

1. STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS AT THE POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA

*Thulha H.N. Frans

Abstract

The effectiveness of learning language requires that users of a language be provided with the right knowledge to cope with its complexity and demanding nature especially in the area of writing. In this sense, this article seeks to draw attention to some of the important features of writing skills in English at Polytechnic of Namibia. This article also reports on a study that investigated the writing and spoken proficiency of students of English as a second language at the Polytechnic of Namibia. But, this article only deals with students' writing skills at the institution. There are many barriers that prevent students from writing English competently. However, it should be noted that the study only investigated various English syllabi and the teaching of writing skills that I consider to be some of the barriers.

1. Background to the problem

Namibia has now been independent for 24 years. English as medium of instruction was introduced in education immediately after independence. Since then, English has been a problem in education that is regarded as the contributing factor to learners' generally poor performance in schools. I, therefore, consulted my two previous studies, one on the institutionalisation of English as a Second Language (ESL) in grade 10 in 2007, and the other on the impact of English as Second Language learning in grade 12 in 2009. The findings of these studies revealed that the cognitive language skills of learners (for example, comprehension of texts and question instructions in content subjects) were very poor. Learners had difficulties with problem-solving in content subjects and written language. For example, the structure of sentences affected learners' abilities to express themselves clearly and adequately. Also, teachers' English proficiency was poor (Frans 2007&2009) and this contributed to learners' language proficiency.

When I started teaching English at the Polytechnic of Namibia, I soon noticed that some students had a language deficiency especially in writing skills, which prompted me to further investigate what constrains students at tertiary level to write English well. It seems that higher institutions such as the Polytechnic of Namibia inherit the problem (poor English proficiency) from schools. At this institution, students should be taught English skills required to successfully meet the demands of the future working environment.

2. Problem Statement

When Namibia became independent in 1990, the education system changed from that of the Cape Education in South Africa to the so-called Cambridge system. The medium of instruction changed to English overnight. Since then, there has been an outcry about the poor results of Grade 12 learners in general, because some of them (learners) do not make it to tertiary level (Media, Television and The Ministry of Education). Some of those who complete secondary education lack a competent command of the English language, which is a pre-requisite for entry into tertiary education. While teachers who are themselves incompetent in written (and often

*Junior Lecturer, Department of Languages and Education, School of Human Sciences, PoN, Windhoek

spoken) English teach English at schools, learners and students will never become competent, as a language is a living thing which needs to be correctly practised every day for it to be embedded in the mind of the user. The learners and students seldom hear correct spoken English (including on TV) and they almost never read books from which they could absorb correct written English usage-thus there is no possibility of teaching them this correct usage by the time they have been brainwashed in incorrect usage for 12 years they were at school. However, the study did not focus on different subjects taught in English at the Polytechnic, but specifically on English writing skills. Wolfaardt (2001) investigated the language policy for Namibian schools and concluded that “English is a stumbling block to learners’ performance in different subjects”. This makes one believe that English has an impact on students’ English proficiency at tertiary level. Against this background, this study sought to answer the following question:

What are the barriers that are preventing students from improving writing skills in English?

Lecturers play an important role in students’ education, however, when lessons are planned and presented, are learning materials and teaching approaches that enhance the learning outcomes specified in the English syllabi taken into consideration? This study therefore, only looked into issues of the English language such as oral and written work. Teaching and learning English, specifically written work, may present several barriers to be overcome for both lecturers and students alike; these barriers include teaching methodologies and learning strategies, or the lack thereof. Overcoming these barriers may improve students’ writing skills. Therefore, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to describe the extent to which lecturers and students face the problems in written work which may affect students’ English accuracy;
- to explore the degree of effectiveness of instructional methods in written work;
- to explore the degree in which the syllabi are set that may overcome the barriers to improve students’ writing skills.

3. Literature review

Central to the research problem, the general objectives of the study were to explore and understand what English syllabi say in terms of providing advanced English language in writing skills in all contexts of life, and to describe the experiences of lecturers and students in written work. The objectives of the study were reviewed through the lens of the following concepts: syllabi and teaching and learning of writing skills.

