndikhumbula ndisemncinci, ndandikuthanda kakhulu ukufunda. Kwathi kwakuvulwa i-Empolweni cinema, ndaya. Ndafumanisa ukuba andiva nelinye igama. Ndandifunde kakhulu, yet ndingeva nelinye igama elithethwayo le-English. Yintoni enye engendandiyenzile ukuze ndi- understand(e) bhetera? (So, other than reading English books and listening to English programmes, what else can one do to learn the language? In which way can you make sure that you really understand the language you have been learning? Because I remember in my case as a young child, I used to read a lot. When they opened the Empolweni cinema for the first time, I went there. I discovered that I couldn't understand a word. I had done a lot of reading and yet I couldn't understand a word of spoken English. What else, do you think I could have done to understand better?)

L7: Umhlambi ukuba le nto ubuyivile ungaphinda uyibalisele omnye umntu (Maybe you could have discussed what you had seen with somebody.)

I : So, ukuthetha in the language kukwayindlela ebalulekileyo yokufunda i- language. Utsho uziqonde ukuba kukangakanani na oku -understand(ayo). Bekunokuba bhetera still if ubunokuthetha nabeLungu, kuba ubuza kuzibona apho ukuba uya- progress(a) na. (So, that means 'talking' in the language is also an important aspect in learning a language. It indicates to you how much of the language you understand. It would be all the better if you could talk to white people, because if they understood you, then that would be an indication that you really were making progress). So, do you enjoy reading?

L7: Yes, Miss.

I : Uthanda ukufunda ntoni? (What do you enjoy reading?)

L7: Ii-magazines. (Magazines.)

I : So, leliphi elona bali linomdla obukhe walifunda just recently? (So, which is the most interesting article you have read just recently?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, bendikhe ndafunda kwi 'True Love' kuthethwa ngendlu ka Romeo Khumalo. (Excuse me, Miss, I read an article from the 'True Love', where they wrote about Romeo Khumalo's house.)

I : Yeyiphi i-language o- feel(isha) most comfortable kuyo if uya-read(a) okanye uyabhala. Le unga ngaske ukuba ubuza ku- test(wa) ngaske u- test(we) ngayo, yona uqinisekileyo ngayo? (In which language do you enjoy listening and writing, the language you are most comfortable with, the one in which you would prefer to be tested in, and in which you are confident?)

L7: Yi- English. (It is English.)

I : Why?

L7: Kulula kum uku- understand(a) nge-English kunezinye ii-languages. (I find it much easier to understand in English than I do in any other language.)

I : Not even in Xhosa?

L7: No, Miss. Andikhe ndizifundele nto ngesiXhosa. (I hardly ever do any reading in Xhosa.)

I : Ndiyayingela inokuba njalo loo nto, because there is not much ebhaliweyo ngesiXhosa, enokunika umdla kuni. Siya- need(a) ukuba kubekho abantu abazakubhala in Xhosa before sithi die a slow death. Enough ke about that. Into endifuna ukuyazi, ukhe ubhale in English during your spare time? (I can understand that because there is just not much written in the language, that would be of interest to you. I think we need to have more people writing in the language, before it dies a slow death. Enough about that. Now what I would like to know is, do you ever write something in English during your spare time, maybe at home?)

L7: Xa ndisekhaya, ndidla ngokubhala about myself. (When I am at home, I often write about myself.)

I : Uzithini ezo zinto uzibhalileyo? Uyazigcina or uzithini? (And what do you do with those pieces of writing? Do you keep them or what?)

L7: Ndizibhala kwenye incwadi endiyigcina ekhaya. (I write in a book which I keep at home.)

I : Ungakwazi ukundibonisa le ncwadi wakufika ekhaya? (Do you think you could show this book to me when you get home?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, ndandibhale i- essays eziyi-two about myself last year, and andiyazi what happened to them. Ngoku kukho enye.(Excuse me, Miss, I wrote two essays about myself last year, and I don't know what happened to them. Now there is only one.)

I : I-right wethu nanjalo. Qha please make sure that I see it so that ndizokuyisebenzisa for the research. Xa ndijonge incwadi yakho ye-essays, ubonakala ubhala kakuhle. Ucinga ukuba yintoni ekwenza ukuba ubhale kakuhle kangaka? (That is okay with me. Just make sure that I see it so that I can use it for the research. Looking at your essay book, you seem to write very well. Why, do you think, are you in a position to write so well? What equips you for this?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, mna ndiqale ndicinge ukuba njeba ndibhala ukhona omnye umntu oza kufunda, then ndicinge ii-words ezi-interesting ozoba nomdla xa uyifunda Miss. Nakulo msebenzi wakho njengomntu o-teach(a) i-English mhlambi iza ku-encourage(a) ukuba njengokuba usi- teach(a) nje noko wenza kakuhle. (Before I start writing, I always keep in mind the fact that someone is going to read what I have written, then I try to think of words that would be interesting to the reader. I try to write so that my English teacher becomes encouraged that he is doing a good job in teaching us English.)

I : So, uba naloo nto yokuba iza kufundwa ngutishara le nto uyibhalayo? (So, you write with your teacher in mind?)

L7: Yes, Miss. Ndiphinda ndi-choose ii-topics endizaziyo ukuba ndiyazazi ukuba ndakha ndayenza okanye ndiyayazi, ndizokwazi ukuba ndiyibalise kakuhle 'cause andizokwazi ukuthetha into endingayaziyo. Kufuneka ibe interesting too. (I also choose topics that are familiar to me, about my personal experiences. A topic has to be interesting too.)

I : Let's talk about one of your essays, 'When a stranger gave me a lift'. Did this ever happen to you?

L7: No, Miss, i- part yesi story ndandiyifunde encwadini, enye ndiyayicingela. Kulaa essay ithi 'The downfall of the school bully', ndathatha kwi-film endakha ndayibona isithi 'The Bullies'. Ezi 'bullies' yayingabantwana ababini notata wabo. Always benza izinto ezimbi, bethatha free izinto kwi- shops bangafuni ukubhatala. Bafa kakubi ekugqibeleni, benzeka izinto ezimbi xa iphelayo. (Part of it is something I read about in a book. So, I also use my imagination. Also, for this essay, 'The downfall of the school bully', I drew from a film I once watched, which was entitled 'The bullies'. These bullies were a father and his two children. They were always doing bad things, taking things from shops without paying for them. They suffered terrible deaths in the end.)

I : Okay. Ngoku ke khawujonge apha kulo msebenzi uphambi kwakho, ngowuphi ocinga ukuba ngowona uwubhale kakuhle kakhulu? (At this point I would like you to look at your written work in front of you. Which piece do you think is the best you have written so far?)

L7: Ndinga ukuba yile essay ithi 'When a stranger gave me a lift'. (I think it is the one

entitled 'When a stranger gave me a lift'.)

I : Why? What makes you say so?

L7: Uxolo, Miss, ndicinga ukuba yeyona inomdla. (I think it is the most interesting.)

I : Inomdla kubani, kuwe or the person oza ku-read(a)? (Interesting to whom? To you, or the person who is going to read?)

L7: Ndicinga ukuba sinik' umdla xa usifunda, kuba nakum sindinike umdla. (I think it would be interesting to read, because I also find it interesting.)

I : Why?

L7: Uxolo, Miss, ndicinga ukuba ndithethe kakuhle kule essay. (I think I have been able to express myself very well in the essay.)

I : Kanjani? (In which sense?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, ndicinga ukuba i-good kuna kwezinye i-English endiyisebenzisileyo. Andikhange ndifumane bunzima zizinto emandizithethe, i- ideas zize lula. (I think I have used good English compared to the others. I did not experience any difficulty trying to think what to say, the ideas just came easily.)

I : So, that is why usithi it is a good piece? (So that is why you think it is a good piece?)

L7: Yes, Miss.

I : Utishara wakho uthi you are the best writer ku-standard seven wonke. Ukuba ubuza kucebisa ezinye ii-students ngokubhala kakuhle, ubuza kuthini? (Your teacher thinks you are the best writer among all the standard sevens. Imagine you were to advise the other students on how to become good writers, what would you tell them?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, mna ndingathi umntu makafunde iincwadi, nee- magazines mhlambi nee-poems. Amamele nee English programmes azokuba mhlambi ukuba i-English isetyenziswa njani na, nabo benze njalo. Kufuneka baziqhelanise nokuthetha i-English, mhlambi nakowabo umntu ayithethe. Naxa bekhetha i-topic funeka bakhethe enomdla abaza kukwazi ukuthetha kakhulu ngayo. Kufuneka Miss umntu abene-picture yale nto ayibhalayo. (I would encourage them to read books, magazines and poems. They should also listen to English programmes so that they may hear how English is used, then they can do likewise. They should also try to use English as much as they can, even at home. They should also choose interesting topics on which they can say a lot. They must have a mental picture of what it is they are going to write on.)

I : Ukhe uyisebenzise kanti i-English wena ekhaya? (Do you ever use English at home?)

L7: Sometimes, Miss.

I : Nini, and nabani mhlambi? Bendiba uthi hayi nje? (When, and with whom, for example? I thought you said 'no'.)

L7: Uxolo, Miss, umhlambi xa ndithetha nabantwana basekhaya. (When I talk to my younger brothers and sisters.)

I : Bathini ke, baku-understand(e)? Ba-feel(isha) njani ngaloo nto? (And, do they understand you? How do they feel about this?)

L7: Sometimes baya-understand(a), xa bengal- understand(i) bayadikwa, ndibayeke ke nam. (Sometimes they understand. When they don't, they get bored, and I leave them alone.)

I : Badla ngoku- respond(a) njani kuwe? (How do they normally respond to you?)

L7: Ukuba uLihle uya-understand(a), uphendula ngesiXhosa, sometimes abuze ukuba ndithini na. (If Lihle understands what I am saying, he responds in Xhosa. Sometimes he asks me what I mean?)

I : But anikhe nibhale nto phantsi? (But you hardly write anything down?)

L7: Yes, Miss.

I : Ufuna ukuba yintoni ebomini bakho? (What is your ambition in life?)

L7: Uxolo. Miss, ndifuna ukuba ngugqirha, Miss. (I would like to become a doctor.)

I : Ucinga ukuba i-English ingabu affect(a) ubomi bakho as a doctor? (Do you think English could affect your life as a doctor?)

L7: Yes. Miss. Njenga xa i-patients zingathethi le language yam. Mhlambi kufuneke ndithethe nabanye oogqirha endisebenza nabo abangasaziyo isiXhosa. (Like when the patients don't speak my language. I may also need to communicate with other doctors, doing the same job as myself, who do not know Xhosa.)

I : Uyasiqonda nje phofu ukuba isiXhosa siyi-official language, oko kukuthi ungasithetha naphina naninina? (You do realise, of course, that Xhosa is an official language, and that you can use it whenever and wherever you want?)

L7: Uxolo, Miss ndiyayiqonda loo nto, kodwa uba abantu endithetha nabo abasazi, andikwazi ukusisebenzisa. (Yes, Miss, I understand that, but if the people I'm talking to don't understand it, I cannot use it.)

I : Yinyaniso ke leyo. Ibingumbuzo wam wokugqibela ke lowo. Thank you very much sisi

for your help. I hope ubenguye lo gqirha ufuna ukuba nguye ngenye imini. (That is true. That was the last question I had for you. Thank you very much for your help. I hope you'll realise your dream to become a doctor one day.)

APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPTION OF L8' S RECORDING

I stands for Interviewer.

L8 stands for a standard 8 learner.

I : Sesizakuqalisa with our interview, please don't panic, akho nto yoyikekayo interview. Ndifuna nje ukuba uphendule kangangoko unakho. Okay? Ukhetha ukuba sisebenzise eyiphi i-language? (The interview is about to begin. Please don't panic, there' nothing threatening about an interview. All I need is for you to answer to the best of you ability. Ok? In which language would you prefer us to conduct the interview?)

L8: Inoba Miss iya kuxhomekeka kwi-question, ukuba ingathi ndingaphendula in English, I'll answer in English. (It will depend on the question. If it's a question I feel I can answer in English, I'll answer in English.)

I : Yintoni ekwenza ukuba ufuno ukuphendula some of the questions in English, ezinye in Xhosa? (What makes want to answer certain questions in English and others in Xhosa?)

L8: When I'm not sure about the answer, I'll answer in Xhosa, and if I'm comfortable I'll use English.

I : Fair enough. My first question to you is: do you ever associate with non-Xhosa speaking people, whether it is a family member or just a friend? Ukhona nje umntu onjalo? (Does such a person exist?)

L8:Yes, Miss there is. I have a white friend who stays at West Bank.

I : Could you tell me more about this friend? How did you meet?

L8: I first met her at West Bank. I was on holiday. She is my neighbour. She took me out to the movies. We started to get to know each other. We became close friends and she calls me sometimes.

I : When you meet, which language do you use?

L8: We use English.

I : Ndifuna ukuqonda ke ngoku sisi ukuba ngaba zikhona na ii-instances, ngaphandle kwalapha esikolweni nale friend yakho, apho ukhe usebenzise isiNgesi? (What I would like to know is whether there are instances, other than here at school and with your friend, where you actually converse in English?)

L8: Iba khona Miss, like umakazi wam utshate nopmlungu and akasiva isixhosa, so we talk in English xa ekhona. (There is, Miss. My aunt is married to a white man. He cannot understand Xhosa, so we talk in English when he is around.)

I : Do you ever listen to English radio programmes over the radio?

L8: Yes, Miss. My favourite channel is Radio Metro.

I : The yeyiphi i-favourite programme yakho on Metro? (And which is your favourite programme on Metro?)

L8: Yi-'Breakfast Show'. (It is the 'Breakfast Show'.)

I : On TV, which program do you listen to?

L8 : Sometimes it's 'Felicia Mabuza' Miss, sometimes I also watch 'Two-Way', maar not qho. (but I don't often do that.)

I : Yeyiphi eyona uyibukela qho? (Which one do you watch regularly?)

L8 : It's 'Jam Alley' and 'Oprah'.

I : U-'Jam Alley' mos isebenzisa ii-language ezininzi, and isiXhosa asiyiyo enye yazo ne? (Jam Alley uses various languages, and Xhosa is not one of them, is it?) What about the 'soappies', awuzimameli zona (don't you watch those?)

L8: Ndiyazimamela Miss. (I do, Miss.)

I : Okay, so how do you feel about learning English?

L8: I-English mna ndiyayithanda, andinacala ngakuyo kuba ukuba umntu akayazi I-English, akazokwazi uku-communicate(a) nabantu. Like if unokudibana nefriend yakho ethetha isiSuthu, so wena awuyi-understand(i) le nto ayithethayo, so you have ukuba uthethe isi-Ngesi. (I love English, Miss. I don't have a problem with it, because if someone does not know English that person will not be able to communicate with people. If you have a Sotho-speaking friend, and you don't understand what he/she is saying, you have to talk in English.)

I : Do you enjoy reading in English?

L8: Yes.

I : Ikhona mhlambi into enomdla obukhe wayifunda in English recently, noba ibiyi-magazine or incwadi? (Have you read any interesting article recently, whether it was a magazine or a book?)

L8: I-article ebendikhe ndayifunda kwi-YOU ibisithi 'Arrested for being too black'. Kuthwa phaya omnye ubhutiebehamba e-airport, kwathwa pha since e-black kakhulu makaphindele e-Zimbabwe. Wabanjwa kuba emnyama kakhulu kwathwa makabuyele e-Zimbabweskuba akangowase South Africa. Kwathwa makaze ne-passport ukuqinisekisa ukuba akangowase South Africa. (I read from the YOU magazine, from a story entitled 'Arrested for being too black'. According to the story, a certain man was arrested at the airport and told to go back to Zimbabwe because he was not South African. He was told to bring his passport to ascertain that he really was not South African.)

I : That was an interesting story. So, which language do you feel most comfortable reading and

writing in?

L8: English.

I : Why?

L8: Because it is easy, you can understand if you are good at English.

I : But what about Xhosa? Don't you find it easy to understand your own home language?

L8: Sometimes Xhosa is not difficult ukuyibhala, kodwa kukho la magama esixhosa othi ngoku usithetha isixhosa ufike kunzima ukuwa-understand(a). Mhlambi uyaqala nokuwabona. (Sometimes it is not that difficult to write in Xhosa, but there are certain words that even though you are Xhosa-speaking, you'll find difficult to understand. Maybe you are seeing them for the first time.)

I : Kwi-English awakho kanti amagama anjalo? (But don't you find such words in English?)

L8: Senditsho Miss, ona a-understand-eka easy kunawesiXhosa. Ungangawazi onke amagama esiNgesi, but kwi-English kulula uku-guess(a) i-meaning yegama ngendlela elisetyenziswe ngayo e-sentence-(ini). Kungenjalo ungakhe ujonge kwi-dictionary. (I mean they are much easier to understand. You may not know all the English words, but with English it is much easier to guess the meaning of a word as it is used in a sentence. With English you can guess the meaning of a word and if you experience difficulty you can consult a dictionary.)

I : Sibe ke sona isiXhosa singenaso ii-dictionaries? (And there aren't any dictionaries in Xhosa?)

L8: Zimbalwa and zinqabile ii-dictionaries zesiXhosa. (There are few Xhosa dictionaries, and these are scarce.)

I : In your opinion, umntu xa afuna ukwazi i-English ngaske athini mhlambi? In your opinion how could one learn English?)

L8: Ngokuthi ahlale phakathi kwabantu abatheth' i-English qha, Miss, because ngolo hlobouzonyanzeleka ayithethe. Zikhona ii-programmes nakwi Radio Xhosa, like zingenza abantu bayi- understand(e) i-English, like angamana emamela umntu, abo? Like nee-parents or friends zakhe kubekho umntu omncedisayo kowabo, and kufuneka naxa bethetha naye basebenzise i-English azokuyi-understand(a). Amamele also ii-programmes ezizakufuna ukuba athethe i-English and aye nase library afune iincwadi. Ngolo hlobo angayifunda lula. (By living with people who speak only English, because in that way one will be forced to speak the language. On Radio Xhosa there are English programmes that could make one understand English. One must also listen to these. Parents and friends could help also, at home there must be someone to give assistance, by addressing one in English. One should go to the library to look for books. In that way one could learn English easily.)

I : Uza kuzazi njani ukuba nyhani ke ngoku uyifundile i-English? Masithi ke mhlambi uhleli kule-community of English-speakers, abantu besiNgesi besithetha isiNgesi sabo, and you are simply listening to ii-programmes zeEnglish, yeyiphi into obunokuyenza ukuze uqonde ukuba nyhani 'I have understood the language'? (How would you ascertain that you really understand the language? Let's say you live in this English-speaking community, and the people express themselves in

English, and all you do is simply listen to them as they speak and you also tune in to English programmes. How could you prove to yourself that you really understand the language?

L8: Kufuneka uthethe Miss, akufuneka usoloko umamela qha. Kufuneka uthethe bazokuxelela abantu ii-mistakes zakho. Akukho mntu u-perfect mos, so uzakumane usenza ii-mistakes. Once uthule awuzukukwazi ukuthetha. (You must talk, Miss. You can't just listen all the time. When you talk, people will correct you. Nobody is perfect, so you'll continue to make mistakes. Keeping quiet is not going to help you.)

I : Hay' inene. (That is indeed true.) Do you do any writing outside of school?

L8: No, Miss.

I : Awuyingenelanga na la-project yakwa-Telkom, apho i-student sibhalela itshomi ekwesinye isikolo? (Are you not part of the Telkom project whereby a student is expected to communicate with a friend in another school?)

L8: No, Miss.

I : So akuyenzi into yokubhala tu, akho nale nto yokuba umntu akhe abhale noba yi-poem nge-spare time sakhe mhlambi? (Which means you hardly ever do any form of personal writing in your spare-time, whether it's just a piece of poetry?)

L8: U-sister wam uyathanda ukubhala i-essays, uyayithanda into ene-crime phakathi, so ndiyamnceda xa enento angayiqondiyo. Ungumntu ofuna ukuyazi i-English and umamela loo nto ndiyithethayo. (My sister enjoys writing essays, I usually help her when she experiences problems. She enjoys writing about crime, and as she is interested in English, she pays attention to what I tell her.)

I : Laa tshomi yase West Bank obukhe wathetha ngayo, yona anibhalelani? (The friend from West Bank you mentioned earlier, don't you ever write to each other?)

