Narrative writing and language biographies on English language learning: the case of Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus
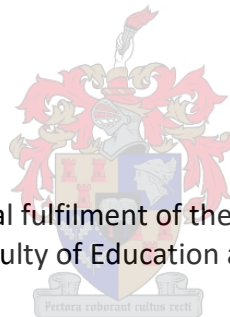
by

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to the field of language teacher education by investigating the degree to which narrative inquiry can reveal changes in student teachers' language teacher proficiency as well as their English language proficiency. Language proficiency refers to the ability to use a language fluently and accurately, whereas language teacher proficiency refers to professional and pedagogical knowledge of language teaching. In the Namibian context, a critical perspective on English language proficiency and language teacher proficiency is needed to relativise common perceptions of what proper and accurate English language use may entail.

These two concepts - language and language teacher proficiencies remain a challenge for most student teachers who want to become language teachers. This study investigated whether language biographies and other types of narrative writing could promote language and language teacher proficiencies of final year of Bachelor of Education students specialising in English language teaching at the Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus of the University of Namibia. Furthermore, it aimed to find out what kind of identities student teachers constructed concerning their language teaching proficiency and to determine the insights into teaching development they constructed regarding their continued professional development as English language teachers.

Most student teachers of English complete their training without the necessary expertise in terms of knowing the language in general and having pedagogical knowledge about the language they need to teach. Many studies that have utilised continuous writing in tertiary contexts have shown that an improvement in the learning of a target language is possible. The study was informed by Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, in terms of which it was anticipated that an improvement in both language and language teaching proficiencies would result from the students' narrative engagement with a variety of topics. This, it was hoped, would enable English language teachers to articulate themselves accurately in general and in teaching contexts in particular and to develop appropriate pedagogical knowledge for English language teaching. It is hoped that this would lead to an improved performance of learners in Namibian schools.

Qualitative case study and narrative inquiry methods were used for an in-depth study of the problem. Participants were purposely selected from a final-year English Language Education 4

class, who all wrote a baseline language biography. From this population six students then wrote personal journals as well as a writing frame over a period of eight weeks.

Data analysis was done using content and thematic analyses and was rooted in Margaret Archer's (1995) notions of structure and agency.

Findings from the baseline essay indicate that, although participants were proficient users of English, there was room for improvement. With regard to journal writing and writing frames, some participants' language proficiency improved although it was not consistent. Other students regressed in terms of language proficiency. It is also found that participants demonstrated the ability to reflect on their own needs and strengths in terms of professional development.

This study adds to the body of research on narrative writing especially in Namibia and southern Africa because only a few studies on narrative writing currently exist. Based on these findings, it anticipated that relevant institutions and policymakers would consider this study's recommendations.

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DEDICATION

Gerson, Rejoyce, Ethan and Carson – this is for you!

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ELE   English Language Education

ESL   English as a Second Language

HPC   Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus

L2   Second Language

MKO   More Knowledgeable Other

NSSCO   Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary

SBS   School Based Studies

SWAPO   South West Africa People's Organization

TP   Teaching Practice

UNAM   University of Namibia

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

English has been the official language of Namibia since its independence in 1990, and it is also used a medium of instruction in Namibian schools as well as in tertiary institutions. It is therefore an important gateway subject that gives access to higher education and to jobs. In a small country as Namibia, English which was opted for as official language is also a minority language, thus this has a major effect on the learning of language students who major in English, which is in terms of their ability to speak or write it proficiently as well as their mastery of teaching content.

However, English as a second language remains problematic for learners and students alike. It is no surprise that, when Grade 12 results are made public at the beginning of every year in Namibia, the subject that causes public backlash because of learner performance is English. According to Haifidi, Mbendeka, Mupupa and Uunona (2019:1) "for the past three years (2017, 2016, and 2015) and beyond, the ESL NSSCO level results have consistently been poor in terms of performance, which is alarming and causing public unrest". In recent years, Namibia

> only achieved its highest ever number of graded subject entries in the 2011 Grade 12 National Senior School Certificate ordinary level exams, whereby more than 6 000 full-time and part-time candidates are expected to qualify for university admission as opposed to the other years (Smit, 2012).