3.1 Curriculum/syllabus

There are two terms used in education that describe what needs to be taught, and these are “curriculum” and “syllabus”. In formal education, a curriculum is defined as the set of course work and content offered at a school or university where the course objectives are usually expressed (Bobbitt 1981:2). The Chambers-Macmillan Dictionary (1995) defines curriculum as a document that consists of several parts that form a course of study at a school, college or university. Lanfranco (2006:v) defines a syllabus as an outline of specific programmes prepared by the instructor, which includes the topics to be covered, their order, the required and suggested reading materials and any other relevant information. From these definitions, a curriculum describes the programme objectives as pointed out by Bobbitt (ibid), whereas a syllabus describes what a student is expected to know and be able to do at the end of the learning activity, and lists what will be taught and tested. The documents (the syllabi/study guides) analysed describe what

students need to know and the programme objectives. Therefore, I used the term “syllabus” for my purpose. The following is a brief explanation of different syllabi at the Polytechnic that were investigated.

3.1.1 Language in Practice Course (syllabus)

The Language in Practice Course is a core course that covers the four English skills, namely, writing, reading, speaking and listening. Students are introduced to the basic elements of English grammar, academic reading and writing skills while continuing to build their vocabulary by means of the production of well written basic sentences, paragraphs and essays. The aims of this syllabus are to instill the four skills of English, expand, adapt, and apply speaking skills and strategies in formal and informal contexts. On completion of this syllabus, a student is expected to show evidence of his/her ability to understand the correct use of English in written and spoken form, generate, plan, and organise ideas for written and oral activities and use English across a variety of contexts and situations (Language in Practice Course syllabus, 2011).

3.1.2 English in Practice Course (syllabus)

The English in Practice Course syllabus is designed to introduce students to the oral and writing English skills required to enable them to use English effectively in the academic contexts students encounter in their studies. The main emphasis is on improving students’ confidence and competence in using English in these contexts. As far as possible, the syllabus addresses the specific language needs of students’ ability levels and subject specialisation. The English in Practice syllabus aims at equipping students with the necessary grammar competencies expands their understanding of specific grammar components in a descriptive method and integrating the four English language skills throughout. This syllabus elaborates vocabulary to improve especially the students’ writing skills and exposes students to different literary texts, integrating language skills and critical thinking, and expands students’ reading and writing skills.

Upon completion of this syllabus students are expected to show evidence of their ability to:

- Recognize and correctly apply common grammar rules and demonstrate the correct use of tenses reported speech, passive voice, gerunds and conditionals;
- Integrate new vocabulary found in the workbook and in other selected literary texts, in writing and speaking;
- Analyze and answer comprehension and critical reading questions in a text;
- Distinguish between summarising and paraphrasing, summarise in their own words and capture the important ideas in a text in the correct tenses; and
- Apply essay writing skills and proofreading strategies to write competently.

(English in Practice syllabus, 2010).

3.1.3. English for Academic Purposes Course (syllabus)

The English for Academic Purposes Course equips students to study effectively in the English medium learning environment and assists students to improve and develop their English language proficiency within a framework of academic contexts in order to communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in academic speech and writing.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Recognise the difference between spoken and written communication in English in academic contexts, and
- Improve and extend relevant features of students' grammar and so
- forth (English for Academic Purposes syllabus, 2012).

3.1.4. Professional Writing and Professional Communication Courses (syllabi)

The Professional Writing and Professional Communication Courses are electives and taught simultaneously. The Professional Writing builds on the business writing skills introduced in the English for Academic Purposes Course. Students are expected to develop the advanced language and writing skills necessary for concise and effective communication in their educational professions, the corporate world and business correspondence. Students practise letters, proposals, questionnaires, reports and other business related tasks. Emphasis is placed on correct format, style, register, and language usage (Professional Writing syllabus, 2008).