L8 : Hayi, Miss siyaphone(lana) qha. Ukubhala endikhe ndikwenze kuxa ndishiya i-note ekhaya, qha kufuneka ibe sisiXhosa ukuze bazoyiva abantwana. (No Miss, we just phone each other. The only writing I ever do at home is when I leave a note for the children. The message then has to be in Xhosa so that they may understand.)

I : Abantwan' abancinci abayiva i-English? (Don't the younger children understand English?)

L8: No Miss ba-understand(a) i-Afrikaans bhetere because basuka ekapa. Ndibhala ngesiNgesi xa kufike oo-Jennifer. (No Miss, they understand Afrikaans better because they are from Cape Town. I express myself in English when Jennifer and the others come visiting.)

I : U-choose(we) as the best writer kubo bonke kwi-class yakho. Yintoni oyenzayo xa ubhalayo? (You have been chosen as the best writer among all the learners in your class. What do you do when you write?)

L8: Like mna Miss xa ndibhala, ndibhala ngento endiyaziyo. Le essay about crime ndiyithandile, because i-crime is all around us, and yenzeka every day. Andibi nangxaki mna xa ndibhalayo,

because I always use i-dictionary. Futhi le topic yakha ya-discuss(wa) kwi-show ka Felicia, so khangе ndibe na-problem ukubhala ngayo. Xa ndine-problem ubhuti wam omkhulu ukhona and uyandinceda. (When I write I choose familiar topics. I enjoyed writing this essay on crime because crime is all around us, and it happens everyday. Also the topic was once discussed in one of Felicia's talk-shows, so I didn't experience any problem writing on it. When I experience difficulty, my elder brother helps me out.)

I : So ukuze ubhale kakuhle funeka ube uyayazi i-topic. li-classmates zakho nazo zi-aware nge-crime ekhoyo in our country, kodwa that does not make them write well. Kucacile ikhona le nto uyenzayo wena, abangayenziyo bona, yintoni? (So, to write well you have to be familiar with the topic under discussion. Your classmates are also aware of crime that is in our country, yet that does not make them good writers. It is clear that there is something you do that they don't do, what is it?)

L8:Before ubhale kufuneka u-relax(e), at least for five minutes uhlale, ungapanick(i) ungangxami. Xa ndibhala mna Miss andifuni ukubheka-bheka because ubekhe ndabona umthi mhlambi ndizovela ndiphazamiseke. Ndi-concentrate(a) kwiphepha lam, kule nto ndiyibhalayo, ukuze ndingalahlekwa zii-facts zam. (Before writing relax for at least five minutes without panicking or rushing. I don't want to look around when I write lest I see a tree and as a result I lose concentration. I concentrate on my paper, on what I am writing, so that my facts may not flush out.)

I : Ziintoni ozi-consider(ishayo) before you decide on a particular topic? (What do you consider before you decide on a particular topic?)

L8:Le i-about crime ndayikhetha because yayingathi i-easy kum. Kufuneka ndiqiniseke ukuba ininzi into endinokuyithetha. Kuba bhetere xa ubukhe wafunda or weva ngento, noba mhlambi kuse-TV(ini). lindaba ze-TV zingakunceda nge-ideas. (I chose the one on crime because it seemed the easiest to me. I must ensure that I have a lot to say on the topic. It is preferable if you heard or read about the topic, maybe from TV. TV news can also help with ideas.)

I :Xa ujonge ezi-essays zakho, yeyiphi ocinga uba is the best? (When looking at your essays, which one do you think is the best piece of writing?) .

L8:Ndicing' ba yile ithi 'Crime in our country is escalating at an alarming rate', because ndayibhala ndingazange ndifumane chance yoku-practise(a). Ndayibona laa topic for the first time kwi-exam, kodwa ndakwazi ukubhala ngayo kuba it was about something I knew. (I think it is the one on 'Crime in our country is escalating at an alarming rate, because I had not had an opportunity to practise writing it beforehand, I saw the topic for the first time in the exam room. I was able to write on it because it was about something I knew.)

I : Ummo wakho uya-'practise(a)' before ubhale? (So you normally 'practise' before writing?)

L8: Uba mhlambi u-Miss usixelela ngoku ukuba next week sizakubhala nge-topic ethile. (If the teacher tells us now that next week we are to write on a particular topic, I prepare for the topic.)

I : Ukuba ubuza kucebisa i-class-mates zakho ezi-poor in writing ability, ubuza kuthini? (If you were to advise your classmates who lack in writing ability, what would you say?)

L8: Akukho nto ndiyenzayo omnye umntu anganakuyenza. Nabo mabafunde bamamele ne-English

programmes. I-dictionary yinto ebalulekileyo umntu ofona ukufunda i-English amakabenayo. Mababe ne-friends, like i-pen-friends, bapRACTISE nakowabo, Miss. Xa behleli ne friends, they must try to talk in English. E-class(ini) umntu maka-participate, umnt' othetha nge-English makangajongwa ngathi uyaxhoma. Ndingathi mna Miss mabathethe nge-English xa bathetha nam, so that sizokukorekishana, because nobody is perfect. (There is nothing I do that another person could not do. They have to read and listen to English programmes. A dictionary is important for one

who wishes to learn English. They must have friends, like pen-friends. They must practise English at home. When they are with friends, they must try to talk in English. They must participate in English lessons. A person using English must not be seen as if he/she is bragging. I would also encourage them to express themselves in English when talking to me, so that we could correct each other, as nobody is perfect.)

I : Waza wathetha ke sisi. (You have said a mouthful.) What is your ambition in life?

L8:I would like to become a chartered accountant.

I : Do you think English might play a part in your chosen career?

L8:Yes, Miss.

I : Ingenzeka njani loo nto? (How could that possibly happen?)

L8: As a chartered accountant umsebenzi wam ungafuna ndibale imali yono-'business'. Abanye ono-'business'. Abanye babo bazakube bemhlophe and if andiyazi i-English andizikwazi uku-communicate(a) nabo. Naxa kufike umLungu ezokubhankisha, ukuba andisazi isingesi ndoba nengxaki. (As a chartered accountant my job would involve counting money for business people, some of whom are white. If I don't know English I won't be able to communicate with them. Also, when a white person comes to the bank, I'll experience problems if I can't speak English.)

I : Nono, ube luncedo nangaphezu kokuqonda, ndiyabulela ke sisi ngayo yonke into.(You have been of very great service to me, thank you very much.)

APPENDIX F : TRANSCRIPTION OF L9'S RECORDING.

I stands for Interviewer.

L9 stands for a standard 9 learner.

I : Which language do you wish we could use for the interview, Xhosa or English?

L9: Xhosa, Miss.

I : Is there any reason for your preference?

L9: Kulula kum ukuthetha ukusebenzisa isiXhosa xa ndithetha, kodwa xa ndibhala ndikhetha i-English. Kodwa ukuba bendinyanzeleka ikuba ndithethe i-English, ndingayisebenzisa. (It is easier for me to use Xhosa when speaking, when I write I prefer English. But, if I were compelled to speak English, I would use it.)

I : Yintoni ekwenzela ubunzima xa uthetha i-English? (Why do you experience difficulty when conversing in English?)

L9: Xa uthetha kufuneka into oyithethayo ize msinya, kodwa xa ubhala unalo ixesha lokucinga. (When talking, the ideas have to flow, but when you write you have time to think.)

I : So, you feel you can't talk in English?

L9: Ndinakho, Miss, kodwa not ngoku, kuba andinyanzelekanga. (I could, Miss, but not now. At least nothing compels me to do so.)

I : Okay. So, do you ever associate nabantu abangasithethiyo isiXhosa (with non-Xhosa speaking people?)

L9: No, Miss.

I : Are there any instances in your life, other than at school, where you actually converse in English.

L9: Kunqabile ukuze yenzeke loo nto. (It happens on rare occasions.)

I : Like when, for example?

L9: Njenga xa umntu ofowunayo ethetha i- English, ndinyanzeleke nam ndisithethe.

(When somebody on the phone can't speak Xhosa and uses English, I'm forced to speak English.)

I : Do you ever listen to English channels on the radio?

L9: Yes, Miss. Ndiyayimamela i-Radio Metro. (Yes, Miss, I do listen to Radio Metro.)

I : Which is your favourite programme on the channel?

L9: Yeka Grant Shekwane on Sunday afternoons from twelve to three. (The one by Grant Shekwane, 'The G. S. Connection', on Sunday afternoons, from twelve to three.)

I : What about TV? Do you watch English programmes?

L9: Yes, Miss. Ndithanda u 'Touched by an Angel' ku SABC3 ngo seven on Tuesdays, no 'New York Undercover' ngee Thursdays. Ndiyayibukela nala show ka- 'Oprah', though not qho. (Yes, I like 'Touched by an angel' on SABC 3, at seven o'clock on Tuesdays, and 'New York Undercover' on Thursdays. I also watch the 'Oprah' show, though not regularly?)

I : And the 'soappies'?

L9: Nazo ndiyazibukela. (I watch them too.)

I : How do you feel about learning English?

L9: Ndinga ukuba kubalulekile ukuyifunda kakhulu ngokuba xa use ukhulile, phofu nangoku, kufuneka xa uhamba ezindaweni u-communicate nabanye abantu abangakwaziyo ukuthetha le language yakho, and then i-English yona yi-language eyaziwa ziintlanga zonke. So, yiyo ebalulekileyo ekufuneka uyazi uqiniseke ngayo ukuba uyayazi. (I think it is important to learn English, because when you are grown up, in fact even now, when you go to different places, you must be able to communicate with people who cannot speak your language. English is used by all the different nations, so it is important that one should know and be confident in it.)

I : Okay. So do you enjoy reading?

L9: Mmh, ndiyaku-enjoy(a), Miss. (Yes, I do enjoy it, Miss.)

I : Which is the most interesting story you have read recently? Ungandibalisela (Would you share it with me?)

L9: Ndandikhe ndafunda i-story, not ngoku but kudala kancinci. Sasingo Magic Jones ekwakusithwa une AIDS ngoku kuthwa akanayo, iphelile. (I once read a story, not recently but a little while ago. It was about Magic Johnson who was said to have been

suffering from AIDS, and now he no longer has it, it is gone.)

I : Nanko ke ummangaliso! Yenzeke njani loo nto? (Now isn't that a miracle? How did that happen?)

L9: Kucaba uyi-treat(iwe), then yanyangeka. So ndayibona inomdla loo nto kuba kungathiwa njani ukuba umntu une-AIDS, aphinde anyangeke? (It seems he was undergoing some treatment and he was cured. I found that interesting because how can it be said that a person with AIDS cannot be cured, and yet he was cured?)

I : So ubuyifunde phi loo information? (Where did you obtain this piece of information?)

L9: From i-EBONY.

I : Where did you get the magazine from?

L9: Ndiyayithenga e-book-shop. Ifika once a month. (I buy it from the bookshop. It comes out once a month.)

I : Uyayithenga regularly? (Do you buy it regularly?)

L9: Ngamanye amaxesha, kodwa andikayithengi eyale inyanga, Miss. (Sometimest, but I haven't bought this month's edition yet.)

I : Yintoni ekwenza u-choose i-Ebony? (Is there a reason why you choose the magazine?)

L9: Mmh, i- Ebony ingobomi babantu abamnyama, kukho nendawo apho kuthethwa ngehlobo abantu abamnyama ababesokola ngalo. Ithetha ngabantu abanceda ukukhupha abantu abantu abamnyama ekusokoleni, izinto ezinjalo. I- bas(w)e kubantu abamnyama. (It deals mainly with the lives of the black people, there is a section which discusses the struggle of the black people, it is about people who had helped emancipate black people, things like that. It is based on black people.)

I : So, is that why you find the magazine interesting?

L9: Ndingathi mhlawumbi yile nto ndimnyama nam. (I would say it is maybe because I'm also black.)

I : Okay. Which language do you feel most comfortable reading and writing in? If bekunokuthwa read(a), ngaske ufunde in which language? (If you were asked to read, in which language would you prefer to do it?)

L9: Kwi- English, Miss. (In English, Miss.)

I : Why?

L9: Iske ibe ngathi ndibhetele ekufundeni i-English, namagama ndiwabiza bheterere. KwisiXhosa akhona amagama oqonda ukuba uxakiwe kodwa yi-language yakho but iyaxaka. (I think I am better off reading in English. I feel I can pronounce better in it than in Xhosa. In Xhosa there are words which confuse even those who speak the language.)

I : In English you have never experienced something like that?

L9: Ibakhona but ingathi kubhetere kwisiNgesi uku-deal(ishana) namagama akhona. (It happens sometimes, but I still think it is much better to deal with such words in English.)

I : Ukhe ubhale ngaphandle kwalapha eskolweni? (Do you ever write other than at school?) For your own personal pleasure?)

L9: Not kakhulu, but ikhona i-letter ebendikhe ndayibhalela u-Oprah Winfrey, wandiphendula. (Not much, but there is a letter I have written, to Oprah Winfrey, and I got a reply.)

I : Is that so? What did you write about?

L9: Ndandithetha ngobomi bakhe, ngendlela akwazi ngayo ukuziphucula emva kwendlela akhule ngayo. (I was commenting on her life, about how she managed to improve her life, after the way she had grown up as a child.)

I : Ubuzive phi ezo zinto ngo-Oprah? (And how did you learn about Oprah's life?)

L9: Kwi-magazine, kwakuthethwa ngobomi bakhe bonke. (I read about it from a magazine. It was a story about her entire life.)

I : Do you still remember which magazine you got that from?

L9:Yayiyi DRUM. Enye i-information ndayi- read(a) from i-EBONY yam yokugqibela. (It was from the DRUM magazine. I think I also got some of the information from my last EBONY.)

I : Do you have the letter here with you, the one you wrote to Oprah, or is it the response from her that you have?

L9: Ndine-response qha. (I only have the response.)

I : Ibhalwe ngesandla, or itayitshiwe? (Is it handwritten, or typed?)

L9: No, Miss, itayiphiwe, kodwa inayo i-signature yakhe. (No, Miss, it is typed, but it bears her signature.)

I : Hey, hayi niyazenza izinto ezi-exciting, I'm really impressed. (I must say I'm impressed, that was an exciting thing to do.) So, other than that letter, and the work you do at school, do you ever do any other kind of writing?

L9: Ndandidla ngokubhala nje, nangantoni na ethe qatha engqondweni yam. Ndivele ndibhale nge- English ndi... (I used to write, for no particular reason, about anything that came to mind. I would write in English and...)

I : Wawudla ngokubhala izinto ezinjani mhlawumbi? (What form did your writing take?)

L9: Izinto ezibu-essay ezingenamsebenzi. (I used to write just simple essays, nothing serious.)

I : And what did you do with these? Ziphi ngoku? (Where are the essays?)

L9: Bendiske ndizishiye nje carelessly, zilahleke ke ngoku. (I would leave them carelessly, and lose them in the process.)

I : What about the Telkom project? Don't you have a penpal in another school?

L9: Yes, Miss, ndinayo. (I have one.)

I : Do you communicate?

L9: Ndakhe ndambhalela once. (I once wrote to her.)

I : Which language did you use in the letter?

L9: Ndasebenzisa isi-Xhosa. (I used Xhosa.)

I : Njani kaloku ugqiba kuthi ukhetha ukubhala in English, not ngesiXhosa? (But why did you do that, when you just claimed you prefer to do your writing in English, and not in Xhosa?)

L9: Ndacinga ukuba mhlambi yena lo mfundi akazukuyi-understand(a) i- English ngolu hlobo ndiyi-understand(a) ngayo mna. Ndandisonqena ukum-confuse(a) nge-English. (I was concerned that the other pupil might not understand English the way I do. I did not want to confuse her by writing in English.)

I : So, you understand English, don't you?

L9: Mna ndicinga ukuba i-English ndiyayi-understand(a) bhetele, mhlambi omnye umntu yena kuza kuba nzima kuye. (I think I understand it better, so it may not be so easy for another person to read in English.)

I : So that is your reason for using Xhosa?

L9: Ewe, Miss, ukumenzela lula. (Yes, to make things easy for her.)

I : All in all, how many letters have you exchanged so far?

L9: Inye qha, zange andiphendule. So ndaqonda ukuba mandingaze ndiphinde ndimbhalele. (Only one, and she never responded to that. That is why I have decided not to write to her again.)

I : Your essays are well-written. Wenza njani xa uzibhala? (How do you go about writing them?)

L9: Ndiya concentrate(a) kwi topic leyo, ndi- try(a) ukucinga ukuba ndiyayazi na loo topic. If yi- topic endikwaziyo uku- relate(a) kuyo, ndicinge ukuba ngaba kwenzeka ntoni ngelo xesha, nokuba kwathini? (I concentrate on the topic. If it is a topic I can relate to, I try to imagine what could have taken place. I ask myself what happened at that time?)

I : Le mibuzo uzibuza yona inge-English or Xhosa? (Are the questions you pose to yourself in English or Xhosa?)

L9: Kulula xa uzibuza in English, ukwenzela uzokwazi ukuziphendula nge-English. (It is easier if they are in English, so that when I answer them, I do so in English.)

I : Masikhe senze umzekelo, sithathe i-essay yakho yokugqibela, yona unokuyikhumbula bhetera. Wawubhale on 'How to improve the criminal justice system in our country'. Yeyiphi into yokuqala owayenzayo? (Let's contextualise the situation and take your latest piece of writing, with the hope that you can recreate the circumstances. You wrote on 'How we can improve the criminal justice system in our country'. What was the first thing you did?)

L9: Ndaqale ndazibuza ukuba injani na i-criminal justice system in our country? Emva koko ndizokubhala impendulo endiyifumanayo. Iya izizela ke ngoku into emandiyibhale. (I first asked myself about the present state of the criminal justice system in our country. After asking myself these questions, the responses I come up with are what I am going to write down. I then start writing. The ideas come flowing to my mind.)

I : What kind of topic do you enjoy writing on? Ngamanye amagama, yintoni ekwenza ukuba ukhethe le i-topic uyeke ezinye? (In other words, what made you choose the one topic over the others?)

L9: Ndiyibone inomdla le topic because i-serious, nyhani yinto eyenzekayo le. I-system yalapha e-South Africa andiyiboni ngathi iyawenza umsebenzi wayo mna. Bathi abantu ngoku ba-commit(e) i-crime, umntu umbone sele esesitratweni, so ayiwenzi kakuhle umsebenzi wayo. Ndiqonde ukuba le topic i- serious kakhulu so mandibhale ngayo. (I

was attracted by the serious nature of the topic. It is really true that the criminal justice system in South Africa is not doing a good job. People who commit crime today are out in the street tomorrow, so it is not doing its job well. It is the seriousness of the topic which attracted me.)

I : Masithi ke ngoku, generally speaking, nangaphandle kwale case yale exam, yintoni ekwenza ukuba u-choose itopic ethile xa zikhutshiwe phaya zininzi? Le uyikhethe kuba i-serious, ukuba ibingaphumanga le, ubuza kuthini? What do you consider when choosing a topic? (So, generally speaking, what is it about a certain topic that attracts you? You have judged this topic to be of great importance to the country, but what is it exactly that you consider when you choose a topic?)

L9: Ndikhetha engathi inomdla, endinomdla kuyo, nendibonayo ukuba ndingabhala kakhulu and ndinganazo noko izinto ezibalulekileyo ezibambekayo endingazibhalayo ngayo. Kufuneka ibe yi-topic endizakukwazi uku-form(isha) into ngayo, kungafuneki ukuba ndikhuphele into exactly ngohlobo eyenzeke ngalo, ibe yinto endiyaziyo. (I must find it interesting and have sufficient facts on it. I like it when it challenges my powers of imagination, so that even if I know something of it, I can always create my own story out of it. I must not be expected to just reproduce something, because I want to add something of my own.)

I : The facts obhala ngazo (you write about), where do you normally get them from?

L9: Iyaxhomekeka kuloo essay. Ukuba yinto e-real, ndiyazibuza ukuba yenziwa yintoni na, yenzeka phi na, njani na? If ayiyonyani, ndiyayingela. (It depends on the essay type. If it is based on reality, I question myself why it happens at all, where and how it happens.

If it is an imaginary topic, I try to imagine a certain situation.)

I : If you were to choose the best piece of writing among these, which one would it be?

L9: Yile ithi 'God loves me'. (It is the one entitled 'God loves me'.)

I : Why?