According to the National Planning Commission of Namibia (2017:61), the transition from secondary to higher education is very low and is presently estimated at 19% of their grade 12 cohorts. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) (2017:12) reports that only 9 000 students annually obtain the 25 points required for university study, and many of them, through choice or financial constraints, never enter university. As referred to earlier, with English being the official language and a language for global communication as well as business, performance in English is always in the public eye. The National Planning Commission of Namibia (2017) claims that the quality of education is unsatisfactory, especially in terms of English performance. Thus, I have presented the data regarding English as a subject in Table 1 below, which shows the

performance in percentages for Grade 5 and Grade 7 (National Planning Commission of Namibia, 2017:50).

Table 1:   English performance for primary phase in 2014

Grade	English %
5	45
7	48
8	30% repeat grade

As one can see in the table above, the pass rate for English was below 50% in 2014. Grade 5 achieved 45% English proficiency (learners' ability to correctly engage in English, orally or in writing), while Grade 7 had a slightly higher percentage in terms of English proficiency. The reason for the above performance is claimed to be unsatisfactory quality of teaching by teachers (National Planning Commission of Namibia, 2017). It is then the aim of this study to determine whether teacher training can make a difference in this regard, should there be a promotion to students' language and language teaching proficiencies. Therefore, this study can be considered significant as it is tied to student teachers' language proficiency as well as their language teacher proficiency. If this study can provide some evidence that language biographies and other types of narrative writing can promote language and language teacher proficiencies, then one can hope that the teaching quality can improve if expressive writing is emphasised and student teachers become more reflective.

Despite poor performance, many prospective students apply for admission at tertiary institutions; they are denied entry because of failure in English as a subject. Those who manage to enter into these institutions experience challenges due to their low proficiency in English, and this is more of a problem when these prospective students wish to specialise in English and become future language teachers. Regarding this problem, Kamerika (2018:11) states:

> Raising the professional status of teaching: A need to raise the status of teaching as a career choice to attract more able people into teaching and to develop teaching as a knowledge-based profession. Attracting the best and brightest school leavers to teaching is only a first step for top-performing nations.

However, many of those who make it into the teaching profession, and specifically those who apply with an intention to become English teachers, end up becoming professional teachers without the basic proficiency to articulate themselves in English, let alone teach it. Due to this, the occurrence of so much failure becomes a vicious cycle.

Having been a teacher educator for English as a second language for a number of years, I always pondered how our students fared when they started teaching, in terms of their general language proficiency as well as their language teacher proficiency. This is how my interest in the topic developed. In many cases, I noticed that students could not understand speech that one would think Grade 12 matriculants would understand. Simple English sayings were met with surprise and wonderment. On several occasions, I have had student teachers getting their teaching language corrected by learners during teaching practice (TP) or school-based studies (SBS). These were learners in Grades 4 to 7. In other instances, student teachers' pedagogical knowledge was wrong, which caused confusion in learners, especially those who knew the correct content that was incorrectly taught by the student teachers. As their educator, this did not sit well with me.

It is against this background that it was deemed necessary to investigate whether the use of narrative writing, specifically language biographies as well as personal journals and writing frames, could promote language proficiency, particularly language teacher proficiency.

A brief definition of the two concepts is offered here: For the purpose of this study, language proficiency is defined as the capability level one demonstrates when using a target language (Feltman, 2018:20), whereas language teacher proficiency is simply referred to as being good at teaching all aspects of a language, that is the content knowledge a teacher possesses before teacher training and during the process of training, as well as how they interact and use that acquired knowledge in a classroom context or interaction. Due to the ambiguity of the two terms, both language proficiency and language teacher proficiency are narrowed down to writing because this study is situated in narrative inquiry. A more detailed definition of these two concepts is going to be provided in the next chapter.

1.2   OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The Faculty of Education at the University of Namibia (UNAM) offers different courses in the field of education at different campuses across Namibia. This specific study was conducted at Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus (HPC), one of the 11 satellite campuses of UNAM, under the Faculty of Education.

HPC is located in Ongwediva (see the map below), a cosmopolitan town in north-central Namibia, in the Oshana region. It is a campus that trains student teachers in various specialisations: pre- and lower primary, junior primary, as well as secondary phase in science education. The medium of instruction at HPC is English. Students who register here are not just from the Oshana region, but from all over Namibia and elsewhere in the world, especially in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Figure 1:   Map of Oshana region, Namibia

1.2.1   Namibia's language landscape

Before I delve into the Namibian language landscape, it is necessary to give a description of what a language landscape is. It was not easy to find information tackling this issue, specifically to provide the Namibian landscape as such.