3.1.5. Professional Communication course syllabus

Professional communication is a semester course. Its prerequisites are a successful completion of English for Specific Purpose, an exemption from English for Specific Purpose or successful completion of Professional Writing. This course introduces students to the use of English for academic purposes in their specific fields or disciplines. Professional Communication builds on topics introduced in English for Academic Purposes and enhances students' abilities to interact effectively in professional situations. During the course, students develop their discipline-related language and technical skills while studying topics such as meetings management and documentation, argumentation, problem solving, interpersonal and intercultural skills, professional presentations and interviewing skills (Professional Communication syllabuses, 2011).

The questions remain, why can some students not write in proper English at the Polytechnic? Is it the problem of practical teaching or how the syllabi were designed? To answer these questions I looked at the practical teaching of writing skills.

3.2. Practical teaching of writing skills

Writing is the process of producing words using a pen and a piece of paper or a computer to convey a message. The writing of words is not just a game for pleasure but is required to convey meaningful and readable information. Writing is also a very important skill for people of all ages and for daily use. Colorado (2008:1-2) provides some reasons why writing is so important such as

to complete tasks, which is an important element of a student's education and where students have to show more sophisticated writing skills; it is often an essential element of an employee's job and a vital form of communication. In addition to this, Colorado (ibid) claims that many students have trouble in writing especially with clarity, coherence and organisation, which discourages them from writing. Therefore, students need to be taught to write competently. Lecturers should guide students on how to write a sentence correctly by showing them the sequence of words, punctuation, spelling and proper vocabulary.

Wang (2012:2) argues that "training practical writing ability is a pretty slow process, which requires scientific guidance and long-term accumulation". According to Wang (ibid), the satisfying effects cannot be achieved just through a few hours of teaching as it is the case at this institution; it is a long term process. Wang further argues that from the aspect of teaching materials, the majority of colleges and universities are still using general textbooks. Wang (2012:3) raises a valid point that these teaching materials such as textbooks are used too widely, most of them are confined to the original university teaching model and emphasize on the integrality as a system, where as they ignore analysis of various cases during practical application and lack individual guidance in writing practice. It probably leads to the ineffective application in the reality, which is not ideal teaching effect. So it is expected that the institution-based curriculum teaching materials could bring forth the new through the old. Because of these arguments, Wang (2012:4) proposes three aspects to improve the students' ability in writing:

Firstly, a scientifically formulated teaching plan should be designed and students' interest and motivation stimulated. For example, students can propose what content they would like to learn within a specific writing. Another suggestion which Wang comes up with is the establishment of a mechanism of competition in class, where a combination of writing and oral communication is enforced. In this way, lecturers can for example arrange a contest in delivering tour guide or welcoming speeches. Along these lines, students learn two skills (writing and speaking) simultaneously, because they will be well prepared and want to fight for their honour. Furthermore, Wang (ibid) further says that the other students as "audience" also play their role in judging and marking.

Secondly, the boundaries of traditional teaching should be broken to create an enthusiastic learning atmosphere. My argument would be that some lecturers are not trained to teach; as a result they might not know the teaching methods that enhance learning. Wang suggests that "if we want students to gain interest and joy from learning practical writing, we need to make them learn through use and make them acquire real skills". Should Polytechnic train lecturers who were not trained to teach? Wang (2012:2) gives an example of a power point (Micro Soft Word) which provides a large number of sample essays and cases in a classroom, which according to him is very easy to use. This way, students will be able to observe good examples and make their own comments or draw conclusions, and correct mistakes and errors in certain samples after reading them thoroughly. Also, students can easily comprehend the information in textbooks, as well as exercise skills of appreciation and evaluation, and use these samples as references for their papers as well.

Finally, new teaching methods like task-driven and project-oriented theories should be introduced. Wang (2012:4) is of the opinion that lecturers should introduce a method that encourages students through showing, leading and guiding. Lecturers also need to intensify the idea of self-determination, exploration and cooperation in the process of teaching. Wang advocates changing the methods from focusing on teaching to focusing on writing coupled with guidance.