L9: Kuba kwezi bendizibhale kulo nyaka upheleleyo nezi ndizibhala ngoku, ndicinga ukuba i- English yam iye yaphucuka kakhulu kuyo, since yona ndiyibhale this year. (Because, compared to the ones I wrote last year, my English has improved a bit. I wrote it this year.)

I : Inokuba yintoni ebangele ukuba siphucuke isi-Ngesi sakho? (What could be responsible for the improvement in your English, in your opinion?)

L9: Ndingcinga ukuba ngokuba umntu ekhula uye efunda kakhulu and then ne- language iye ikhula. Ngokuye ufunda iincwadi ezininzi, i- knowledge yakho ngezinto ezenzekayo

outside iyanda. Loo nto indenze ukuba ndibhale kakuhle, njengoko nexesha lihambile. (I believe that as you grow, you read more and more, so the ability to use the language improves, because as you read more books, your knowledge about things happening around you also grows. That makes me write better and better as time goes on.)

I : So, you think that the more you read, the more you are going to improve in the language?

L9: Nokuya ndiprekthiza ukubhala ndizakuye ndibhala kakuhle. (And the more I practise, the more I am going to improve my writing ability.)

I : If you think this essay is good, you must think the one entitled 'I'm blessed' is good too, because content-wise the two are the same, though put differently. Do you realise the similarity?)

L9: Ndiyayiqonda, ukuba ziyafana, kodwa enye yi-improvement yenye. Ngenxa yexesha, noko nam ndi-improve(ile). (I am aware that the content is the same, but I think the one is an improvement on the other. Because of the time factor, my English has improved.)

I : Imagine that you are asked to advise your classmates who have poor writing ability, what would you tell them?

L9: Mabafunde iincwadi zesiNgesi baprekthize ukubhala. As ba besiya bebhala kuzakuya kusiba lula. Mabamamele nee programmes ze-English. (They must read English books, and practise writing. As they write more, so will they find it easier to write. They should also listen to English programmes.)

I : Ubuthe earlier on xa uthetha ukhetha isiXhosa, xa ubhala kubhetele i-English. Ucinga ukuba yintoni enokwenza ube confident when speaking in English, ngolu hlobo wenza ngalo esiXhoseni? (You said earlier that when talking, you preferred to talk in Xhosa and write in English. What, do you suppose, could give you the confidence to speak fluently in English, in the same way that you do in Xhosa?)

L9: Kufuneka ukuba ndiprekthize ukuthetha in English, naxa ndithetha nabantu basekhaya, ukuze ndizokuqhela ukuthetha ngaso. (I need to practise speaking in English, even if with members of my family. I must get used to using the language until I feel comfortable in it.)

I : True. What is your ambition in life, Pakama? What would you like to be one day?

L9: Unzima kakhulu loo mbuzo, Miss. (That, indeed, is a very difficult question.)

I : Don't tell me that at standard nine awukazazi ukuba ufuna ukuba yintoni na (you still haven't thought about your future career?)

L9: Andikayicingi kakhulu loo nto, de ndibe ndipase u-Std IO. (I haven't given much thought to that, I still need to pass standard ten first.)

I : Why is that?

L9: Abantu abaninzi aba- plan(a) ii-careers zabo ababizizo eza zinto bebethe baza kuba zizo. Andiyazi yintoni ebangela loo nto. Abanye ingathi abazi kakhulu nge-careers, kodwa ndibawela ukuba yi- civil engineer one day, kodwa andiqinisekanga nokuba ndokuba yiyo na. (Most people who plan their career well ahead of time don't realise their dreams. I don't know what causes that. Some don't seem to even know much about their future careers, but I would like to be a civil engineer one day. I cannot say for sure that I'll become one.)

I : Why that particular field? Wenzani loo mntu? (What does such a person do?)

L9: Uba responsible for ukwakhiwa kweendlela namadami. Ndinomdla kulo msebenzi kuba zange ndikhe ndibone nanye i-female eyi-engineer, nakweyiphi na indawo endakha ndaya kuyo. Ndiyibona iyi-challenge kum loo nto. (It is a person responsible for the building of roads and dams. I find the profession very interesting because wherever I go, I have never seen a female civil engineer. I find that challenging.)

I : So, you wish to dare where most females don't? Please do that, it's high time we proved that we can do whatever we put our minds to. I-English ingadlala role ithini kwi-career yakho as an engineer (What role could English possibly play in your engineering career, if any?)

L9: Ndizakube ndisebenza nabantu abaziintlanga ezahlukileyo nabasuka kumazwe awahlukileyo. Mhlambi kufuneke ndiye overseas, apho akukho mntu uthetha siXhosa, kufuneke ndithethe i -language eyaziwa ngumntu wonke. SisiNgesi ke eso. (I would be working with people from different nationalities, and from different countries. I could also be required to go overseas. There, nobody speaks Xhosa, and I would need to use a language they know. English is that language.)

I : That was the last question. Thank you very much for your co-operation. I wish you good luck with your choice of career, may your dreams come true.

APPENDIX G : TRANSCRIPTION OF LI0'S RECORDING.

I stands for Interviewer.

LI0 stands for a standard I0 learner.

I : So, LI0, what should we do? Would you like us to conduct this interview in English or in Xhosa?

LI0: English is okay.

I : Is there any particular reason for your preference?

LI0: The thing is, the thing is, Xhosa is my language. There is nothing that I gain or lose when I talk in Xhosa. When I use English I gain something like vocabulary, I get used to speaking the language because it's not my language.

I : Okay. So, do you ever associate with non-Xhosa speaking people?

LI0: Yes, umh, I'm a member of a musical group called 'Ever-praising'. It's a youth gospel group. So, sometimes we have camps, sometimes we have visitors. For instance, I have a friend called Wayne. He is a white person. He stays at Selborne.

I : Here in East London?

LI0: Yes, here in East London. He's a student there. So I associate, and I like it. I like associating myself with white people, or any other people who don't speak my language because I love languages.

I : Which other languages are you interested in?

LI0: I would like to learn French and German in future.

I : So, when talking to Walter, which language do you use?

LI0: Mh, I use English, but he prefers me to speak Xhosa because he wants to learn Xhosa, but I use English.

I : So, you keep in touch?

LI0: Ja, we phone each other maybe thrice a month since he is at school. I can't call him all the time. Sometimes when I visit him, or when he visits me in church or at home...

I : So, you converse in English?

LI0: Yes.

I : Do you ever write letters to each other?

LI0: I can't say so. We never write letters. We always communicate with telephones or visiting.

I : Okay, so it's usually oral communication?

LI0: Yes.

I : Are there any instances in your life, other than at school or with Walter, where you actually express yourself in English?

LI0: Well, in this musical group, 'Everpraising', we don't only practise. We sort of make a service before we practise: we have an opening, then someone will preach.

I : Is it a group of black people?

LI0: Yes, and one of the main things that we want to do is to develop ourselves in any way. So, we use English sometimes when we are addressing others, or when we are just talking, using it because we want to learn, we want to be used in talking English, we want to be used in using this language.

I : Okay. Do you ever listen to the radio or watch TV in English? If you listen to the radio, for instance, do you tune in to an English channel?

LI0: That is exactly my style. I don't listen to Radio Umhlobo Wenene, for one thing, not that I have any, any reason against it but I listen to Metro, I listen to Algoa. I listen to English stations. And even with news, I like watching news in English.

I : Over the radio?

LI0: Over the radio and on the TV. I like listening to TV and radio in English.

I : Which is your favourite radio programme?

LI0: My favourite radio programme is 'The Breakfast Show'.

I : Which channel is that?

LI0: Radio Metro. And then on TV it's 'Felicia Mabuza-Suttle' show. I like that one and I also watch the soappies: 'The bold and the beautiful' and 'The days of our lives'.

I : How do you feel about learning English?

LI0: English is to me the subject I love the most. Of course I may have love for Biology and other languages, but I love English the most. If I could, I would take English up to university level.

I : If you could? You don't think you can?

LI0: It's only that I want to be an English professor, I wanted to be an English professor, but I somehow changed.

I : Why?

LI0: I don't think I could afford to study-to continue until I finish my studies because I would have to go for a bachelors' degree, honours' degree ...

I : Oh, but you could. That is exactly what happened with me. I started off with a teachers' diploma, that was all the education that my family could afford to give me. The rest has been left up to me, but look where I am today. It can be done, so don't give up your dreams. So you said you liked learning English, what reason did you give for this?

LI0: I love English.

I : In your opinion, how can one learn English?

LI0: I think that to - to- learn any language, you have to speak the language. You have to love that language. You just have to listen to anything, read anything in that language. Myself, for instance, I listen to English programmes. I read a lot of newspapers, English newspapers. I don't have to buy these newspapers because I don't have the money. My mother buys the Sunday Times, once she finishes with it, I read it. I read it for news, for vocabulary, just to be used in reading English. And, at home, I speak the language.

I : With whom?

LI0: With whoever. With whoever that I know will understand.

I : And, do they respond in English.

LI0: They don't have to. Even if they speak in Xhosa I do not mind. I am just developing myself.

I : How many of you are there in your family?

LI0: We are five.

I : If you had a message that you wished to convey to a family member who was not at home at that moment, how would you do this?

LI0: If I know that the first person likely to receive my message, wouldn't mind me using English, I'll leave a message in English.

I : Do you do that, communicate in written English?

LI0: Yes.

I : So you are the only one who communicates in English?

LI0: My dad used to do that, but he passed away. He used to do that. Even any letter that I write, even to my friends, I don't use Xhosa, I always use English.

I : There is this Telkom enterprise that some of the pupils take part in, where you are expected to correspond with a penpal in another school, do you participate in that?

LI0: No, I haven't started yet.

I : Why not?

LI0: I have just received the address of my correspondent.

I : And now that you have the address, what will you do?

LI0: Nothing, you see, I don't think the exercise will be worth my while.

I : Do you enjoy reading?

LI0: A lot.

I : Which is the most interesting book or magazine that you have read over the past year?

LI0: I read from the YOU magazine, about a lady who inserted a sort of radio in her womb, so that she could communicate with the embryo.

I : Haai bo! That must have been interesting!

LI0: She was operated, and that was inserted. Then, after nine months, it was taken out with the baby.

I : (laughing) Whew, I wonder! Which language do you feel most comfortable reading and writing in? Would you rather what you read were written in Xhosa or what?

LI0: I am more confident when I read in English.

I : And then when writing, which language is best for you?

LI0: English.

I : So it's English again. Do you do any form of writing outside of school?

LI0: Yes, I have. I am writing something. I don't want to say it's a book. It's a book. I'm doing it.

I : Is that so? But where is it?

LI0: It's there at home. I'm still continuing with it. I haven't finished the chapters which I have prescribed for myself.

I : How many chapters have you written so far?

LI0: It has seven chapters, and I think I'm in chapter four.

I : So you need to write three chapters more.

LI0: Yes. It's about how a young person can live a fruitful life. A sound or valuable life.

I : So it has some biblical connotations?

LI0: Yes.

I : So I guessed. Do you suppose you could possibly show it to me? Is it handwritten?

LI0: Yes.

I : Please, I would appreciate that. It would help me so much. You said something in one of your essays about wishing to become an author one day. I'll get back to this later. So, is that the only form of writing that you ever do?

LI0: Yes.

I : Have you never attempted poetry for example?

LI0: I think about poetry. I don't write poetry.

I : Why ever not?

LI0: I don't know. Maybe I never took it seriously. It's crossed my mind. I have thought

of writing about nature, about a person, about my mother, or anything...

I : But you never got yourself to do it?

LI0: No.

I : Coming to the question of your essays, they are very well-written. How do you go about writing your essays? Which steps are involved in the writing thereof?

LI0: Well, I was taught by my high school principal, my higher primary principal rather, how to write an essay, English essays-Mr. Dinga (fictitious name).

I : Where was he from?

LI0: Elitheni Higher Primary. He taught me the format, the introduction, body and conclusion.

I : Exactly what did he teach you about these?

LI0: He taught me that when writing an essay, in my introduction I have to mention almost everything that I am going to talk about, so that I can give the person who is going to read my essay the 'form' so he or she may be interested in reading what are you going to say more. When writing, always lead to another sentence so that the person may be interested to know what you are going to say in the next sentence. Finally, when he or she reaches the conclusion, he or she must not be satisfied. He or she must wish that you could write some more. As a result, it bothers me sometimes when instructions say you must write a hundred to hundred-and-fifty words. I so wish they could say we should write one hundred to two hundred words, because I love writing, especially an essay. I don't have time to maybe ... (trails off). But you know that well, topics are given in the question paper, so you don't have time to go about researching or asking people about the topic. You just meet them at the paper, and then you have to write about them. So I just use my mind, to talk about anything.

I : So, let's say or imagine you are in an exam situation, like the one coming up next Monday, and then you get this list of topics. Out of maybe seven topics that you are given in the paper, you choose one. What makes you choose that particular topic out of the seven. Which things do you consider?

LI0: The thing is, I write about things that I know. I write about facts when I am writing an essay. I don't write an essay for the sake of writing an essay, and, so that (unintelligible) Unathi Kamlana wrote an essay. In fact, okay for instance, you may say 'My school', 'My house', or 'My church' or 'My society' or 'My parents'. I would write about my parents because I consider them number one in my life, for one thing. I am what I am because of them. That is what is important to me.

I : So you choose a topic that is important to you?

LI0: Ja, that thing is important to me and I know everything that has to be known about it.

I : Okay, so you have chosen a topic now, what is the first thing you do maybe in the form of preparation? What do you do next before you actually write?

LI0: Well, I close my eyes, then I think about what I am going to write. I picture it. If it's a house or a school or it's my parents, I picture it. I picture events, I picture memories in my mind. Then I form a sort of what I'm going to write about, so that as I'm writing, I'm writing about something that I have seen in my mind. That is what I do.

I : So, how do you exactly formulate your ideas? Do you brainstorm the key concepts or think in full sentences or what?

LI0: I think sometimes it's a waste of time to...maybe you are given thirty minutes to write that essay, so you'll spend fifteen minutes dotting down ideas. I think it's a very quick way to just think about it, if you can, just like me. Jot those ideas in your mind.

I : But do you think in full sentences?

LI0: No, not in full sentences. I think of important words that I'm going to use, then as I'm writing that sentence, it just comes to me where I should put 'is' or 'are' in the sentence.

I : What kind of topic do you enjoy writing on. There are different types of topics in an exam. Which kind would you prefer to write on if you could choose?

LI0: Ah, first of all, there is a saying about Shakespeare, which says he was not for an age but for all time. I like writing about things which will be effective from now till ... I don't know.

I : ...till eternity.

LI0: Ja, I like to write about things which are alive, ... things which someone can quote and say 'I'm quoting a writer from South Africa or from the Eastern Cape'.

I : Topics like which ones for example?

LI0: ...like how I feel about abortion, 'cause I'll always feel the same way about abortion. Topics about how I feel about a president, how a president should be, because I'll always feel the same.

I : And which kind of topic don't you like?

LI0: Topics ...er...crisis topics, topics about ...er...I don't like criticising. I don't like to say 'No, don't do this, do this'.

I : In other words, you don't like prescribing, or imposing your ideas on others.

LI0: Ja, I don't like doing that. I also don't like scientific topics, for an example if someone said why is the sun rising from the east and not from the west?' No one should write about that, because the sun will never rise from the west. So I don't like topics like that.

I : Looking at the pieces you have written so far, which one do you think is the best?

LI0: I think it's this one, 'What I like about myself'.

I : Why?

LI0: Because I love myself, and this is a statement of fact. This is exactly what I like about myself. Here I expressed everything I wanted to say. As I was talking about myself I didn't have to consult any encyclopaedia, dictionary or anyone. I was talking about myself here.

This is who I am.

I : Going back to your reading and listening to English programmes, what do you do when you encounter a term that you are not familiar with and you don't know the meaning of?

LI0: Usually I write it down, if it's just one word I keep it in my mind and consult my dictionary later, because I have a big Oxford dictionary at home.

I : Suppose you were approached by your classmates who are less skilled in writing in English than you are, to advise them on how to become good writers, what would you tell them?

LI0: In writing, writers usually write about things they like or love most or what happened to them. So to become a good writer, you have to have a good life.

I : A 'good life'... and just what do you mean by a good life?

LI0: A good life... you have to have standards. You have to have things that you don't do and things that you do, no matter what. So, to write something for other people, you have first to understand what you are writing about, and to know what you are writing about, so that even if you have to be interviewed about it, you wouldn't have to think about the book because you know exactly what you are talking about. So if you have standards and values, things that you do and things that you do not do, when you are writing you are (unintelligible) people the original you. What you write about is what you are. No matter

you are not writing a book about your life, but if you are writing about a story in the community that someone killed someone, stabbed him like this and that, the way you are going to express that is exactly how you understood it. It is exactly how you thought it happened. So, if you have a good understanding, if you have good standards and good values, then people will read good values and good standards.

I : It seems as if you are particularly interested in the message in the writing. You seem to approach the writing issue from a moral point of view, that in order to be a good writer you have to be a good person. Do you suppose that a 'bad' person would be unable to write well?

LI0: I wouldn't say anything about bad people because I don't know how bad people are. I don't know their personalities and I don't know what makes them bad.

I : But do you seriously think their goodness or badness would affect their writing ability? Don't you think that a bad person would be writing from the point of view of a bad person?

LI0: It would differ in that people believe in different things. It differs in what a reader considers when reading. Are you just reading for that language for example, or are you interested in which tools the writer used in the writing, or whether you are reading in order to get the writer's intended message. It all depends on what a reader wants when he goes to a bookseller.

I : Are you telling me that when you write, you write for a particular reader?

LI0: I wouldn't say so. When I am writing, I write for anyone and about anyone. It's like making a speech at a stadium. Even if there were one thousand people, they wouldn't all understand what you were saying to them. Even if the speech is made by the president, not everyone is going to understand what the president was trying to say mainly there. What exactly was the theme or the gist of what he was talking about, just like in writing. It is inevitable that not everyone is going to be for or is going to like what you have written. So it is just as well... you may just write for people who you think will like your style. Anyway, if I write a book with the title like, let's say 'Rules for fruitful living', then another writer writes a book about a killing in Soweto, the killing in Soweto will be more marketable. Why? Because the rules for fruitful living, everybody thinks that I know what I should do to be good, and I don't need anyone to tell me how to be good. But I don't know what happened in the street in Soweto, you see? So, people have different interests and believe in different things. You just cannot run away from that.

I : So how would you advise your classmates about good writing ability?

LI0: As I said earlier, you have to love English in order to know English. So, to be a good English writer, I believe if you think that you can write, just the mere thought that you

can write, means that you can do it, means that you can write.

I : All in all, am I correct in thinking that what you are encouraging is positive thinking?

LI0: Ja, positive thinking. Be confident in what you write. Be willing to learn, be willing to be corrected. Be willing to be advised. Be open to suggestions, I would say that. Don't tell yourself that you cannot do this or that this is a very complicated topic and it is suitable for others.

I : If I understand you correctly, what you are talking about is the whole idea of attitude towards writing. But, what about the writing itself? You have told them about the importance of a positive attitude, that they should not feel threatened by the various topics and so on. But what about actually putting pen to paper? What could you tell them?

LI0: Point number one, I thought it was something that we all know that you cannot write good English if you do not know English grammar. You have to learn English grammar.

I : And how do you do that?

LI0: To learn English grammar, we are so fortunate that we have English teachers, we have English books. If you are used in reading what other writers write in English, then you'll have number one : a format of writing - you'll know that when you are writing you have to start with this. At the beginning of a sentence it must be a capital letter, it must be a comma there, a full-stop there. You must associate yourself with people who are writing or should I say read anything which has been written by other people. Then you will sort of use or adopt a certain style of writing. And then, English grammar, it's reading and even listening to people talking in English. Then, when you are writing you'll understand that this sentence, when someone is reading the sentence, people read it like this. Then you'll know that okay if you want him or her to be interested in reading this sentence, I must write this, I must put this there. I must write this (unintelligible). I must put this preposition there. So it's reading, it's listening to English, knowing your grammar, just those things.

I : Okay, so let us assume now that this person has written something. How could he/she ensure that what is written is up to standard? What do you do after you have written a piece?

LI0: When you are writing an essay you are sort of in a hurry, because you want to write this essay and finish it before the time is over. Then, if you have maybe five minutes left, number one that you should do, check spelling, maybe you sort of left out an 'e'. Number two, try to think about grammar, is this in past tense, present tense, all those things. Should I put an '-ing'? Should I put a comma there, is this sentence too long? Things like that. Try to be cool, try to relax. Then read you essay or letter all over again, maybe twice

or thrice if you have the time. Make sure that there is no spelling wrong. Of course, because he or she is a student, maybe word order or something like that, but spelling, is, was, were, all the basic things, things that a student would know that they are wrong, or whatever...

I : Okay, so, when writing an essay for example, where do you get your ideas from? On what do you base your writing?

LI0: Er...if maybe I'm writing about a train or an aeroplane, maybe I would have read something about a plane, then I would add those ideas with mine. Maybe things that I would think , things that would come up at that point in time. Maybe I have read it in a newspaper or have heard about it over TV, or whatever, you know. I would base my ideas on that.

I : So, what is your ambition in life, LI0. What would you like to be one day?

LI0: As I said earlier, I wanted to be an English professor.

I : You mentioned, in one of your essays, something about becoming an author one day.

LI0: Ah..ja, I remember. I like writing, but well I didn't consider an author being a profession. I would write in my spare time. I would like to write a book. But what I would like as a profession is to become a psychologist. It may be industrial psychologist or counselling psychologist. Just any psychologist, I think I can fit anywhere.

I : Any reason for that?

LI0: Because I love counselling and I know that I can counsel.

I : What do you do when you counsel?

LI0: Well, when you counsel you have to look at the situation, who you are talking to, where is the person from, the cause of the problem, the person's personality, what words can you say when you talk to him, what words can't you say when you are talking to him. Things like that.

I : So, to become a psychologist, do you think English might affect your life-chances?

LI0: In what way?

I : As a psychologist, do you think your being able to express yourself or to use English, might affect your profession?

LI0: Yes, because psychology patients are people who are hurt, people who are depressed. English has suitable words to advise or console a person. It's not harsh, it's

not heavy. You choose every word. English is just a pure and simple language. So I think it would affect me in a very big way. Saying 'hallo' to a person doesn't sound the same as saying 'molo'.

I : 'Molo' sounds...?

LI0: A little bit heavier.

I : Yes, I can see that psychology would be just the right field for you, because the cure there is in the choice of words. Whatever you say has to have a healing effect on the patient. Whew...that really was interesting. I am through with my questioning, and I must say I have found this interview both interesting and illuminating. Thank you very much for your time and co-operation. I think our country is in great need of dedicated people like you, people who take time to think about every step they take and who think things through. Thank you once again.

My township
6 February 1996

I didn't see the township looks like Mdantsane because it is very big. It is the second biggest township in South Africa. It is in the Eastern Cape.

The name of my township is Mdantsane. It is in the East London near the sea. Mdantsane has got seventeen units. It has got schools, hospitals, garages and clinics.

There are schools like Dalukhanya and Siyavuya and stadiums like Green Point and Sisa Dukashe. There are hospitals like Cecilia Makwane and Nkubela and garages like Koko's garage and Caltex.

My township has famous people like champion in boxing in the world Mr Nkhosana Mqajane Mr Vuyani Bungu. There are many streets in

6 February 1996

My township
Corrections

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9/10/2019

like champions boxing in the world.
Mhosana Mxajane and Umyani Burgu.
There are many streets in Mdantsane.
The biggest street in Mdantsane is
Qumga High way.

The busiest place in my town
ship is T.V.2. There are people
who sell to us food. There is
another township search is big as
mine. It is Bisho.

I like my township very much.
It is big and clean.

9/10/2019
Mlyca

Mdantsane is a township in the
eastern Cape province of South Africa.
It is one of the poorest townships in
the country.



Mdantsane is the biggest street in my township
is Qumga High way.

The busiest place in my town ship is N.U.2.
The are people who sell to us food. There is
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eastern Cape province of South Africa.
It is one of the poorest townships in
the country.

11
2000

25 Sonia Street
33 South Park Bridge

4901800000 21
19 March 1996

Dear Thandō,
Thank you for your last letter that I received last week on Saturday.

I spent my December holiday in Transkei at Butterworth. It was a very pleasant holiday. I arrived by taxi. I first went to the zoo where I saw chimpanzees and monkeys with their babies.

After that I went to the zoo. I went to the beach and to aquarium. In aquarium I saw sea lions, seals and daggong fishes. After some times I saw sword fish, catfish, sea-horses, sunfish and

yellowfish.
I saw small birds and butterflies.
I saw many more birds and

flowers. I saw many butterflies and
I saw many small birds and butterflies.

I saw many small birds and butterflies.
I saw many small birds and butterflies.

I saw many small birds and butterflies.
I saw many small birds and butterflies.

yellowfish. At the beach I swam
carefully because there were some
children who were lost there.

We went to the restaurant where I
was given a book to order food. ~~It~~
I was having a friend whose name is
Danny. My uncle bought a pair of
shoes. Then we went back to my ~~to~~
home in Park ridge.

Give my regards to Ananthu

Your sincere friend
Wickho

7/6/03/19
Wickho

Ananthu

Wickho

We went to the restaurant where I
was given a book to order food. ~~It~~
I was having a friend whose name is
Danny. My uncle bought a pair of
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was given a book to order food. ~~It~~
I was having a friend whose name is
Danny. My uncle bought a pair of
shoes. Then we went back to my ~~to~~
home in Park ridge.

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25 April 1997

A NARROW ESCAPE

One day we were told at school that next week we could go to a tournament. After school, when I got home I asked my mother for a permission. My mother didn't agree with me. There was nothing I could say but I told myself that I'll go.

The day became, my friends wanted to go there. They forced me to go and thus I went to that tournament. We went to the stadium, that day was cloudy. The tournament started and we saw that the storm was coming.

After the tournament the rain fell. I was supposed to cross the river. It was so full especially for me. When I was crossing the river I skated on the mud. I waved my hand and cried for help. Two men helped me. My mother thanked the men for helping me from death. That was my narrow escape.

1 August 1996

My birthday party

My birthday party was on the seventh of February in 1994. It was a very pleasant day. My birthday party started at twelve o'clock in the afternoon. It was held at my uncle's house.

I invited my friends, neighbours and relatives. It was opened by my grandfather with a short prayer. The house was decorated by my sisters, brothers and friends. My mother bought a big cake for me. It was written as Happy Birthday likho.

I was wearing my silver grey suit. There was meat for grilling. My friends, neighbours and relatives bought cards.

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I was wearing my silver grey suit. There was meat for grilling. My friends, neighbours and relatives bought cards.

17
20 ✓
Good

52 Sonia Road
Parkridge

5201

6 March 1997

Dear Ben

I thank God for giving me this chance to write this letter because we were all busy at home. I write this letter to tell you about my sister's birthday.

It was on the twenty-fourth of June 1996. It was held at my uncle's house. My sister invited friends and relatives. It started at one o'clock in the afternoon. My grandmother opened it with a short prayer. It was from Saturday to Sunday. ~~two~~ ^{last} two days.

On Saturday ^{we} were at my uncle's house and on Sunday we were at the beach. We were dancing, talking, drinking our drinks and grilling meat. After that we went back home. My father thanked people for coming to his daughter's birthday. After the people ^{had} left we cleaned the house. We collected all the decorations and kept them.

Give my regards to Danny and Shery.

Yours sincerely
Nikho

28 January 1997

How I spent my holiday

I spent my holiday at my uncle's house. The house is in East London at Parkridge. Before I went there, I wrote a letter to my aunt and she phoned me saying I can go.

My uncle took me to the garage by his car. At the first of January 1997 my uncle's family and me went to the beach. We were ^{SP}drilling meat. I went nowhere but without the beach.

Before I came back home, my uncle bought me all my school supplies. I thanked him very much and he thanked me for visiting them. I was home with his car and ^{car}family. Before they went back they greet me. I told my father that it was a pleasant holiday. I want to go there in June holiday.

Correction

~~Bottoman~~ ~~Wickho~~ ~~5-27~~ ~~59~~ hubisi Street
East-London
Duncan Village
5201
27 May 1997

Dear husband

I thank God for giving me this chance to write this letter because we were all busy at home and also at school. I write this letter to tell you about my sister's birthday.

It was on the twenty fourth of June 1994. It was held at my uncle's house. My sister invited friends and relatives. It started at one o'clock in the afternoon. My grandmother opened it with a short prayer. It lasted two days.

On Saturday we were at my uncle's house and on Sunday we were at the beach. After all that we went back home. My father thanked the people for coming to his daughter's birthday. After the people had left we cleaned the house and collected all the decorations, we kept them. It was enjoyable.

Give my regards to Danny and Shery.

Yours sincerely
Wickho

Mahashe Jandisive

Std 7³

20 March 1997

When a stranger gave me a lift

25

It was a wednesday afternoon. I was in East London near Shoprite Checkers. I was wearing a school uniform. In my wallet I had only R4.50 for the taxi. When I was about to catch a taxi, a white B.M.W stopped. The driver was a black guy and he was a stranger, because I ~~did~~ did not know him.

He asked my name and what I was doing there, I answered. Then he asked if I wanted a lift and I said yes. I took the lift because I wanted to save that R4.50. I got in the car and he drove off. After some time I told where I was going, but he didn't make any response. I told him again but he just became angry. I got suspicious about the guy, and I was ~~se~~ scared. The guy did go to N.4.3 where I stayed and my eyes started to have tears. The guy drove his car to N.4.10.

We arrived at his house. The guy said "get out", and I said "no I want to go home". I begged him to let go of me, but he did not have any sympathy. I was crying loudly now, and it was getting late. Then we stood near the house door. He searched for a key in his pockets, but he did not find it. He went to look for it in the car. While he was in the car I escaped. I went next door, his house and asked for help. Luckily they helped me. They borrowed me a phone and I called my mother. I gave her the address to come and pick me up. She arrived and she was very worried. I told her everything. She said she looked for me everywhere, and she did not find me. We went home and we were ~~so~~ relieved. I promised myself that I will never do ~~such~~ a stupid thing like that again. "

$$\frac{24 \times 2}{50} = \frac{21}{50}$$

8582 N.U.3

Mdantsane

5219

29 October 1996

Dear Uncle

I am very glad for the puppy you gave me some time ago. I write this letter to tell you how he is getting on now.

I have decided to call him Tippy, because he has a brown colour on the tip of his tail. His colour is white. He is two months old. He is very mischievous, and he loves playing very much. In the morning he eats porridge and in the evening I give him meat and bones. When I bring him food he always jumps at me because of the food. He is a very lovely dog. Could you come (to) see ^{him} next week?

Give my regards to all at home

Your loving niece
Sandisiwe

20/50

8582 N.4.3

Molokwane

5219

25 February 1997

Dear Nasiphiwo

I am very glad to hear that your mother has been discharged in hospital. I write this letter telling you how I spent my valentine's day.

I spent my valentine's day at home. I was with my mother. My mother and I had a little bar. My mother bought meat, cool drinks and snacks. We played music and we were so happy.

After a while, I suggested that we must go to watch a movie. The movie was in Vincent Park. The name of the movie was 'The Bad Boys'. The main actors were Wil Smith and Martin Lawrence. The movie was nice but so violent. Then we went back home after its end. We spent our valentine's day very good, and we enjoyed our selves.

Give my greetings to Ayanda.

Your loving friend
Sandiswe

Last in a city

30
20
10

On the fourth of June last year I went to Cape Town. ~~I went~~ with my parents and my cousin. We visited the Gugulethu township. We visited my uncle and my aunt's house. We unpacked our things and had a cold drink.

My uncle decided that we go to the city by his car. Then we got there. We got in a book shop. I became bored in the book shop and I went to Fagars. It was my first time to go there. I did not have any friends and I did not know anybody.

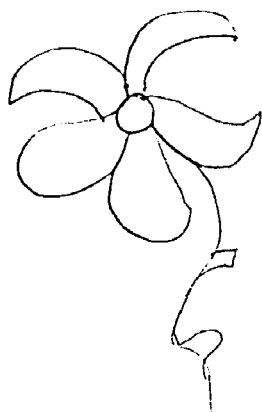
My curiosity drove me to go to a mall called ^{sp} Tyggervalley. There were a lot of people there. I hanged up there. After some time, I thought I was going with my parents. I look for them everywhere, but I didn't see a sign of them. I was so afraid now. The time became four o'clock. I was worried because I had neither a friend nor somebody I know.

The shops were closed. ~~Am~~ I stood near a closed chemist. A policeman saw me and he knew that I was lost, because it was wrote all over my face. He asked me who am I and what I am doing there at that time. I answered. He took me to the police station. They asked me a lot of questions and I responded.

They called my parents and my uncle. ~~to go there~~. They arrived. My parents thanked the policeman that took me to the police station. Everybody warned me (that I shall) never do that, because it is too dangerous.



My name is Sandisiwe Mahasha. I live at Madantsane. I attend school at Hlokomani High school. I'm in standard seven. I honour old people. I love my family. My mom and my grandmother are very special to me. My family is not a rich family but not a poor family. I don't have a glamorous childhood. I am a very short tempered person, when something annoys me I ~~get~~ ^{become} very angry so easily. I'm not a very kind person but I'm not harsh. I love little babies, lovely children. I detest evil things. I believe in God and that His son Jesus died in a cross for all of us in this world. I have a good heart and when somebody is in ^{an} awful condition I feel sorry for him, but I'm not saying I don't do mistakes sometimes. I am very ambitious. I want to be a doctor. I want to be a very intellectual, open handed, smart, confident and have a great sense of humour. I want to be a powerful person and when I want something I have to struggle for it, not just get it without having to do anything. I wish God could blessed this country so that crime could be stopped. I don't agree with the cruelty that is made in animals. Animals must not be caged because God created them to be free. I also hate ~~the~~ robbery and other crimes in this country.



S.T.D. 8^c

= 152

25-05-99

200

English paper I

Crime in our country is escalating
at an alarming rate.

Crime in our ^{percentage} country is escalating at a very high. Only 60% of people ^{with} jobs and the whole 40% without jobs. and the 40% of people without jobs turn to crime because they think crime is the only way to solve their problems.

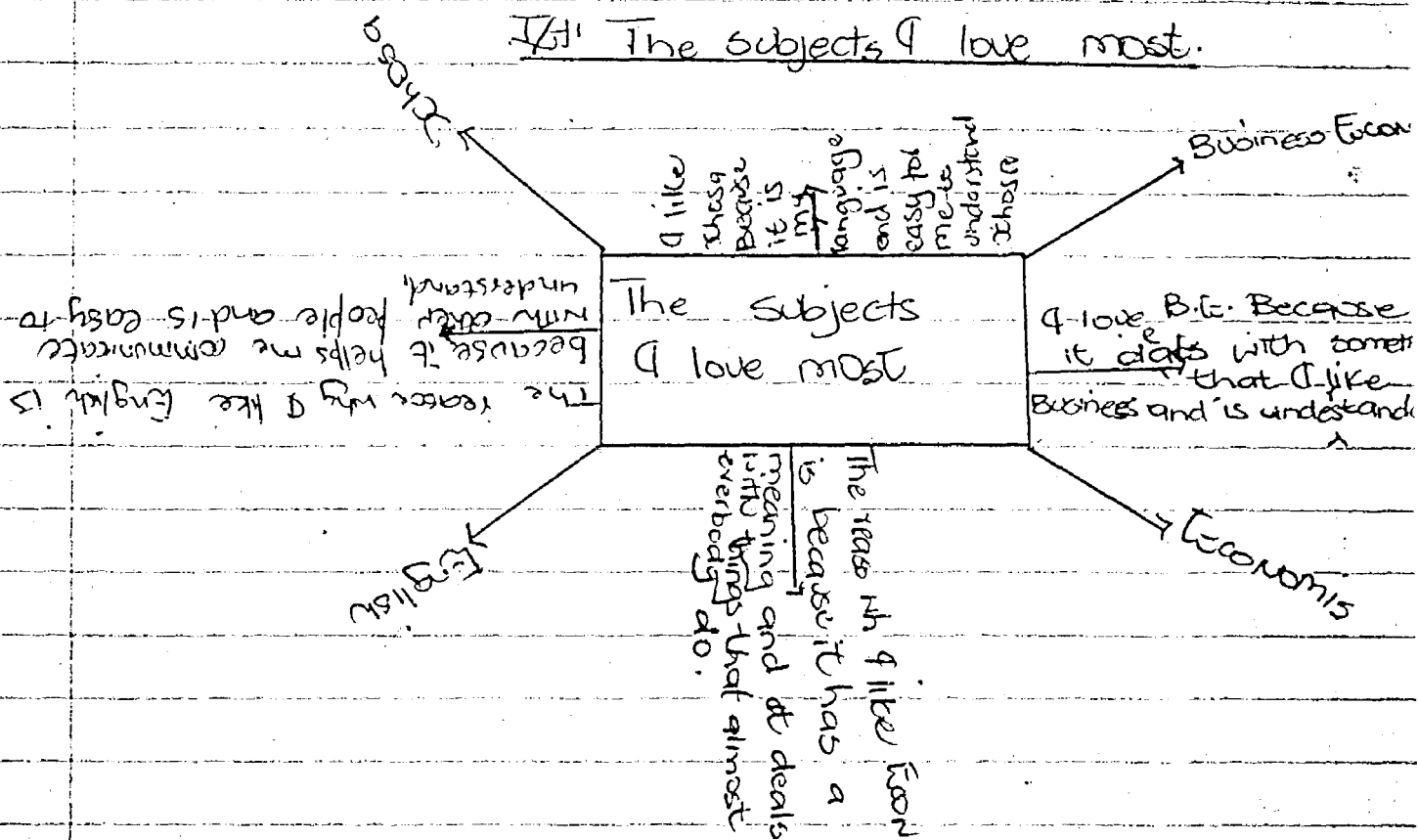
The scarcity of jobs causes a high crime rate. and there are no more vacant jobs for people. The other reason that causes crime is abuse. Sometimes you will find out that children who have been abused run away from home, and they have no other place to go to. and they also turn to crime. They rob people; they still steal from the shops. and they turn up to be criminals.

People without education, are increasing crime. Some of them drop out - at school for some reasons. and others just drop out - at school with no

reason. ✓

The only way to stop crime is by education. If you are an educated person you will know what to do. You will not just turn to crime as if it is the only way to live. The other reason to stop crime is to sit down and talk to the criminals and maybe you will find out that they need help. The end if only there were ^{and help them} people who would agree to that, maybe crime would decrease in our country.

14 April 1997



The reason I like these 4 subjects is because they all deal with the same things people, and is so easy to understand all of them. These subject all have a meaning.

The first subject I would like to talk about is Business economics. The business economics teacher is Ms Tshento. Business economics deals with business and with the ~~corporate~~ ^{businesses} things orround us. Business economics is easy to understand, it is a very common subject with talk's about the ~~surrounding~~ ^{surrounding} orround us.

The second subject is Economics. The economics teacher is Ms Sizuba. Economics is similar to Business Economics. It teaches us how to handle

our businesses in the near future. It is also a very common subject, and is easy to understand and also has a meaning.

The third subject is English. The English teacher is Ms Khondlo. English is a language which is spoken by white people. The reason why I like it is because it helps us communicate with white people. and if no one knew how to speak English there would be no understanding between Black and white people. English also helps us to get jobs; and that is why I like English most because it will help me in the future.

The last and the fourth subject is Xhosa. The Xhosa teacher is Ms Mkhabela. The reason why I like Xhosa is because it is very easy and not only easy to understand it to speak and write Xhosa is very easy. It is also fun to study Xhosa. and Xhosa also has a meaning and it also helps me to communicate very well with people from the rural areas.

I like all of these subjects.

17
30

P.O. Box 915

Mdantsane

5219

26 May 1997

Dear Busisiwe

Thankyou for the amusing letter that you send me last week.

From the letter you send last week, I hear ^{that} you want to drop out of school without completing your standard 8 studies.

It might be hard for you to finish your studies, but life forces you to finish your studies because education is the only key to your life. In the near future you will see that it was a stupid thing to do; to live school is the biggest mistake of your life. I wish that you were not thinking of being a criminal after leaving school, and no matter how hard it is for you. I know you can make it through and I have trust on you. I will always be on your side in happy times and in ^{or sad} hard times.