On the other hand, Ahmend (1996:8) argues that teaching strong writing skills reinforces and enhances what students are trying to express because they (students) have to write words down. Ahmend (ibid) says that when students speak, they can gesture, use facial expressions, ask questions or fumble their way through their communication, but when they write, they have to communicate their meaning with actual visual words. Ahmend (ibid) further concurs with Colorado (ibid) that when students are taught writing strategies to communicate, they are taught to dig deep to find the appropriate words because they are forced to form correct sentences (grammar), use suitable words (vocabulary) and accurate spelling.

Furthermore, Ahmend (1996:9) is of the opinion that writing gives students confidence with language and forces them to use a regular dictionary and therefore expand their vocabulary and their other skills become sharpened as they think of how words are formed and spelled. Ahmend (ibid) then suggests some factors and activities that can help second language (English) students learn basic life skills that are critical in various daily situations such as students need to be taught and practice to:

- Write letters of reference and correspondence for schools and work. This practical ability will reveal whether they have the technical written ability to handle their courses or job requirements;
- Create banking forms, write cheques and write down money figures;
- Discuss the big moments in life such as completing and submitting application forms for work, school, renting, leasing or buying a home or vehicle. A written project can be a lot of fun, as each student can describe what type of house and car they are pretending to purchase on a made-up application form;
- Develop and strengthen English writing and spelling. This gives students a strong spelling aptitude which is a definite way to enhance their writing. If the spelling is weak, this is an indication of whether a student reads and writes often or not.
- Be taught to read often so that they are exposed to different styles of writing, a wide range of words and sentence structures.
- Be exposed to many different types of books. Whether you take them to the library, read to them in class or talk about the writing style of the author and the genre of the book, this will help students discover different writing styles and choose one which they like.
- Take note of how English-speaking people around them write their e-mails, notes and general correspondence, and write exercises online and in books.
- Punctuate correctly. When students form sentences, they will be surprised at how knowing punctuation can help understanding and how it can change the meaning of a sentence completely;
- Apply productive skills of writing paragraphs. Teach ESL students to write paragraphs that make sense. Teach students to write well-constructed paragraphs that enable them to produce engaging stories and essays, paragraphs which have beginning, middle and end, and must be clear in what is being said. Grammar, spelling and punctuation should be sharp.

Peck and Coyle (1999:3) teach English at university level and state that while students are expected to be competent writers, it has been their experience that the most common weakness in students' writing is the inability to generate sentences that are both readable and understandable, and grammatically correct in a conventional and formal sense. They (Ibid) further argue that this inability to generate appropriate and correct sentences is not something new; many people have difficulty handling the basic mechanics of sentences but that may lie in the sort of technical vocabulary used to explain the mechanics of language. They suggest that once the basics of sentence construction are grasped everything else will fall into place. They (ibid) further mention that the essential skill in writing is the ability to generate a 'correct' sentence followed by another

‘correct’ sentence. By ‘correct’ they mean a sentence that follows the conventions of Standard English in terms of punctuation, spelling and grammar. Peck and Coyle (1999:4) state that employers value anyone who can express himself or herself and write grammatically correct sentences and convey information clearly and accurately. This is also what this institution is geared for.

4. Approaches and research methods

4.1 Participants

The sample was selected purposefully to include people who had knowledge of the topic of the study. In addition to this, Chandran (2004:88) is of the opinion that a sample method is a way of selecting a portion of a population that represents the whole population adequately. Therefore, two heads of department, 30 students, ten lecturers and five course coordinators were purposefully selected to reduce the chance that the results would be due to factors related to the participants in the study. Apart from students, the other participants were selected because they were the ones teaching writing skills, and to obtain information from them as to how the students’ language proficiency affected their teaching. Therefore, the findings were not generalized to include all tertiary institutions, lecturers, heads of departments, students and course coordinators in Namibia.

4.2. Data collection procedure

I first did a pilot study that included a few samples at the Polytechnic of Namibia. This would enable them to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the questionnaires and thereafter to make adjustments before the main research was undertaken. I personally handed out the questionnaires to the participants who were sampled purposefully because of their involvement in issues of English second language learning investigated. The participants were given one week to complete the questionnaires that were later collected by me. This also enabled me to verify the information given and address any questions that posed problems to the participants. The following instruments were used in this research.