Give my regards to all at home

Your friend
Mihlali

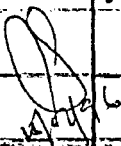
15-02-96

V. Good!I AM BLESSED

I am blessed because I have a mother who is very special to me, she is a very kind, loving and supportive woman. She supports me in anything I do if it is the right thing but if it's the wrong thing, believe me she won't. She has always been there for me. I don't know what I will ever do without her. //

When I have a problem I don't hesitate to go to her and tell her about my problem, because she always finds a way to help solve it. In good times and bad times she's the one who's always there. //

Sometimes I go through the worse experiences of my life and I feel so scared and alone, but when my mother's there, there's nothing in this world that we can't conquer together. I thank God everyday for blessing me with my mother. It's a great feeling to know that you have someone who's always there, someone you can trust and you're not afraid to share anything with. ~~her~~ //



Corrections

I AM BLESSED

I am blessed because I have a mother who is very special to me. She is a very kind, loving and supportive woman. She supports me in anything I do, if it's the right thing but if it's the wrong thing, believe me she won't. She has always been there for me. I don't know what I will ever do without her.

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Sometimes I go through the worst experiences of my life and I feel so scared and alone, but when my mother's there, there's nothing in this world that we can't conquer together. I thank God
 I trust up!

everyday for blessing me with my mother. It's a great feeling to know that you have someone who's always there, someone you can trust and you're afraid to share anything with.

V. Good!

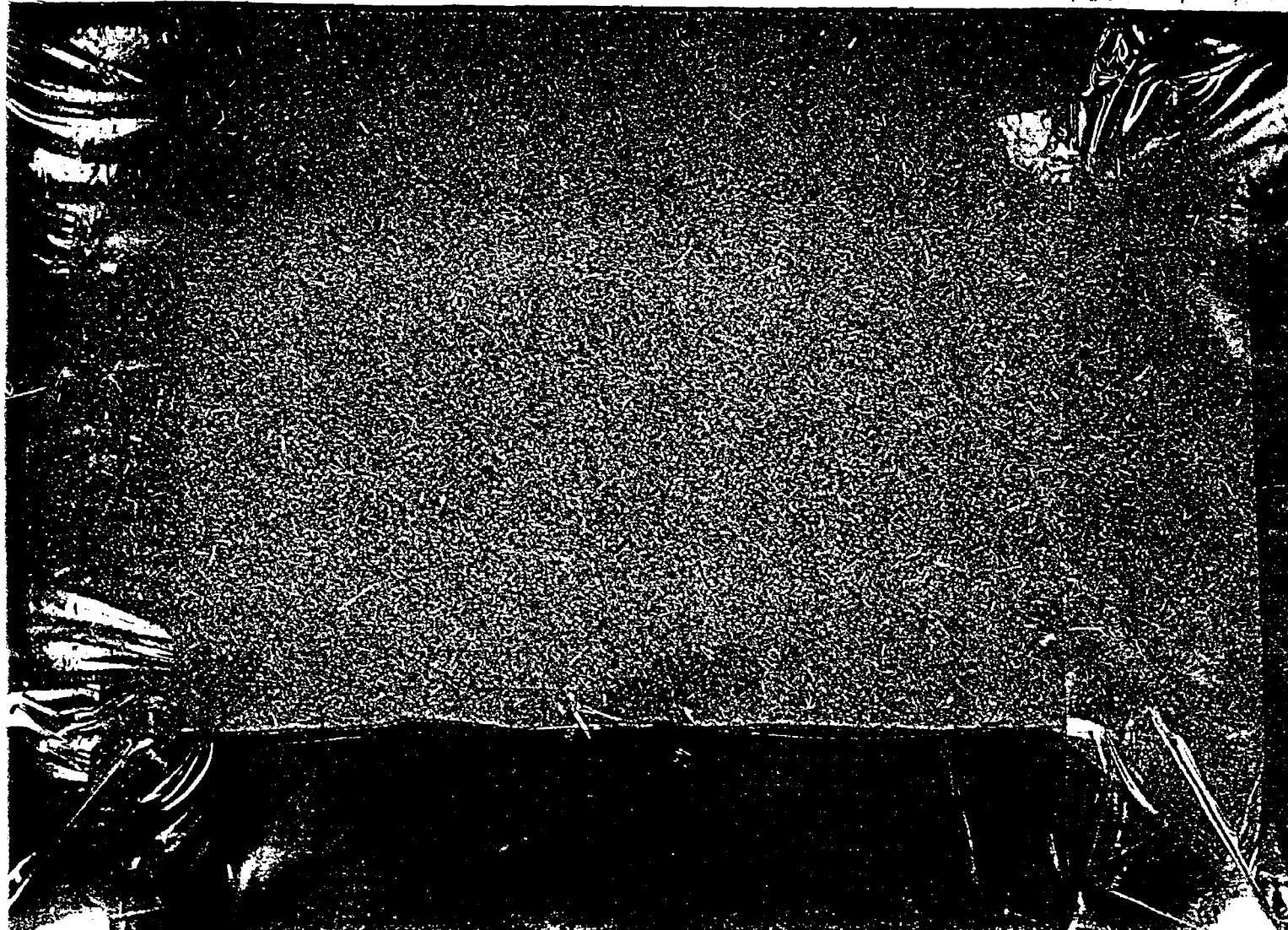
17-02-97

GOD LOVES ME

I know that God loves me, because he blessed me with the most important person in my life, my mother. My father has four children, each from a different father and I thank my lord for loving us enough, not to let my mother abandon us, as our fathers did. :-

I thank the lord for giving us a roof over our heads, a plate, ^{and} wine, ^{and} bread every morning, because not everyone has that. Although we might not have a lot of money, the love we have for each other is the most important thing, that gets us through the day.

I'm very grateful for the love that God has for me, because people sometimes try to deny it. If the lord didn't love me, I don't even want to think of where I would be today. :-



2726 N. U. 12

Molantseane

5219

16 March 1997

Dear Oprah

My name is Phakama Lucato and I live in South Africa, I'm still at school and I'm almost 17 years old. I love your show, it has really taught me a great deal about an awful lot of things. It's only been showing for one year here in South Africa, but you can't imagine the way it has changed my life and the way I feel about different things and people too.

I really love the way you approach your guest and audience. You are a real inspiration and I admire you very much. A few weeks ago I read about some of the awful things that happened to you at your earlier age. I felt really close to you and I loved you more than I loved you before. Whatever happened in your past, I just want you to know, I don't judge you, it was never your fault. You're a great lady Oprah, you never gave up, you kept on going and you've taught me a great deal about faith.

Anyway I just want you to know that I love you very much, you're the second great lady in my life, the first one of course being my mother. I would love to meet you in person one day that would mean so much to me. All in all I just want you to know you've got a fan in me.

Your biggest fan
Phakama

OPRAH

THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW

May 2, 1997

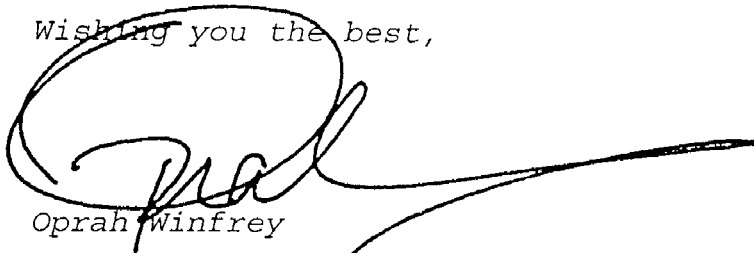
Phakama& Nolubabalo
2726 N.U. 12
c/o Phakama Luvab
Molantrane (East London), 5219 SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Phakama& Nolubabalo,

Thank you for writing and watching The Oprah Winfrey Show.

I appreciate your letter and hope that you will continue working hard in school. Keep up your grades -- education is the key to success!

Wishing you the best,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oprah', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Oprah Winfrey

OW/sg

54 Kuvolo Phokama
Moderator
28

28/06/97

How we can improve the criminal justice

English Paper I: Section A

50 95

26 May 1997

System in our country

Today South Africa is known to be the highest crime rating country in the world, I don't understand why. We recently got our freedom, in an apartheid ruling country, and apartheid was what caused so many criminals, but now I just can't imagine why people are putting this country's reputation in such low English.

In my opinion, I think that South Africa is too soft for its own good when it comes to ~~criminals~~ criminals. I really think that that should change or else we will have the whole of the country committing crime the only way I think that can happen, if we as the people stood together, learned to understand each other, stopped pulling each other down and have one aim and one aim only, to stop the crime in our country.

We should appoint some representatives in our communities first, people who are committed to assure the safety of their community. There should be some neighbourhood watch system going in each zone, in that way the criminals can be caught in the act. The government should really have strict penalties against the criminals.

Realistically, we cannot do anything to stop the crime, we don't have the power, only God has it, but we can do something to the criminals and its high time that we as the community took the stand and joined arms with the government and the police, because taking the law into our own hands is the worse thing that we can do. To me together, as is the way to go if we really want to improve the criminal justice system in this country.

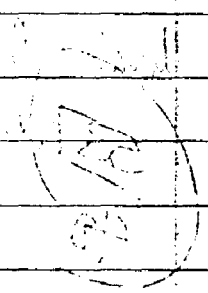
PART 2

2726 N.V.12

Mdantsane

5219 ✓

29 October 1996



My dear Monnica /

Yesterday when I came to school there is something that I did to you that I should not have. I write this letter, and these words I know, ~~that~~ can erase what happened but the same want you to know that they are from the bottom of my heart.

I feel terribly horrible for accusing you of taking my walk. When I came back home from school yesterday, I found it lying beside my bed. When I told my mother about what ~~ever~~ had happened she was very upset with me.

I know I shouldn't have accused you of something you didn't do, it was wrong and I had no ~~write~~ right to treat you so badly. We both said something that we regret, but I am really sorry. I just hope that we could be friends again, so that I can do everything in my power to make it up to you. Please just give me a second chance. It is all I am asking for.

Love to all at home.

Yours sincerely
Phakama

Lwab Phakama

STD 8A

29-10-96

5372

78

ENGLISH : SECTION A

Part 1

PROBLEMS FACING THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITIES TODAY

First of all there are so many pl problems which are facing our society these days. ~~And~~ each and everyday of our lives we enc a new problem, that needs ~~an~~ immediate attention, and sometimes finding solutions is not always as easy as people think. Some people blame the government for the problems occurring in their community.

Let's talk for instance about poverty. This is one of the very serious issues which leads to many problems. Poverty and unemployment go hand in hand, because you can't be hungry if you have a job and you can support yourself and your family. Being unemployed, some people tend to make a very bad use of that situation, by robbing and committing all sorts of crime, ~~and~~ even killing, because a hungry man is an angry man.

Safety is another one that I don't think some people are aware of. There is no safe place nowadays in the community, because of a very much increasing rate of crime and gangsterism. You are not safe even in your own home.

I think the solution for all of th problems is in our hands. ~~And~~ I think we should stand up for our selves, stop leaning on the government and blaming me it. We should learn to fight for our rights, not violently but in a peaceful manner, where everybody can be satisfied, after all everybody has a right to be alive.

2-08-1996

Corrections

MAJOR ISSUES CONFRONTING OUR SOCIETY TODAY

Today there are so many issues confronting our society but we tend to run away from them, maybe we are we don't want to face them, maybe we are too scared for our own good. Let's talk for instance about homelessness, people nowadays really do not care, you bring a child into this world and you leave it in the street, what do you think is going to happen to that child? You are leaving it with no home, no one to call it's own, and it grows up in the street, trying to make a living for itself, and it ends up robbing you maybe.

There is another very serious issue that I think people, especially women, should really be aware of, abuse, it doesn't matter if it's rape, sexual assault or harassment there so many of them, but, the point is, people should be able to protect themselves from this kind of behaviour. A man is unemployed, he's left with his three year old daughter, and he finds that he has nothing to do he's bored and he turns to rape his own child, what is he thinking?

Unemployment that is another problem that leads to many bad things like crime. The more unemployment increases, the more crime increases, because people sitting at home doing nothing that bore them, and they turn to crime. They get arrested and ~~get~~ go to jail and at least in jail, they get something to eat, maybe at their homes they didn't.

Maybe if we could stop being selfish and try by every means to help people on the streets, maybe and just maybe the rate of homelessness would go down. Men should really realise the value of women in the society and stop abusing them. I think there should be community centres where people with these kinds of problems can be helped. Lastly unemployed people can really realise

PART II

2726 N.U. 12

Mdantane

5219 ✓

5 June 1996

My dear Tiffany ✓

Thank you very much for writing to me again. Although what happened to you is very bad and so sad, but any way, it was nice hearing from you again. I write this letter because I want to try and convince you to talk to your parents about what happened to you.

I know it's not easy, but you have to do it for your sake, before it's too late. If you talk to someone, this man can be stopped, but if you don't, don't he can abuse someone else. By telling your parents and the police, you will be saving some lives.

4
2

If you keep quiet and this man strike again, I don't think you could live with yourself. please Tiffany, I'm begging you, for your sake and ~~some~~ someone else's who might be invole in this, you can never know who might be next. I might be for your sisters, please stop this madness now! I'm your best friend, and I wouldn't, never, ask you to, if I didn't know it was a right.

Greetings to all at home. ✓

Yours sincerely
Phakama ✓

46
28
18
13
27
14
146

146 + 83

210 Phakama 90

229
~~228~~

JUNE 1996

ENGLISH PAPER - I

SECTION A

Moderated 8A.

PART ONE

13/06/96

WHY I WILL NEVER BE A TEACHER

For most growing up children, when they are asked what they wish to be when they are grownups, they will always tell you that they want to be teachers. I know, because I did too, but, as I grew up, things changed and I changed too.

In the gone by years, teaching has been the most wanted and popular profession, because there were not many 'careers' to follow, but now there are so many careers, it's even hard to know which to choose.

But the reason why I don't and never want to be a teacher even if it was the only alternative, it's because, before, teaching was easy in a sense that teachers made the rules, and that was the procedure, but now the students make the rules and everything everybody has to follow them, including the teachers, or else face the consequences.

I never, ever, want to be a teacher, because it's very hard nowadays, it's not an easy task, and you have to be strong and patient. I do all the same congratulate the teachers who are still hanging on, and I hope they do, because without teachers the world is dead.

23 April 1996

V. GOON!

MY ENGLISH TEACHER

The name of my English teacher is Ms. Nette. She is a very wonderful, caring and inspiring lady. She does not only teach us English just only as a subject, she tries to teach us about the right and the real facts of life. ✓

I like her very much. She is the first, well maybe the second teacher who has really inspired and shown me ~~the~~ what life is really all about. ✓

I know these days being a teacher is not an easy job and I to thank her very much for everything that she has done for me in these few months that I've known her. ✓✓



23/10/96

2726 N.U.12

Mdantsane

5219

7 March 1996

Good!
My dear mother

Mother, I know I was wrong for not listening to you, when you told me not to go to that show last week. I knew it was wrong because I was almost strangled by a man there, but luckily for me there was someone watching and he came and rescued me.

I did this course. I did not care at the time, I just wanted to be someone I was not, and go the wrong way. I know that I have hurt your feelings very badly, I apologise.

I know, too, that we don't always agree on everything, but that's the way life is, it's up and down. I am willing to do anything in my power to make it up to you, if only you could forgive me. I can't blame you if you don't, I know it was a bad thing to do.

Creetings to all at home.

Your daughter
Phakama

Phakama

people's premises, and I think that's the only way we can stop this madness before it gets out of hand.

Give regards to all at home.

Yours faithfully
Phakame Luvalo

Appearances can be

deceptive

Appearances can really deceive you sometimes if you go with them, I should know, I've been there. It's just started ^{with} his looks, I thought and felt that he was the greatest thing that God ever created. ~~And~~ Oh! boy, was I wrong!

He looked like a real gentleman. I had never even talked to him, I just saw him from afar. He always had a smile on his face, like someone who had something to hide and he had indeed. //

Strange as it may seem, I felt I had to ~~and~~ analyse his every move. When I started doing that, I discovered the secret behind that so-called gentleman. He was abusing drugs so as to cope with his family problems. Not only was he using drugs himself, he was also dealing them and that was the real thing that pierced me off.

11 April 1999

Although I had a lot of disappointment in all of this
proust, I learned the greatest lesson that I would
cherish for the rest of my life. The lesson is that I should
never look at the outer looks of a person. I should look
inside, look into the heart, don't listen to what he
says but how he says it and that is how I will
know if he is genuinely.

8
1/04/2008

Conventions

Appearances can be

Deceptive.

Appearances can really deceive you sometimes if you
go with them, I should know, I've been there.
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He was abusing drugs so as to cope with his
family problems. Not only was he using drugs
himself, he was also dealing in them and that

was the real thing that piss me off.

Although I had a lot of disappointments in this, I also learned the greatest lesson that I would cherish for the rest of my life. The lesson is that I should never ^{look} ~~look~~ at the outer looks of a person. I should look inside, look into the heart, don't listen to what he says but how he says it and that is how I will know if he is sincere.

Kambana Unathi

Std 8^A

26 October 1995

57 ✓ Modish that people like about myself

02/11/95

What I like about myself. Most people or should I say most teens like to compromise their lives just because they want to be like their role models. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not trying to say it is wrong to have a role model, but you don't really need to like him/her more than yourself.

I may be having people whom I admire because of their good deeds, but I certainly admire my skill of counselling. Some natural counsellors make a mistake of being able to counsel and encourage others and failing to do the same for themselves. I am able to counsel other people that's for sure, but I'm certainly able to counsel myself too. I don't really care that much for people's opinions or views about myself, because I'm able and I do clap hands for myself and that's certainly what I like most about myself. Parents may not always approve of the things you think so right for yourself, but that doesn't discourage me ~~at~~ an inch. I trust my judgement about my life, no matter who else do is unhappy about it.

Most people lose their self-esteem just because they wanted to please their 'loving' parents, and I am not like that at all and after all 'Once buster, twice shy' is not that so. You may like doing or following a career in Personnel Management and there comes your parent and say with a very low and tricky voice, 'I thought you'd be a doctor my ^{son's} daughter and make me proud, I did it know, really I did it know, and my errors will be 'certainly Dad I know you did it know, did you?'

So, I thank God that He has given me a very precious gift, to be proud of myself no matter what other people think about me. Other people may say pride will destroy you just because you'll make mistakes and moves from them without their consultation. After-all, you don't judge people by the mistakes they make, you judge them by counting how many times have they learnt from them and stood up again. That's certainly what I like about myself.

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Sunnyridge

5604

26 October 1995

The Principal
Stirling High
P.O. Box 160
Stirling

5271

Dear Sir ✓

APPLICATION FOR A TESTIMONIAL ✓

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I'm hereby asking you to write for me a testimonial
I was a matric student at your school last year and
I passed my final year examinations. Now I applied for
admission at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. They have sent
me an admission form to complete and stated clearly that
I should attach my matric results and a testimonial. ✓

I hope that my letter will have your favourable consideration,
and your help will be appreciated. ✓

Yours faithfully
Kamela Unathi ✓

SECTION A Moderated JML ENGLISH I 59+69+52 = 180

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With these two concepts one can never be unable to achieve his life's goals. In our nation, our parents are so busy, too busy to even pat a son on the shoulder or kiss a girl on the cheek. That is exactly why people give in to misfortunes and regarding everything as impossible. Each one of us is unique. No one was born to be better than the other. We all can do everything that others could do.

There is only one remedy, if our students could tell themselves that if other people/students made it why can't we make it. Everyone of us has a potential tapped inside of him. It can only be released by him. The problem is that we die having not used that potential. The graveyard is a very rich 'world' with presidents, doctors, lawyers who retired before they even started.

If we would all realize how much we can do and how powerful we are, this world would be in for winners. The problem with our black superiors, people who have

everything is that they do not care much for the lower level people who back them up. The people on the lower level throw stones at them and when they fall nobody and again nobody is ready to take over.

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Vincent

5247

29 November 1996

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23 April 1997

To all the members of the Everpraising Youth Club.
A meeting of the above mentioned club will be held
on Saturday 26 April 1997 at 12:00 P.M. in the club's office-hall.

AGENDA

1. Opening
- 1.1. Welcoming
- 1.2. Personalia - (Mr. Z. Nguli's graduation party.)
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3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. New matters
5. Benediction

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Mr. B. Bistoli made opening remarks and carried on the
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The Chairperson welcomed and thanked everyone present
in the meeting.

1.3. Personalia

The chairperson also congratulated Mr. Z. Nguli on
his great achievement, he obtained a B.B.A. degree from RAU.

1.4. Supplementary Items

- there were 'nt any.

2. Confirmation of minutes

Miss N. Ndunge and Mr. K. Bistoli confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting, and the chairperson signed them.

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- The minutes were clear and there were no questions.

4. NEW Matters

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5. ~~Benediction~~

The vice-chairman made closing remarks and closed with a prayer.

Diff. in the "New South Africa" is a lot better than it was in the "Old South Africa".

I personally agree with the above statement. Even though I was not yet born to witness the horrible and terrifying atrocities of the past, my ears interpret them as bad as possible.

In the past, starting from the government itself, it was unilateral. Nobody had a say especially coloured or should I say black people. People were beaten, jailed, killed and no law or no one could lift up even a finger to save them. There was a great fear and ~~horror~~ ^{horror} amongst the society, having to mind and wait each and every word you say, lest it brings you to judgement.

Use of you turns comp to speech!

We were forbidden to even go to some schools, beaches or other facilities with white people; Even forbidden to enter in the same door when shopping.

But in the 'New South Africa' (I tell you), things are different. We have freedom of speech; freedom to be educated; freedom of expression to count but a few, all written in the constitution of our country. We have free education which does not mean free schooling equipment because we shouldn't be robbed of our responsibilities. In South Africa now, we also have a democratically elected President N. R. Mandela.

Our parents ~~no~~ have a right to own/buy houses and land anywhere they like. We have what is known as equality.

How ^{can} I forget women, who have been ~~fight~~ fighting for years, for this equality. To mention but a few of their leaders: our parliament speaker Dr. Ginwale LL.D. Mrs. A. Tambo and others. We have really achieved much in a very few years of democracy that means much more is to come. In conclusion I want to quote the words which were said by President Mandela after he was ordained as "President of S.A." "Never and never again shall a person be oppressed by another."

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THE BASICS OF FRUITFUL LIVING



BY: UNIAITHI KARUNAINAI

Kamala Unathi

Std 8^A

26 October 1995

57
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Modi that I like about myself

02/11/95

(What I like about myself) Most people or should I say most teens like to compromise their lives just because they want to be like their role models. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not trying to say it is wrong to have a role model, but you don't really need to like him/her more than yourself.

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60 29 NOVEMBER 1996

SECTIONAL ENGLISH
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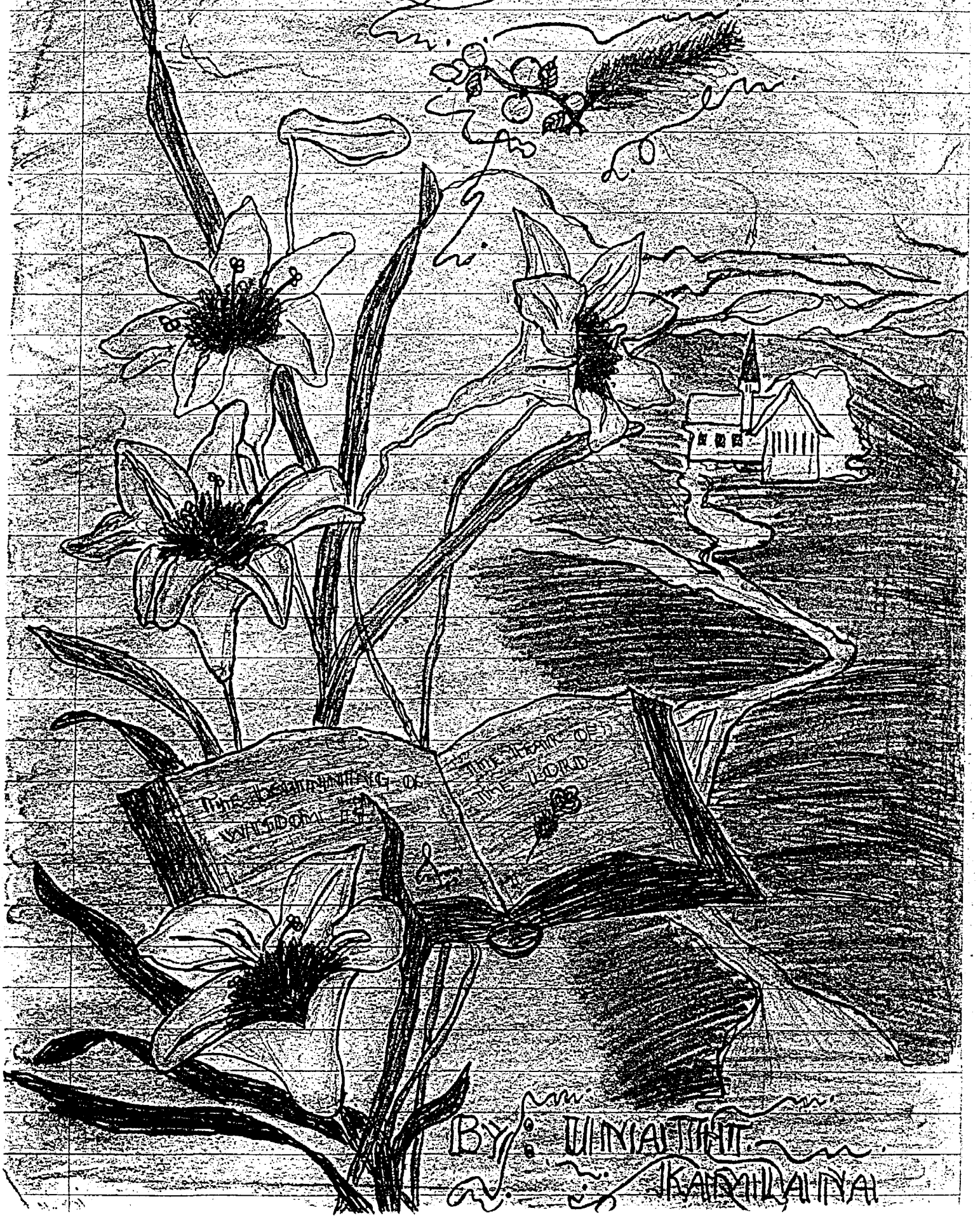
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THE BASICS OF FRUITFUL LIVING



THE DISCOVERING OF
WISDOM

THE SPIRIT OF
THE LORD

BY: UNIAITHI
KANVILAIYA

1.

SINCERE TRUE LOVE

THIS TYPE OF LOVE IS VERY RARE, IT IS LIKE DISCOVERING A TREASURE. IN ALL THE BOOKS WHICH DISCRIBE IT, THE VERY BEST BOOK IS THE BIBLE. THE BIBLE DISCRIBES IT IN A RATHER UNREALISTIC WAY ONE WILL SAY, BUT I WOULD LIKE YOU (THE READER) TO DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS DISCRPTION OF PAUL ABOUT LOVE.

IT IS AS FOLLOWS:

LOVE IS PATIENT AND KIND; IT IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS OR CONCEITED OR NOT ILL-MANNERED OR SELFISH OR IRRITABLE, LOVE DOES NOT KEEP A RECORD OF WRONGS; LOVE IS NOT HAPPY WITH EVIL, BUT IS HAPPY WITH THE TRUTH; LOVE NEVER GIVES UP; AND IT'S FAITH, HOPE AND PATIENCE NEVER FAIL. (CORINTH 13:4-7)

LOVE IS NOT JEALOUS OR CONCEITED OR PROUD. JEALOUSY DESCRIBED.

- 1. IT IS AN UNHAPPY OR RESENTFUL FEELING BECAUSE YOU THINK THAT SOMEONE IS YOUR RIVAL OR IS LUCKIER THAN YOURSELF.
 - 2. IT IS BEING CAREFUL IN KEEPING SOMETHING FROM SOMEONE.
- IF WE LOOK AT THE CONCEPT OF CAREFUL WE MAY FIND OUT THAT WHEN YOU'RE CAREFUL ABOUT SOMEONE YOU END UP MAKING THAT SOMEONE A SLAVE, JUST BECAUSE YOU WANT TO TAKE FULL CARE OF HIM/HER. IN ORDER TO DO THAT, YOU HAVE TO TAKE IT ALONE AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHERE THE DANGER IS.

IF WE COME TO THE SECOND ONE (CONCEITED) IT MEANS BEING TOO PROUD OF YOURSELF. THE BIBLE ALSO SAYS THAT, WHEN TWO PEOPLE MARRY (AN OFFICIAL STATE OF LOVE) THEY BECOME ONE. THEREFORE THERE SHOULD BE NO WORDS LIKE 'MYSELF' YOURSELF AND ONLY THE WORD 'I' AND 'OUR' SHOULD EXIST.

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Kandana Unathi

Std 8^A

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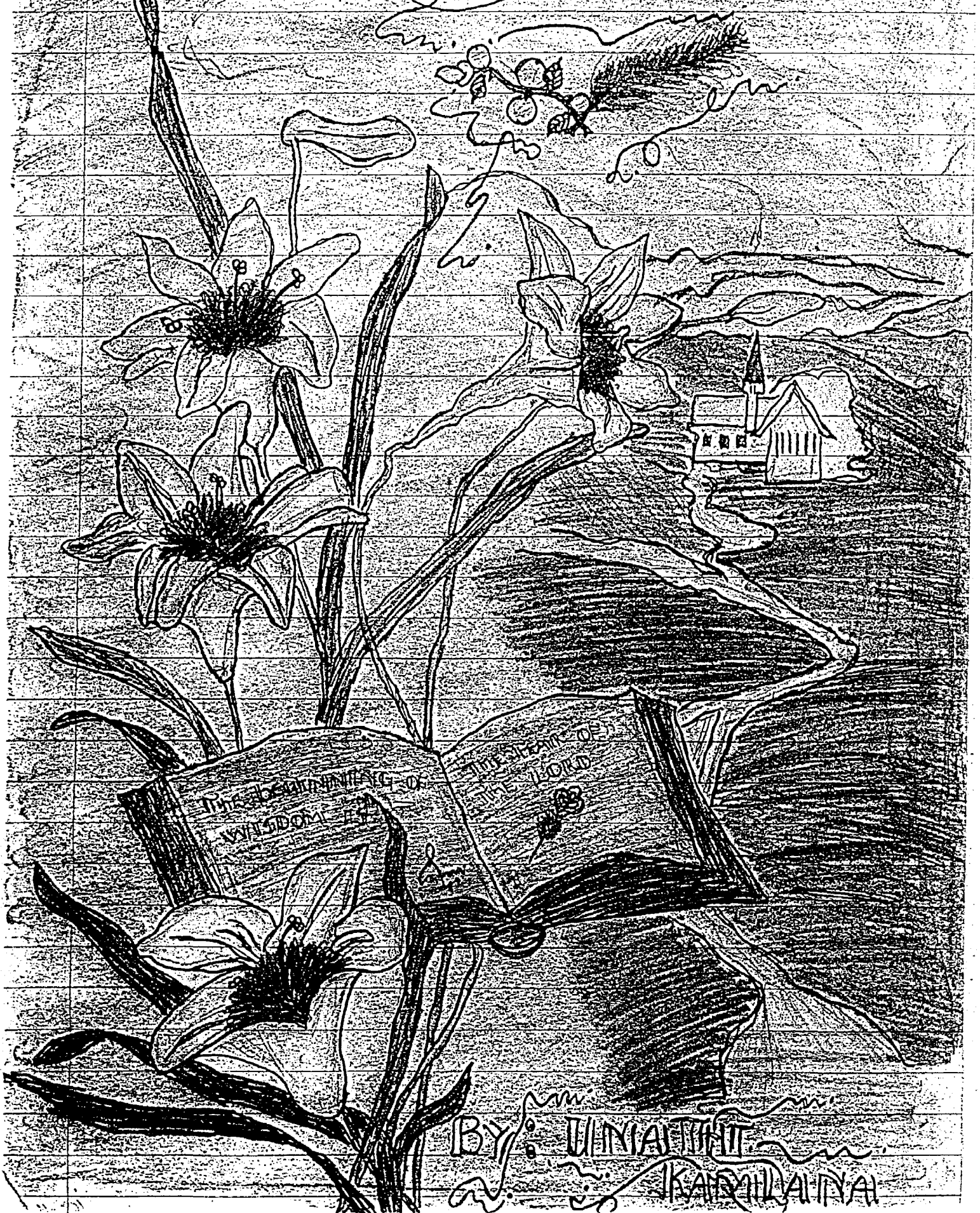
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BY: UNIAHIE
KARUNALNA

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ROM 5 VS 1

THEREFORE BRING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

SOMETIMES YOU BECOME SO SURE THAT YOUR HATRED IS JUSTIFIED BECAUSE YOU ARE THE VICTIM. I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING, NOTHING IS RIGHT GODD IF IT DOES NOT MAKE PEACE. THE ONLY WAY YOU DON'T HAVE PEACE WITH YOURSELF YOU CERTAINLY CAN NEVER HAVE PEACE WITH OTHERS.

AT TIMES YOU LOOK AT YOURSELF AND YOU SAY YOU LOOK SO UGLY AND YOU SEE ALL THE WRONGS AND YOU'LL NEVER BE PEACEFUL IF YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF ATTITUDE YOU COULD NEVER HAVE PEACE WITH YOUR OWN SELF. BECAUSE YOU ARE ALWAYS CAUSING WAR INSIDE OF YOU. MAKE SURE THAT YOU'RE FIRST BEAUTIFUL INSIDE FOR WHAT IS IT WORTH OUTSIDE. BEAUTY IF IT GOES AWAY AFTER 3000 YEARS. THE INSIDE BEAUTY WILL STAY WITH YOU FOREVER. IF YOU WANT IT TO STAY WITH YOU FOREVER IF YOU WANT IT TO STAY WITH YOU FOREVER IT OR NOT. OLD NO MATTER.

NEVER ALLOW HATRED TO STAY LONG IN YOUR HEART. LOVE MAY BE THE STRONGEST THING IN THE WORLD BUT HATRED IS EVEN STRONGER IN THE UNIVERSE.

DON'T HATE PEOPLE, DON'T HATE THEM EVEN IF YOU HATE THEM. LOVE THEM FOR YOUR OWN SAKE FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO IT FOR YOUR OWN BENEFIT. DON'T LET THEIR PERSONALITIES TO CHANGE YOUR PERSONALITY. YOU ARE SO SPECIAL THAT I WANT GOD MAKE YOU TO BE YOU AND CERTAINLY NOT ME. IF IT BE POSSIBLE STAY IN PEACE WITH EVERYBODY. PEACE LEADS TO A VERY HAPPY AND FULFILLING LIFE. SO GET EVERYTHING OUT WITH ALL YOUR GETTING GET.

IT IS A DISCIPLINE THAT SAVED YOU FROM A VERY DEEP AND DARK HOLE. "BLESSED ARE PEACEMAKERS FOR THEY SHALL RECEIVE PEACE"

3. KINDNESS

IN THIS WORLD WE ARE ALL THE SAME. WHAT I DO I MEAN WHEN I SAY THAT. IN CRISIS, WE ALL RESPOND IN THE SAME MANNER. WE ARE ALL ANGRY PEOPLE.

WHAT IS KINDNESS?

- KINDNESS IS SHOWING MERCY AND LOVE NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE.
- IT IS BEING STILL IN HUMANITY, BEING A REFUGE.

OUR WORLD TODAY IS SHORT OF KIND-PEOPLE. THE REASON BEING THE JUSTICE GIVEN TO ANGER. IN SOUTH AFRICA WE ARE IN A DILEMMA OF WHAT WE CALL THE DEATH SENTENCE AND ABORTION.

IF WE CONDEMN INNOCENT CHILDREN BY PUTTING THEM TO DEATH NOT REALIZING THAT THEY MAY BE ^{GOOD} FUTURE LEADERS, AND NOT KILLING THE KILLERS ~~AND~~ INSTEAD GIVING THEM A 'CHANCE' TO KILL AGAIN.

WE MIGHT AS WELL BE KIND TO BOTH, I SAY LET US NOT KILL NEITHER THE BABIES NOR THE KILLERS.

DEATH WILL NEVER BE A SOLUTION TO ANY PROBLEM, FOR KILLING IS IN ANY COUNTRY ILL-LEGAL. WE SHOULD NOT PROMOTE OTHER MURDERS AND CONDEMN OTHERS.

THE BIBLE SAYS "BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY. THEREFORE TO OBTAIN MERCY BE MERCIFUL. TO PRODUCE A KIND NATION, WE SHOULD SHOW THE WORLD KINDNESS. KILLERS CONTINUED TO KILL EVEN DURING THE DEATH SENTENCE ERA. IT'S NOW TIME TO CHANGE, LET US TRY KINDNESS, SHALL WE.

4.

GENTLENESS

THIS CONCEPT IS OFTEN CONFUSED WITH KINDNESS. IT DIFFERS IN THAT IT IS A MANNER OF DOING THINGS, IT DEALS WITH CONDUCTING MATTERS, WHILE KINDNESS IS INSIDE A PARTICULAR PERSON.

WHAT IS GENTLENESS?

- IT IS A SOFT TOUCH, A SOFT SWEET SMILE, A SOFT BUT WISE INSTRUCTION.

WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS NOT WHAT YOU SAY, WHAT YOU SING OR WHAT YOU DO BUT IT'S EFFECTIVENESS. WE'VE SOULY ON HOW YOU DO IT.

YOU MAY BE A VERY GOOD SPEAKER OR A VERY GOOD SINGER BUT A GENTLE SPEAKER AND A GENTLE SINGER IS DIFFERENT. SO, UNFORTUNATELY OUR WORD NOWADAYS IS SO ROUGH THAT IT IS OFTIMES SHOCKED BY GENTLE PEOPLE.

NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE A FEW GENTLEMEN AND I CAN'T ASSURE YOU MANY THINGS BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT JOINING THEM IS NOT A CRIME.

TO MAKE A CHANGE IN THIS WORLD WE NEED YOU AND ONLY YOU. STOP COMPLAINING AND START PERFORMING FOR THESE THINGS NEED TO BE DONE.

COME OUT OF THAT CROWD AND MAKE A CHANGE.

Joy

THIS CONCEPT IS SO OFTEN CONFUSED WITH THE CONCEPT HAPPINESS BUT I SO PRAY THAT AS YOU READ THIS CHAPTER YOU BE ABLE TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE.

JOY DESCRIBED

1. A FEELING OF GREAT PLEASURE OR GLADNESS.

HAPPINESS DESCRIBED

1. TO BE PLEASED OR MADE FORTUNATE.

WHEN DAVID DESCRIBES JOY, HE SAYS: 'THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH'. WHAT AMARES MEANS IS THAT HE DOES NOT SAY THAT THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH BUT HIS JOY IS HIS STRENGTH.

SO WHEN PAUL SAYS 'THE FRUIT PRODUCES LOVE, JOY, AND OR GLADNESS. NOW BECAUSE THE SPIRIT LIVES FOREVER THAT FEELING OF GREAT PLEASURE AND OR GLADNESS LASTS AS LONG AS THE SPIRIT LIVES. SO IMMEDIATELY IN YOUR LIFE YOU REACH A STATE OF MISERY, TELL YOURSELF THAT 'THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH'.

IF WE ALLOW OURSELVES OR MAKE IN OUR HEARTS A ROOM FOR PROSTRATION, WE WILL BE KILLING OUR SPIRIT, AND WHEN WE ARE SPIRITUALLY DEAD, WE'RE JUST BETTER OFF DEAD BECAUSE THERE IS NO US. (FOR A MAN IS A SPIRIT, LIVES IN A BODY AND POSSESSES A SOUL). DR. M. MURDOO.

TO BE SATISFIED IN LIFE WE NEED TO BE JOYFUL AND I TO BE JOYFUL WE NEED THE LORD, FOR THERE IS NO OTHER SOURCE OF JOY WHICH LASTS FOREVER EXCEPT FOR HIM.

LASTLY THERE ARE THREE WORDS IN THIS LIFE WERE LEADING WHICH CREATE ETERNAL JOY, THESE WORDS ARE: 'I LOVE YOU.'

I LOVE YOU.

FOR THE WORD TO THE WISE IS SUFFICIENT. SO, OH LOOK AROUND AND LET SOMEONE'S KNOWLEDGE BE ALIVE.

I ASSUME THAT IT IS NOT HAPPY WITH ANY EVIL. SO THAT CONCLUDES IN SAYING IF YOU LOVE AND YOU'RE LOVED YOU'LL NEVER BE AN EVILDOER. SO GET OUT THERE AND MAKE SOMEONE KNOW LOVE IS ALIVE. WITHOUT LOVE THERE IS NO LIFE.

IT IS HAPPY WITH THE TRUTH.