4.3. Qualitative approach

The study used the qualitative to gather data. Crocker (2009:5) defines ‘qualitative research’ as an umbrella term used to refer to a complex and evolving research methodology. The approaches in qualitative research use a wide variety of data collection methods, such as observation, interviews, open-response questionnaire items, verbal reports and so on. Within each of these approaches and methods, a number of research techniques and strategies have been developed to help qualitative researchers do their day-to-day work, conceptualising the research project, collecting and analysing data, and writing the findings. In addition to this, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:450) explain that qualitative research is an inquiry in which researchers collect data from face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings. These authors (ibid) further state that qualitative research describes and analyses people’s individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. In view of this, the qualitative methodology was used as it allowed me to gain first-hand information about perceptions of participants on the issue. Considering that barriers to learn English as a second language are context-based, the qualitative methodology was eminently placed to reveal the barriers that research participants faced and how they experienced them.

4.4. Instruments used to collect data

4.4.1. Questionnaires

There were two different questionnaires administered, one for lecturers and one for students, both of which entailed open-ended questions.

- Lecturers' questionnaire

The key questions asked included:

- specific areas in writing skills which they think are challenging to students;
- their suggestions to solve the challenges they mentioned;
- the instructional methods they employ in teaching writing; and
- airing their views on the time allocated to the English course they teach.

- Students' questionnaire

- students were asked if they have any problems regarding writing communication in English;
- they were asked to suggest any remedy they feel could solve the problems they face in writing skills.
- students were also asked what they think about the time allocated to the English course they are doing.

4.4.2. Interviews

Interview questions were done in person and were administered for head of department and course coordinators. The key questions were asked were:

- what they (heads of departments and course coordinators) considered when planning the English syllabi;
- how they determine that the syllabi achieved their objectives;
- to describe the students' accuracy in writing skills; and
- if there were challenges, what they do to advise lecturers on the challenges.

4.4.3. Content Analysis

A check list was used to tick categories and a summary of the categories ticked was written. The key concepts asked were:

- whether there were clear objectives that were carefully designed and clearly presented

learning outcomes in writing skills;

- whether there were instructional methods stipulated for teaching writing skills.

Students' written work was also analysed and, to prove the research question wrong, I have included one essay written by one student.

Exhibition

This was an opinion essay (verbatim) written by a student.

Should the death penalty be reinstated to stop the increase of crime rate in Namibia?

“To stop the increase of crime rate (sic), the death penalty should be reinstated.”

“To my way of thinking, I agree that it should be reinstated to stop the increasing of it. The crime of death penalty is the most think that is decreasing the population of people in the world. It will be better if it gets an end”.

To put it briefly, the crime of death penalty need to be taken as a serious crime and the governments must be interfering in it and take serious cases. The governments must come up with the rules that will be followed by people. So, the governments and courts should be always in connection to deal with people who did such a crime.

In addition, the population of people in the world is always decreasing day by day. Therefore, people need to be protected by avoiding bad things to happen to them. Everybody in the world need peace and living freely. So, the criminals must be taken away from peaceful people. The police should do their jobs by arresting the criminals, especially those who are murdering,

I think or feel that, if the crime of death penalty restituted, everybody in the world will not be against the retribute unless the criminals. All people will be living good and peaceful with one another. The number of crimes will be reduced and the police will no more work hard. Anyway, even the use of drugs and alcohol will not be higher because nobody will be stressful and having bad feeling. Drugs and alcohol are the most thinks that contribute to the cause of crime.

In short, the death of people through crimes will be low if the governments come up with serious rules and decisions in touch with the laws. In conclusion, laws are the most important things which can be against the crimes and they will prevent crimes to happen everywhere and regularly. Crime the death penalty should get an end in the world to avoid the decrease of our population.

5. Major findings

Five English syllabi (Language in Practice, English in Practice, English for Academic Purposes, Professional Communication and Professional Writing) were studied and analysed and the main findings were: all the syllabi were geared toward producing students who can communicate well in spoken and written English, and are seek able in a job market.