TRUTH COMES FROM THE WORD TRUE WHICH MEANS

1. GENUINE, NOT FALSE
2. REPRESENTING WHAT HAS HAPPENED OR EXISTS
3. ACCURATE
4. LOYAL, FAITHFUL

LOYAL - giving firm support

FAITHFUL - TRUSTWORTHY

WHEN SOMEONE FEELS LOVE HE FEELS A VERY GENUINE FEELING WHICH LASTS AS LONG AS HE IS WEARING FLESH AND BLOOD. BY ACTING TOWARDS HIS FEELING IS REPRESENTING EXACTLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN HIS HEART. BY LOVING A CERTAIN PERSON HE IS SHOWING THE ACCURACY OF TRUE LOVE. BY GIVING SUPPORT TO ONE HE IS SHOWING LOYALTY AND BY BEING TRUSTWORTHY HE IS SHOWING FAITHFULNESS. IN LOVE HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY.

LASTLY: LOVE NEVER GIVES UP

THERE IS AN ENGLISH SAYING WHICH SAYS "LOVE WILL ALWAYS FIND A WAY", AND WHICH SAYS "WINNERS NEVER QUIT AND

QUITTERS NEVER WIN". IF YOU START QUITTING ON LOVE

I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT YOU'LL NEVER BE CONTENT NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU SUCCEED IN LIFE.

LOVE IS SHARING WHATEVER YOU HAVE WITH A NEXT PERSON. GOD LOVES US BECAUSE HE WOULD DIE IF HE WOULD SPEND ETERNITY ALL BY HIMSELF. THE GREATEST SIN OF ALL IS NOT LOVING.

6. SELF-CONTROL

IF WE ALL HAD SELF-CONTROL, WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO EVEN MENTION CRIME IN OUR WORLD TODAY. MOST OF CRIMES ARE COMMITTED OUT OF ANGER & LACK OF SELF-CONTROL.

LOSING SELF-CONTROL IS JUST A STATE OF MIND. IT'S LIKE BEING ANGRY. THE ONLY WAY OUT IS TO THINK IT'S BEING IN CONTROL ALWAYS. MOST OF THE ^{BAD} THINGS WE DO, IT IS ALL BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO LISTEN.

YOU HAVE TO TEACH YOURSELF TO LISTEN TO YOUR CONSCIENCE. THERE IS AN ENGLISH SAYING WHICH SAYS "LET YOUR CONSCIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE" AND ~~WHAT~~ ONE WHICH SAYS "TO YOUR OWN-SELF BE TRUE".

ALL OF THESE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR BEING ABLE TO LISTEN TO YOUR HEART AND NOT YOUR MIND. THE XHOSA'S SAY "INTO OYENZAYO UYARENZEMA" WHICH MEANS EVERYTHING YOU DO, YOU DO IT FOR YOURSELF.

I HOPE THAT YOU WILL TRUST YOURSELF ENOUGH TO BE IN CONTROL OF YOUR SELF. WITH SELF-CONTROL THERE ARE NO FEARS.

7. PATIENCE

THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS WHICH ARE OURS THINGS THAT WE NEVER GET BECAUSE OF OUR IMPATIENCE. PATIENCE COSTS BUT IT IS WORTH A PROSPEROUS LIFE.

WHAT IS PATIENCE ?

PATIENCE IS WAITING FOR SOMETHING, IT IS BEING STEADFAST IN WAITING, NOT JUST MEER WAITING BUT REALLY WAITING.

THE DANGER OF IMPATIENCE

SHAKESPEARE WRITES "OFTENTIMES, TO WIN US TO OUR HARM INSTRUMENTS OF DARKNESS TELL US TRUTHS, WIN US WITH HONEST TRIFLES, TO BETRAY US IN DEEPEST CONSEQUENCE"

IMPATIENCE LEADS TO EVIL-DOING AND THUS DEATH THEREAFTER. THEREFORE I AM PLEADING TO YOU PEOPLE, TEACH YOURSELVES TO BE PATIENT.

ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOU WILL BE YOURS IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME. YOURS IS TO HOPE AND WAIT STILL. LIFE IS SWEET BUT SHORT. DON'T HASTEEN YOURS WITH IMPATIENCE.

IT IS BETTER TO LOSE REACHES AND HONOURS THAN TO LOSE YOURSELF.

IMPATIENCE KILLS !

INSPIRED BY: MALBETH : WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

8. FAITH

THIS CONCEPT IS OFTEN CONFUSED WITH JUST MEER HOPE. THE BIBLE SAYS IN HEBREWS 11:1
"NOW FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS UNSEEN."

SOMETIMES PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HURT BY PEOPLE THEY TRUSTED. BUT NOW I WANT YOU TO HAVE FAITH IN THE ONE WHO CREATED YOU THE ALLMIGHTY GOD.

IN OUR DICTIONARIES 'EVIDENCE' IS SUPPOSED TO BE EITHER TANGIBLE/TOUNTABLE BUT WITH GOD YOU BECOME EVIDENT OF THINGS WHICH ARE INVISIBLE. YOUR SECOND STEP IS TO HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF, SO THAT WHEN YOU HAVE DISAPPOINTED YOURSELF IT WOULD BE EASIER TO FORGIVE.

IN THIS WORLD WE NEED PEOPLE WHO HAVE FAITH PEOPLE WHO WILL DEFEND WHAT THEY BELIEVE IN.

IN CONCLUSION I WANT TO APPEAL TO EVERYONE GROW IN FAITH AND GROW IN UNDERSTANDING.

FOR IN THIS WORLD QUIETERS NEVER WIN AND WINNERS NEVER QUIT.

IS THE HURT WITH THE MONTH?

BY! UNATHI KAMLANA

IS THE HURT WITH THE MONTH? 1

THAT ALL I HAVE TO DO IS TO LOSE. 2

IS THE HURT WITH THE MONTH? 3

THAT I ALWAYS HAVE TO CRY. 4

WHAT DID I LOSE? 5

THAT YEAR, THIS MONTH, 6

I LOST MY FATHER. 7

THE HURT SHOULD BE WITH THE MONTH. 8

WHAT DID I LOSE? 9

SOME OTHER YEAR; 10

THIS MONTH, I LOST MY GRANDFATHER. 11

IT REALLY SHOULD BE WITH THE MONTH. 12

WHAT ELSE DID I HAVE TO LOSE? 13

WHEN I THOUGHT I HAD IT ALL, 14

WHEN I THOUGHT I REACHED THE CLIMAX, 15

WHEN? THIS MONTH; TODAY; NOW; HERE 16

I EVEN HAD TO LOSE MY LOVE. 17

WONDER IF SOME OTHER YEAR; NOW, 18

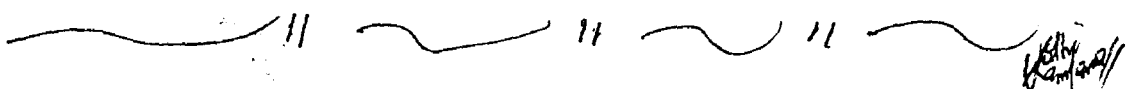
I WOULD ALSO LOSE MY LIFE TOO. 19

GO AWAY; GO AWAY, 20

MAY, YOU SEEM TO DO ALL 21

BUT MAKE ME HAPPY. 22

IS THE HURT WITH THIS MONTH? 23



UNATHI KAMLANA

WHERE DO THEY GO TO?

BY: UNATHI KAMILANA

- SOME WERE GOING TO WORK, 1
THEN THE PHONE RANG,
THEY WERE ALREADY GONE. 2 3
- WE HAD JUST SEEN OTHERS A WEEK BEFORE, 4
THEN IT WAS BROADCASTED THAT THEY FOLLOWED,
THEY WERE ALSO GONE. 5 6
- OTHERS WE STILL FOR YEARS, 7
THEY SEEM TO MISS THE PLACE 8
THEN AFTER SOME TIME, THEY WILL ALSO GO TOO. 9
- THEY SAID THEY'RE TAKING A TRIP TO THE CITY, 10
THOSE HYPOCRITES, MY FRIENDS, 11
NEVER CAME BACK, THEY WERE GONE FOREVER. 12
- WE WERE WITH THEM IN CLASS THAT YEAR, 13
WE AREN'T WITH THEM NOW 14
THEY ARE GONE, 15
- OH, THEY LEAVE US BEHIND, 16
THEY MAKE US WONDER. 17
SURELY WE WILL GO TO, BUT WHEN? 18
- PEOPLE, WE WILL GO, 19
YES WE ARE ALL GOING, 20
BUT WHERE WILL WE ALL GO TO? 21



Unathi Kamilana

~~THE~~ PEOPLE WHO LOVE EACH OTHER, SINCE THEY ARE ONE
THEIR PROCEDURE / WAY OF DOING THINGS SHOULD BE ONE.

IMMEDIATELY THEY DIFFER IN DOING, SO THEIR RELATIONSHIP'S FUTURE
IS AT STAKE.

LOVE IS NOT IRRITABLE

ONCE OR TWICE IN ONE'S LIFE, ONE WOULD DO SOMETHING
WHICH HE/SHE KNOWS IS WRONG. BUT BECAUSE OF SEVERAL
REASONS ONE WOULD DO IT ANYWAY. WHEN ONE COMES INTO
ONE'S HIS/HER HEART, HE WON'T WASTE TIME BEING ANXIOUS WITH
HIMSELF. HE WILL JUST CONSOLE HIMSELF AND TELL HIS HEART THAT
IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN BECAUSE HE WOULD HAVE LEARNED
FROM IT.

SAME APPLIES TO LOVERS, BECAUSE THEY ARE ONE BODY
AND TELL THEIR HEARTS THAT IT WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. MISTAKES
DO NOT HAPPEN TO DESTROY THE RELATIONSHIP BUT TO STRENGTHEN IT.
FOR WHAT IS TO BE WILL BE.

LOVE DOES NOT KEEP A RECORD OF WRONGS

THE FIRST THING WHICH COMES INTO A READER'S MIND IS WE CAN
FORGIVE BUT NEVER FORGET. FROM AGE 1 day to the age you are
now YOU HAVE MADE A MILLION WRONGS, BUT I KNOW AS WELL AS
YOU DO THAT YOU TRY TO FORGET THEM SO THAT THEY MAY NOT
COME TO HAUNT YOU IN THE FUTURE. CAN'T YOU DO JUST THE
SAME FOR THE PERSON YOU CLAIM YOU LOVE. CAN'T YOU
TRY YOUR BEST IN MAKING THIS/HER LIFE HAPPY?
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOOSE IN DOING GOOD, DO NOT
GET WEARY. FOR EVERY GOOD DEED YOU PERFORM, NO MATTER
HOW INSIGNIFICANT IT MAY SEEM IN THE EYE OF MEN, YOU
HAVE A REWARD.

LOVE IS NOT HAPPY WITH EVIL

ST. PAUL DOES NOT STATE THAT EVIL TOWARDS WHOM, BUT
HE SAYS LOVE IS NOT HAPPY WITH EVIL.

APPENDIX M : TRANSCRIPTION OF T6 'S RECORDING.

I stands for the interviewer.

T6 stands for a Standard 6 teacher.

I : In a linguistically diverse country like South Africa, how do you think we could possibly facilitate communication among the people of the country?

T6: Everybody is to learn English, because people in most countries use it. Also, people from other outside countries like England and France can speak the language, because it is an international language.

I : Our English syllabus favours a communicative approach to language teaching and learning, what do you think of the approach?

T6: I think there are two sides to the approach, a good and a bad one. In so far as it allows the child to become an active participant, it is okay. Less emphasis on grammar makes the child feel less inhibited and free to communicate, it helps to reduce anxiety for them.

I : Anxiety? Could you expatiate on that?

T6: When a pupil knows that he has to say something in front of his classmates, and he is not even sure how to say it, this instills fear in him, fear of being ridiculed by the others as the teacher continues to interrupt with corrections throughout. This is the cause of his anxiety.

I : You mentioned a bad side to the approach as well. What is bad about it?

T6: The negative side comes from the fact that if practised in isolation, our pupils would become poor where grammar is concerned. The approach emphasises quantity at the expense of quality, and because of that I do not think it should be divorced from grammar for our ESL pupils to gain a better understanding of the English language. It is of great importance that our children should know English, because the language is the medium of instruction in our schools. An inability to gain a good grasp of the language and its grammar could affect the pupil's chances of making it at school. For our pupils, the approach cannot be used in isolation at this moment, they still need the basics of grammar.

I : In your opinion, how can a language best be acquired?

T6: I would say it depends on the age of the person wanting to learn the language. For

an adult person, involvement with the speakers of the target language would be necessary. The person would need to have an interest in and to be curious about the language. This curiosity could be satisfied through asking questions, talking in and about the language, listening to English presentations on TV and the over the radio. Doing as much reading as possible would also be advisable.

I : You mentioned age as a determining factor. How do you think younger language learners cope with language learning?

T6: Children can naturally pick up a language during play. They are not shy or inhibited like adults, and this makes it easy for them to acquire the new language. They also like to imitate.

I : You have chosen this pupil as the best writer among your pupils, what is it about his writing that makes it so special to you?

T6: Whenever I give him a topic to write on, or whether it is a topic of his choice, this boy always bears the topic in mind and is never out of content. He makes sense in his writing. There is logic in what he writes. When you read his work, you get a sense of one idea leading to the next. He manages to produce interesting pieces, and I never tire or feel bored when reading his work. Very few pupils are capable of the kind of work that he produces, at least at standard six level.

I : Looking at this pupil's written work, which piece, in your opinion, is the best piece he has written so far?

T6: It is the one entitled 'My township'.

I : What makes you say so?

T6: The essay was written in 1996 while the boy was still doing standard five. Admittedly, there are a few grammatical mistakes, but these are not serious because what he has written makes sense. He has the ability to introduce a topic. For the introduction, he arouses my interest by the wonder he expresses at his township, Mdantsane. In the second paragraph he gives me an overall idea of some of the things that one can find in this township, like schools, stadiums and garages. The third paragraph is interesting in the sense that it is an elaboration on the stadiums, schools and garages mentioned in the second paragraph- he mentions some of the schools, stadiums and garages found in this township. In the next paragraph he talks about famous boxers. For a child his age, the way he structures his essay is good. As he winds up the essay, you can see that the essay is nearing an end. He concludes by saying how he feels about his township and he justifies his feelings. I think it is a good essay. I am particularly impressed by his paragraphing ability. What he says in each paragraph links up with what he is going to say in the next. Ideas belonging together are grouped together. His work shows a clarity of mind, you can see he is in control of things.

I : I can see what you mean. So, what, in your opinion, constitutes good writing?

T6: When writing, one has to be concise, he has to say whatever has to be said within a specified length. Within this length, the introduction of characters and themes has to be timed in a way that appeals to the reader. Selection of the appropriate words to use is important. How and when he introduces the different phases in the writing: the introduction, body and the conclusion. Everything mentioned in the introduction and body has to be mentioned again in the conclusion, so that the reader is not left hanging. The story should show progression as it builds towards the climax. The good choice of words, expressions and appropriate tenses are other qualities in a good writer.

I : The learner you have identified as the best writer among your pupils, have you noticed anything peculiar about him, in or out of class, which you think might account for his outstanding ability to write?

T6: As his English teacher I have only known him for about six months now, yet he has made quite an impact on me. With our classes as large as they are, he has managed to capture my attention. He is an enthusiastic pupil who is very eager to learn, is always asking questions, about new words he has seen or heard of. He is not shy, he ventures his opinion very easily. If I want someone to read in class, he'll be the first one to volunteer. He always expresses himself in English and is not embarrassed even if his classmates laugh at him. He is not afraid of making mistakes, and is willing to be corrected. He has initiative and determination. In class they are divided into small groups of fours, his leadership qualities come to the fore in such contexts. He is also confident.

I : What do you think ESL teachers could do to facilitate good writing ability in their pupils?

T6: The teacher should not overwhelm the pupils with lengthy and threatening pieces of writing. Get them to write little bits at first: let them write the introduction only as a first step, then the body next, and lastly the conclusion. After getting them to write the introduction, get them to compare their work and to decide which pupil has written the best piece and why. Do the same with the other parts as well, and when they are ready they will be able to deal with the whole essay. Allow them to choose topics of interest to themselves, or if you must give them the topics yourself, choose ones on which they can write, ones based on their surroundings and day-to-day experiences. Group work could be helpful, each group being of mixed abilities, this should help the less confident to grow in confidence. This group effort will give them confidence which will help when individual tasks are introduced. Teachers are to mark work in the child's presence. The pupils should be encouraged to read as much as possible, being used to the written word and the different styles of writing could be helpful. This is going to take time, so teachers will need to exercise patience.

I : Given the common background of poor writing ability among most ESL pupils, why do think some are able to write so well?

T6: I think most write well because they read a lot. In the process of reading they unconsciously adopt the different styles and are also in a position to tackle different topics.

I : That is probably true. Well, that will be all. I would like to thank you for your kind support. Talking to you has been quite a pleasure, and you have been very informative and original with your ideas. Thank you.

APPENDIX N : TRANSCRIPTION OF T7'S RECORDING.

I stands for Interviewer.

T7 stands a standard 7 teacher.

I : In a country like South Africa, with so many spoken languages, how do you think we could facilitate communication among the various language groups?

T7: We could use English.

I : Why English?

T7: Almost everybody in South Africa has studied English as one of their subjects.

I : Is that a fact?

T7: Yes, I think so.

I : Our English syllabus favours a communicative approach to language teaching and learning. What do you think of the approach?

T7: I think the approach is okay for the pupils.

I : The pupils?

T7: Ja, for them to understand easily.

I : 'For them to understand easily', were they having difficulty understanding in the first place?

T7: Not as such, but the approach helps them speak the language.

I : What about the teachers?

T7: Ja, it helps them too. It helps both teachers and pupils. But I think it is particularly helpful to the pupils because it helps to open them up. That is how I see it.

I : In your opinion, how can a language best be acquired? Which mechanisms can one use to learn a new language?

T7: By reading books, magazines and newspapers in the language. One should also meet with someone who knows the language. If the language in question is English for

example, reading English newspapers would help, so would occasional talks with an English-speaking person. Talking is important, it helps to speed up the process of acquisition. If I, as a Xhosa-speaking person for instance, wanted to learn Sotho, conversing with a Sotho-speaking person would help me grasp the Sotho concepts. If I had more reading material to get back to, plus maybe some cassettes to act as reminders, as well as watching TV in the target language, I would be assured of a speedy acquisition.

I : You have chosen L7 as the best writer among your pupils. What makes her writing outstanding in your opinion?

T7: I think there must be somebody behind this pupil's ability to write, whether it is her mother or any other member of the family. She thinks before she does anything. She has imagination, and she uses this to her advantage. Compared to another boy in her class, Ndoda, who happens to be a good boy, her one advantage over the boy is her neatness. That, coupled with her ability to think before she writes, makes her an outstanding pupil.

I : Looking at the four pieces that she has written, which one do you think is the best?

T7: I love the one entitled 'When a stranger gave me a lift'.

I : Why is that?

T7: As I said before, this child thinks before she writes. As she writes, she manages to hold the reader's attention. The essay has few mistakes. The way she arranges her ideas is good, it is sequential. She is only doing standard seven, yet the standard of her writing could only be expected of a pupil in the senior classes. She has a 'mature' style of writing. Very few pupils can match her level of writing. She writes about real things, her story is credible, you cannot help but empathise with her as she tells the story.

I : So, in your opinion, what is it that constitutes good writing? Which qualities make a good writer? I don't necessarily mean L7, we are speaking on general terms now.

T7: To be a good writer, read. Apart from reading, try to communicate with people.

I : To me that sounds like some advice on how to become a good writer, which is not what I want. What I would like to know is, how do you identify a good writer?

T7: Attraction, if I find their writing attractive. If, for example, I choose a pupil and give him a topic, and he cannot budge. And then you give the same topic to another one, and this one just glides over the topic, it becomes clear to me that this is because he reads.

I : In a nutshell, a good writer should produce interesting pieces. Point number two is that his ideas must flow. Is there something you wish to add to that?

T7: No, that is how I feel.

I : Have you noticed anything special about this pupil, in or out of class, which you think explains her exceptional writing ability?

T7: I can't say I have. I have not been in a position to watch her, they are such a big class, and I am teaching her for the first time. Maybe if I had known about the research beforehand, I would have kept an eye on her.

I : What do you think ESL teachers could do to improve pupils' writing ability?