In addition, the syllabi content seems to be appropriate to provide the information students would require to learn and master English as a second language but there is a lack of specific teaching objectives in written skills. The syllabi cover all basic English components to allow students to

master a high standard of English; however, it seems the time frame is too curtailed, especially for the courses that are offered for one semester only.

Lecturers mentioned that they are faced with problems such as the time which is allocated to the courses and felt that it seems they teach for examination only. This is done as lecturers rush to finish the syllabus because of the time allocated to the courses. Another problem mentioned by lecturers was that the criteria of admitting students who obtained especially the E and D symbols in English at grade 12 level is a matter of concern, since the English proficiency of some of these students are not up to standard. Students lack grammar accuracy when it comes to writing correct sentences. Students are unable to consistently use sequence of tenses and ideas correctly. Writing conclusions and introductions were found to be problematic. Students also have punctuation problems which lead them to vague expression. It was also found that students can identify key sentences but lack ideas to develop these ideas further. It was also surprising to hear that 'reading skill' is a problem among students. As a result, some lecturers felt that these students need a one year English course where they could be taught basic English.

Observation band scales were used to assess how the lessons were taking place. Lecturers were not informed that I wanted to observe writing lessons. For the 9 classes observed, only three had a writing lesson. In one class, students were given a project to write a draft on a topic and to read their drafts to the class. They were given rubrics to follow. As I listened, I could detect lots of grammatical errors. The lecturer was mostly concerned with whether the students followed the rubrics or not. The lecturer did not pay attention to the language usage, perhaps because the students' work would be marked later. In another class, students were given an essay to write. I think as the lecturer was marking, he was writing down the mistakes the students made, which included spelling and sentence construction. Students were then given these errors to correct and came up with the correct words and correct sentences. In the last class, students were given an activity where they had to choose homophones to complete sentences and explain the meaning of the remaining (homophone) word. In other classes, the lessons were basically on speaking, that is doing activities which do not require writing. What I found from my observations was that writing skill is not given much attention.

On students' written work, one can vividly see from the essay above. It is very shocking for a student who is at the university level to write something like this. There is an error in every sentence. Although what a student wants to say is understandable but the problem is how to say it.

6. Contribution of the study

There is a Writing Unit at the institution which was set up to help students with writing problems. I had an informal interview with the coordinator involved in the writing unit who explained that the unit deals with grammar and research for all courses offered at the Polytechnic. Students are informed about the existence of the unit and encouraged to make use of this unit if they realise that they are faced with writing challenges in their specific courses. Students are then referred to a specific tutor depending on what the problem is. A student has to inform the tutor of the challenges she or he faces. The tutor helps the student by explaining or demonstrating how the student might overcome such a problem. I was also informed that the unit receives positive feedback from lecturers who refer students to the unit. Some doubts could be raised here on how many lecturers refer students to this unit, how many students are aware of the unit and make use of it, and how many students feel they need help in this regard.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The study is aimed at educational practitioners including teachers, lecturers, The Ministry of Education, the Namibia Qualification Authority, The University of Namibia where Namibia's teachers are trained and the Polytechnic of Namibia to use the research conceptually to improve the future of Namibia in terms of:

- identifying and understanding the problem addressed in this research;
- understanding why this problem needs to be addressed;
- understanding the different teaching methods as suggested in this research to address the problem;
- revisiting factors such as time allocation to teach the English courses, and syllabi that need to be reviewed to address the gap between secondary and tertiary education which hampers the students' development in the use of the English language.

It is concluded from the study that students' writing communicative competency is poor. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

- A blueprint for improvement is needed regarding syllabi content, teaching of writing skills, students' admission criteria and timeframe work allocated to these courses;
- Students should be encouraged to correct language errors such as spelling, punctuation and sentence construction in marked work;
- When a lesson is taking place, lecturers should seriously look and listen to students' syntax (sentence structure), to guide them and correct errors by pointing out what they should say instead of turning a blind eye to such errors;
- The time allocated to the courses especially for the semester courses should be revised to be at least for one year courses to give lecturers time to thoroughly guide and pay proper attention to every individual student;
- Basic English should be thoroughly taught during the service courses so that when students progress to advanced English courses, their English competencies would have improved;
- Students should be given more written assignments and/or activities and encouraged to write out corrections of their mistakes on a regular basis.