T7: We could advise them, try to encourage them to talk. Let's take the case of a child who has submitted a very poor piece of writing. Shouting at the child or embarrassing him in front of his classmates is not going to help him at all. Instead, we could try to motivate him as much as we could. We could tell him how to overcome the problem.

I : Let's say his problem is an inability to express himself in good English, what could he do to improve?

T7: Start him off on easy topics. Get him to construct simple sentences. One problem with poor writers is to write long rambling sentences which tend to lose meaning. If he could start with short sentences, try to correct his mistakes within those short sentences. Try to motivate him.

I : What do you suppose could be the reason why pupils like L7 are able to write so well, whereas they are all in the same class, and having been exposed to more or less the same level of teaching and learning conditions?

T7: Maybe their parents have something to do with that, by giving them all the support they need. Some parents take time to check their children's book regularly. Or it could be that the pupil loves the language. At least that is what I think.

I: By a parent I suppose you mean any member of the family, like a sister or brother or any responsible person for that matter?

T7: Yes. A teacher could have that kind of effect on the pupil too, sometimes teachers are responsible for the attitudes that pupils adopt toward certain subjects.

I : How could that possibly happen?

T7: If the teacher does not get on very well with pupil, the negative attitude the pupil has toward the teacher could be transferred to the subject.

I : What about the pupil himself? What qualities do you think he /she should possess in order to become a good writer?

T7: It is usually children who read a lot, who are not afraid to air their views and ideas, who are outgoing and are keen to learn.

I : That was the last question. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 0: TRANSCRIPT OF T8'S RECORDING

I stands for Interviewer.

T8 stands for a standard 8 teacher.

I: In a linguistically diverse country like South Africa, how do you think we might facilitate communication among the people of this country?

T8:I would say if for instance we were to specify on a specific group of people, say illiterate people, there are many ways of communicating. They can either, if they can't express a certain point, maybe they want to give a person directions, they can use sign language, or use gestures.

I:I find the point you have just mentioned about using gestures very interesting, because gestures differ from culture to culture. So you can imagine the confusion that could result if a certain gesture could be interpreted differently by different people. Rather than facilitate communication, it could end up in a terrible breakdown in communication.

T8:I can imagine the confusion myself, but I just can't any other solution for the illiterate at the moment, because I always think those that are able to converse in English don't have a problem, although the grammar may not necessarily be correct. I know what I say can only happen at the expense of the other languages concerned, but I strongly feel we need an internationally recognised language, whereby we will all communicate. I therefore think English would be an answer to our problem, the majority of people can communicate in English. If we were to talk about Afrikaans, it is mostly spoken by people from the Transvaal, or from other Afrikaans areas. People who speak English are in the majority. And you can consider the fact that even here at school, the medium of instruction for all the subjects except Afrikaans, is English. Even if a person is illiterate, if he is going to work for a white person, he has to learn the language.

I: Our English syllabus favours a communicative approach to language teaching and learning, what do you think of this approach?

T8:The idea is correct, it is right. We have to consider that for these children English is a second language. There are certain parts in English that we find very difficult to teach to second language speakers, which you can only teach by establishing a rule. These you cannot teach using the communicative approach. So the approach may work for certain parts, as long as you are going to divide your work. The approach could be used when teaching reported speech, by asking the class questions. Then you could ask someone to report what the other person was saying. All the same it takes you back to the rule as you have to show them how this happened. The same goes for the passive voice, when they write the minutes of a meeting, they have to use the passive voice. You can hold a meeting in class, then ask somebody to be secretary, to take some notes on that. That person will definitely make mistakes, which means that you have to show them that in the passive voice, this rule applies. So, one way or another, you still have to go back to the rule. One might add that for our situation the approach is a good one, but if you are going to use the approach, you are also going to need some teaching aids. You need facilities like photocopiers so that you may facilitate understanding. That way it would be much easier to implement.

I: You said something about the approach being a good one, could you explain why you think so?

T8: In that it encourages pupils to speak, to communicate. That is all it is. So now if we actually practice that now, that means they are going to improve in speaking the language.

I: In your opinion, how can a language best be acquired?

T8: You must read in the language, get material in that language. Expose yourself to the speakers of the language, try to learn from them and try to find out certain words, some common words like greetings. I think reading, exposure to media and contact with native speakers of the language will help a lot. You must also have an interest in that particular language, because obviously if you don't have interest in the language you are not going to learn it. I experienced that when I was studying at Fort Hare. Most people who were interested in speaking Sotho, were able to do so, even though I had been around Sotho-speakers for four years, but still couldn't speak it because I had an attitude towards Sotho. So, I was never able to speak the language, despite the fact that I was surrounded by people who spoke Sotho.

I: I agree that exposure to the language is necessary, but how are you going to know if you really can use the language?

T8: You can only know if you have acquired the language by speaking it. So now if you have a clear understanding of that particular language, somehow you have acquired it. You can now communicate and you understand when people of that language address you. The ability to speak the language won't come easily, but because you are exposed and interested in those people, you'll soon understand, even though you may not be able to respond in the same language at first.

I: You have chosen L8 as the best writer among the standard eight's. Why is her writing so special to you?

T8: She can put the message across. I am very pleased with her performance in class. She always answers in full sentences and I usually find very few if any grammatical mistakes from her. She can talk. She has a sense of imagination. In class I like to ask them about things I suspect they have not experienced, and she can really put herself in that position. In a way she is creative. She can create a story and will come up with something relevant to the topic.

I: Is it her writing ability you are talking about? I get the feeling that you are discussing her performance in class. Could you confine your answer to her writing ability please?

T8: She can argue a fact and come up with facts to support it, compared to the rest of her classmates. She can also think. Judging by the standard of our education, and if you compare her with the other learners in her class, the language she uses is a bit advanced for a child of her class. She has her own way of approaching a question. In a way she is systematic. She has an in-depth discussion of that particular topic you actually hear. She is not shallow in any way. Those are the qualities that make her outstanding.

I: Of all the pieces she has written so far, which one do you think is her best piece?

T8: If the emphasis of your question is on the quality of the writing, I have a problem with the question because these were written under different circumstances. So, if you are writing for an exam now, it's different from writing an essay at home. At home you've got everything near you. You have the dictionaries and you are also relaxed. An exam situation is a bit different. On those grounds I'm having difficulty saying which one is the best. It could be the best because she was relaxed, she had more time, or she was on her own ...

I: I am aware of the picture you are trying to paint. It seems to be one of the problems facing us as educators, the question of measurement and evaluation. Now and again we give our learners tests and examinations on the basis of which we decide whether they pass or repeat a class. The sad thing is, we hardly ever consider the individual child and the circumstances surrounding the testing situation. I am hoping that that kind of information will surface when I interview the learners. But, for the time being, I wish to ask that you make the assessment regardless of the underlying circumstances. Just assume that the conditions were kept uniform throughout, if that is possible.

T8: In that case I think it is the one on crime.

I: Why?

T8: She has given a deep understanding of the argument. For instance she would state reasons why crime is committed. It does not end there, she shows that scarcity of jobs may lead one to do this and that, and that the person is doing whatever because he wants to earn a living in order to support his family. So, there is a deeper meaning in it as she can support whatever argument she has put forth.

I: Wouldn't you say she has done the same with the others?

T8: No, if we look at the topic ('The subjects I love most'), here she is talking about the subjects she loves most. She has not dealt with each subject deeply, and said why she likes economics for example. She could have related this to something, say a programme she heard discussed on TV. All she does is give us a little bit of this and that. With this one she goes a bit deeper, she comes up with all the problems related to the topic. She not only exposes those, but also comes up with suggestions as to how the situation can be remedied.

I: I am happy with that. So, in your opinion, what is it that constitutes 'good writing'. Which qualities can be used to identify the good ESL writer?

T8: If you are writing you have to communicate effectively. In order to do that you have to be systematic in your approach. There must be some logic. You must not just give all the points without establishing a link between the various sections in the writing. What you have written must present a complete picture from the beginning to the end. A good writer also needs to be creative, because sometimes he has to write about things he has not actually experienced, or haven't been exposed to. This is what makes a piece of writing interesting.

I: I notice that you have said nothing about the grammatical side of writing. A child could have ideas, but if she is unable to put her message across, chances are that the text will end up meaningless. I know of pupils who can express themselves very well orally, but when it comes to writing you wonder what happened to them. A good writer needs to have away of expressing whatever he wishes to say. Coming to L8, have you noticed anything peculiar about her behaviour, in or out of class, which you think might account for her outstanding ability to write?

T8: I have not been in a situation to observe her over a significant period of time, but if I were to speak on general terms, it does not surprise me that this child excels in the subject. If you look at the way she approaches her work, you'll find that she is relaxed, she does not panic, and most of the time she concentrates on what she is doing. When a child strikes me as being good in English, I normally ask which channel s/he watches. I ask about their backgrounds. I remember once I asked those questions, and I discovered that she has a flair for the language. She is just good at English, that's all. She does it all on her own. I would ask them what they had done for the day, some would tell me they had watched 'Dick Sithole'. She, on the other hand, would tell me she had watched 'The bold and the beautiful' or 'Touched by an angel'. She would be in a position to relate what had happened. I think she just has a flair for the language.

I: What do you suggest ESL teachers could do to facilitate good writing ability in learners?

T8: Good writers read widely in the particular language. Exposure to the media is important. They must not be confined to the books we do in class, because these can be a bit difficult sometimes. They could improve if they read other material in English, as long as they find it interesting. As you said earlier, you could have a good command of a language, but writing is another matter. So they must also practise writing. For the teachers to make the writing more interesting, they can ask the learners to write on any article they have read. Ask them what they have understood about the article. We must allow them to write about things that are familiar to them.

I: Okay, so given this common background of poor writing ability, why do you think some learners make it as good writers, like the one you have identified? Most of them come from more or less similar backgrounds, yet some do better than others. Why?

T8: I firmly believe in the concept of a 'flair for a language'. I am reminded of one pupil at Tembalabantu High School, who comes from a very humble background. If you were to hear him talk, you would swear you were listening to a model-C pupil. So I think a language can come as a gift, which he can develop further through reading and conversing. Love of the language is also important, because a pupil who loves a language does not forget what you teach him/her. He keeps the basics, and builds upon them.

I: Even so, we cannot dismiss the importance of a child's background, because some humble backgrounds would rather buy a newspaper, instead of milk. That kind of exposure can also be rewarding.

T8: Yes, and also, children need encouragement. If a parent praises and recognises their achievements, they are bound to improve. Where there is no encouragement and no one to show interest, you'll quickly get discouraged, and fall off the track. On the other hand there are also children who, although coming from educationally sound backgrounds, and despite a lot of exposure to material, just never make it. The question of ability is very complicated. Sometimes children from poor homes with limited resources outdo those from advantaged families, you just can't explain it.

I: I agree. It could also be a question of motivation. The list is endless, we could go on and in. Well, my dear friend, we have now come to the end of our fruitful and thought-provoking discussion. Words cannot begin to express my gratitude for all you have done for me. Thank you very much.

APPENDIX P : TRANSCRIPT OF TI0'S RECORDING.

I stands for the interviewer.

TI0 stands for a standard I0 teacher.

I : We are now about to begin with our interview. Please relax and try to answer as fully as you possibly can. There are no correct or wrong answers. You can answer in English or in Xhosa, or both. My first question to you is: In a linguistically diverse country like South Africa, how do you think we could possibly facilitate communication among the people of the country?

TI0: The only way I know of in which we can facilitate communication in South Africa is through the use of English, nothing else.

I : Why English?

TI0: Well, English specifically because it's a universal language number one; number two, there are various languages here in South Africa. You can imagine we have about eleven, so if we use let's say ... which one ... Like, if I meet a Hindu, I won't be able to communicate with that person unless he expresses himself in English. That's the only language that I can use to communicate with him. So if I want to do communication some justice, the only possible thing as far as I can see, is the use of English. Because really, as I say, it is a universal language. I cannot say Afrikaans, Afrikaans is just a South African language, once you go out of the country, you cannot use Afrikaans, see?

I : Our English syllabus favours a communicative approach to language teaching and learning. What do you think of this approach? Could you comment on the approach?

TI0: Well, for communication purposes it's okay, but for the level of our students, second language students ... The approach has just recently been introduced, so considering the level of the pupils that I have taught and am still teaching, I still think they need the formal approach. Like, for example, they have a problem with tenses and mostly with concord. So, that child needs to be taught. You need to get into the basics, try to explain what is meant by concord. They still need to be taught how and when to use the various tenses. So, can you see that this is where the formal approach comes in? It's not as communicative as you would want it to be, because if it were communicative, you would tend to ignore these tenses. I think we still need to give them the basics, and then we can start with the communicative approach. When you conduct an oral lesson for example, you don't stop the pupil every time he makes a grammatical mistake. This is where the communicative approach comes in handy.

I : My sentiments exactly. If I give my pupils a comprehension passage to write, I encourage

them to express themselves in full sentences, because I believe it is this kind of drill lesson which will enable them to construct good sentences. So that the pupil may know that if the question started with 'what had ...' for example, that 'had' should appear in the response as well. Because if you encourage them to just supply the required word like just saying 'yesterday', if the emphasis of the question was on the time factor, their understanding of how a sentence should be constructed gets lost. Granted, people do not necessarily communicate in full sentences, but seeing that these are not native speakers of the language, we just cannot take things for granted.

TI0: Yes, and you look at it when they are being tested. It is not their communicating ability that is being tested, it is the grammar that takes the forefront, whereas the child was supposed to have been taught to respond in single words. First language speakers tend to take these issues lightly. Exams are written, not oral. In this way you also equip the pupil for the first paper exam, where the pupil will be expected to express himself in full sentences.

I : Coming to the third question, in your opinion, how can a language best be acquired?

TI0: Any language?

I : I suppose the same rules would apply irrespective of the language in question, but for the sake of this interview, let's confine this to English.

TI0: Oh well, one ... I would need to join the language classes. A language is acquired through one: reading, through the media like TV. I would for example need to attend English classes, read English books. If I were watching an English film, and felt I was having difficulty understanding it, it would be unwise of me to tune in to say a Xhosa channel in order to facilitate understanding. I would need all the exposure I could get in order to understand the language. I would read a lot, and also make sure that when I communicate, I do so in English. In that way I could improve on my English.

I : So, as far as you are concerned, the skills involved in the learning of a language are reading, listening and talking. But what about writing?

TI0: Of course, you would need to write in the language as well. You need to assure yourself that you really are acquiring the language, so you would need to write something, maybe a creative piece of writing in English.

I : You have chosen LI0 as the best writer among all your standard ten pupils. What is it about his writing that makes him so special to you?

TI0: One, that boy is creative, he uses his imagination when writing. Number two, the expressions he uses when writing, you know, there is just no other pupil who makes use of those. When I give a topic, I give the same topic to all of them, yet LI0's work is always outstanding compared to the rest of the class. Admittedly, there are other pupils who are good writers, like Thami, LI0 manages to outdo Thami even on the question of essay length,

this gives me the impression that Thami runs short of ideas. LI0 manages to write lengthy essays, despite the length, he manages to keep me interested in what he has written. Sometimes I even get gooseflesh when I read his work. You can see from his writing that he is good at English and that he also loves the language. Even in class, I know I can expect an answer from him, he is always prepared to give me an answer. He is not one of those pupils who, even though they know the answer to a question, will keep quiet. He is prepared to work and to ask questions. That child listens, works and gives you back all that you had taught him, and more. That is why I have chosen him. I really think he is outstanding. He is attentive, shows a willingness and readiness to learn. As a teacher you cannot help but be aware of him, especially since you know that whatever you teach him, will not fall on deaf ears. He is the type which makes you try your level best not to make careless mistakes, in fear that this would do him harm. He motivates you as a teacher. He is one of the reasons you want to go to class and you wish to give him nothing but the best.

I : I know I used to feel as you do when I was teaching him. He really is a self-motivated pupil. Coming to the next question: of all the pieces that LI0 has written so far, which one do you think is the best he has written, and why?

TI0: It is very difficult for me to say which one is the best because each one is unique. He has a way of expressing himself that makes each piece of writing special in its own way.

I : In your opinion, what constitutes good writing in English? In other words, which qualities does a good second language writer possess?

TI0: To me, good writing need not necessarily be faultless grammar-wise. It has to do with creativity, and the expressions that the person uses.

I : What exactly do you mean by 'creativity'?

TI0: Creativity is what a pupil makes of the topic that you have given. Given the topic 'My school', a creative pupil will not just talk about the ten classrooms in his school. He will create something, using his imagination. The expressions that he uses will paint a picture in your mind, such that you'll also be able to visualise what he is talking about.

I : By 'expressions' do you mean idiomatic expressions or what?

TI0: No, no, not at all. I mean he uses expressive language. If a pupil can do that, that, to me, means he is a good writer. Good writers do make a few inconsequential grammatical mistakes, but these mistakes do not necessarily affect your understanding and enjoyment as the reader. If I could just mention another pupil, Sandi, who also happens to be a good writer, that one has a lot of spelling mistakes. LI0's work is not ridden with mistakes, even though he does make some. So, for me, a good writer is one who conceptualises the topic, one who uses expressions that you normally wouldn't expect of a pupil of his age group. To me, this is a clear indication that the pupil reads a lot, not only school books but other books as well. He exposes himself or herself to the English language. In most cases, it is a pupil who loves

the language who does those things. If you were to investigate, you would find that he reads novels, he likes and watches films and so on, so that is why

I : What about other aspects of writing like punctuation, for example?

T10: As I mentioned earlier, Sandi is an example of a pupil who makes a lot of mistakes, even though he is a good writer. By good writing I don't mean a case where you have to guess what it was that the pupil actually wanted to say. What the pupil writes must make sense, because in that way, it is easy to work through the few mistakes. It is difficult for me to say in a few words, what it is exactly that makes good writing, but when I come across it, I can tell that this is good writing.

I : The next question is: Have you noticed anything peculiar, about this pupil's behaviour, in or out of class, that you think might account for his outstanding ability to write?

T10: 'Peculiar'? I don't find it peculiar that he should be the one who tries to get a debating society together for example. But to try to answer your question, I think it is because he initiates things. Look how busy he has been trying to build a debating society, working hard toward the establishment of a school magazine. He has a drive.

I : What about 'in' class?

T10: In and out of class.

I : What do you think ESL teachers could do to facilitate good writing ability in their learners?

T10: By giving them writing exercises, giving them interesting topics on which they can write. I also wish, though this is very difficult to practise, that we could focus on just a single aspect in the writing exercise, make sure that you do not underline all the mistakes that appear in a piece of writing, I think this would be more encouraging for the pupils. If you could perhaps concentrate on, say, the concord and nothing else for that particular writing exercise...

I : Oh, yes. I find that very difficult to do myself. If I give them a comprehension passage, I cannot ignore spelling and punctuation mistakes. But don't you think that could cause another problem?

T10: Yes, I think it would, in the sense that the child would think that he has written an error-free piece of writing, whereas this is not the case. Lots of written exercises could be an answer to our problem. A weak pupil for example could be encouraged to write just a short piece, on a topic of his choice, outside the classroom situation.

I : The last question is: given the common background of poor writing ability among ESL writers, why do you think some are able to make it as excellent writers?

TI0: I think one of the reasons is the love of that particular language, or that his background has been favourable, from the very early ages of his development. The background counts a lot, like the background of a good English teacher for example. A pupil may be weak in a language sometimes, because of a poor background, and then in the process he develops a hatred for that language. Some pupils are influenced by their families, if the family values reading, chances are that the child will like reading as well, and this will account for his good writing ability at school. Or the pupil could be just above average. If we were to compare two of our pupils, LI0 and Siph0, Siph0 is more intelligent if you compare them on the basis of all the other school subjects. When it comes to English, because he is intelligent, Siph0 is good. But, LI0 shines more, because he loves the language. You don't normally get a pupil who is poor in English, though he loves the language. With our children it is a question of circumstances: poor teaching backgrounds. We need to develop a love of the English language in our pupils, without love, you cannot be a good writer. What do you think?

I : Yes, I agree, except that it is not always love of the language that causes a person to excel in it. Sometimes a person is driven by a certain need which makes it necessary that he should know the language, what we call an instrumental approach to language learning. But whatever the reason, there is usually a motivating force. Well, we have come to the end of our interview. I just wish to express my gratitude to you, for your time and the inconvenience. I know some people do not take kindly to being interviewed. So, a very big 'thank you' to you