It is a fact that there is poor English competency among students at this institution as it is shown in the student's essay included in this article. This was also indicated in the study that tertiary level inherits this problem from secondary schools. Since English is a second language to these students, a lot has to be done to improve their English competency. For example, the institution should be encouraged to introduce a compulsory study unit on written English skills. The contribution this study would make to the benefit of the students goes beyond the classrooms and the institutions. This has to begin at national level with Namibia Qualification Framework which approves common standards which need to be applied in the assessment of the quality and validity of qualifications as well as the quality of training programmes and courses offered including English by educational institutions. Finally, since the Polytechnic is aware of the lack of English proficiency of students and my research confirmed

this, why all the stakeholders in education cannot come up with something viable that will address this issue once and for all? Changing beliefs, attitudes, policies do not happen overnight. If the future success of students in Namibia is at stake, we as a nation have to be rigorously involved. We as a nation have to make a decision on how we see the future of our youth in a developing world and that of our country.

Author's Biodata

Thulha Frans has a B Tech in Education Management from Technicon of Pretoria. She did her MPhil at The University of Port Elizabeth and her B Honors at the Polytechnic of Namibia. She is a PHD candidate at the University of South Africa. She is a junior lecturer in the English Department at the Polytechnic of Namibia. Her research interest is on the barriers to learn English as second language.

References

- Ahmend, M. K. A working paper on: Task-based second language instruction. Teaching oral communication skills in academic settings. International University of Tokyo: 1996.
- Bobbitt, J. F. *The Curriculum*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.
- Chandran, E. Nairobi: Daystar University, 2004.
- Colorado, C. Helping Young Children Develop Strong Writing Skills. Colorado Department of Education. *Academic standard for reading writing and communicating*, 2008. Retrieved May 2010 from [http://www state.co.u](http://www.state.co.u).
- Crocker, R. *Qualitative Research in Applied Linguistic. A Practical Introduction*. Palgrave: Macmillan, United Kingdom, 2009.
- English for Academic Purposes Syllabus (EAP). Windhoek: Polytechnic of Namibia, 2008.
- English for Academic Purposes Syllabus (EAP). Windhoek: Polytechnic of Namibia, 2012.
- English in Practice Syllabus (LPB 0320). Windhoek: Polytechnic of Namibia, 2010.
- Frans, T. H. N. The Institutionalization of the Language Policy at Junior Secondary Schools in Namibia. Unpublished Thesis. Windhoek: 2007.
- Frans, T. H. N. The Impact of the Language Policy in Namibian Secondary Schools in Namibia. Unpublished Thesis. Windhoek: 2009.
- Language in Practice Syllabus (LIP 411) Windhoek: Polytechnic of Namibia, 2011.
- McMillan, J. H. & M. Schumacher. *Research in Education. 5th edition*. Virginia Commonwealth University: Pearson, 2001.
- Peck, J. & Coyle, M. *The Student's Guide to writing. Second Edition*. Palgrave: Macmillan, United Kingdom. 1999.
- Professional Communication Syllabus. Windhoek: Polytechnic of Namibia, 2011.
- Professional Writing Syllabus. Windhoek: Polytechnic of Namibia, 2008.
- The Chambers –Macmillan Dictionary*. s. n. "curriculum", 1995.
- Wang, L. A. Research and Teaching Practice on Practical English Writing in Higher Vocational Colleges. vol. 8. (6). May 1, 2012.
- Wolfaardt, D. A facilitating learning. An investigation of the language policy for Namibia's schools. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Cape Town: University of Western Cape, 2000.

Copyright of Nawa: Journal of Language & Communication is the property of Department of Languages & Communication, Polytechnic of Namibia and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.