Gorter (2006) provides a number of befitting descriptions of what a language landscape is. He and other authors, such as Barni, Machetti, Kolyva and Palova (2014), use the term linguistic landscape to refer to the same concept that I use here, language landscape. The descriptions which Gorter (2006:1-3) gives with regard to what a language landscape is are as follow:

- The literal study of the languages as they are used in the signs and representation of the languages, which is of particular importance because it relates to identity and cultural globalisation, the growing presence of English, and the revitalisation of minority languages.
- An overview of the languages that are spoken.
- It is the same as concepts such as linguistic mosaic, ecology of languages, diversity of languages or the linguistic situation.
- The social context in which more than one language is present.
- The use of speech or writing of more than one language and thus of multilingualism.
- A description of the history of languages or different degrees in the knowledge of languages.
- Internal variation in parts of just one language, in particular in relation to its vocabulary, but also in relation to other elements.

A different definition of what a language landscape is given by Voulvouli (2012:462), who regards landscape as a sign. However, regardless of the different points of view, there seems to be agreement that language landscapes differ, given different contexts. Thus, in the context of this study, languages that are spoken in Namibia are regarded as the language landscape.

The Namibian language landscape is vast in the number of languages spoken in Namibia, especially because Namibia is a multilingual and multicultural society (Legere, Trewby & Van Graan, 2000). However, Namibia is also referred to as a monolingual state because of its one-language policy status – English is Namibia's official language and language of instruction. It is regarded by some as the "bread and butter language, which offers job security and opportunities in education as much as other sectors" (Legere et al., 2000: vii). It is also Namibia's lingua franca (Iipinge, 2013).

Namibia has about 13 ethnic groups, which are made up of blacks, whites as well as people who are historically regarded as from a mixed-race background. According to Index Mundi (2019), Namibia has 13 recognised national languages, including 10 indigenous African languages as well as three Indo-European languages. The languages are: Oshiwambo languages (48.9%), Nama/Damara (11.3%), Otjiherero languages (8.6%), Kavango languages (8.5%), Caprivi languages (4.8%), Afrikaans (10.4%) (which is a common language of most of the population, especially for those residing in the central and south of the country and about 60% of the white population), English (official) (3.4%), as well as other African languages (2.3%) and unspecified languages (1.7%).

Despite English being one of the languages with a small percentage of speakers, it is the country's official language. Additionally, it is the medium of instruction and it is taught in schools as a subject in addition to mother tongues that are recognised and are in print. This has been the status quo since independence was gained in 1990. The problematic nature of this situation will be discussed below.

The linguistic landscape is therefore a multilingual one, with contestation for the status of lingua franca. English is generally regarded as the lingua franca in Namibia (Nyqvist, 2016:6), thus it forms part of our language landscape. As Mohanty (2017:262) points out,

> In multilingual societies, languages are associated with power and hierarchy; some languages enable greater access to privileges and social opportunities and others lead to deprivation and discrimination.

This is certainly the case with English in Namibia, where the language is presented as a language of access to higher education and increased social mobility, despite it being spoken by a very small percentage of the population. Its status as a national language and a language of learning and teaching will be discussed next.

1.2.2   Namibian language policy

Prior to independence, Afrikaans was the language of communication as well as the medium of instruction in most Namibian schools. Many teachers who were trained during the period Namibia was under South African rule, used Afrikaans during their training (Nandu, Mostert & Smit, and 2017:4). Following the changes that ensued shortly after independence, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)-led government abolished the usage of Afrikaans because it was regarded as the language of our colonisers. So, soon after independence, English was adopted as the official language as well as the medium of instruction. The first national school language policy was felt to be lacking in some areas, thus the need to revise it arose, prompting a new language policy. Bokamba (2014:14) claims that a language policy evolves via language planning which affects language forms or structures which are decided upon by an individual, a group of individuals or certain authoritative body both at the micro or macro levels. Therefore it was deemed necessary to review the old language policy as, the MoEAC (2003:2) states:

> There were discrepancies in the implementation of the national policy form region to region, as policy implementers, due to misinterpretation and manipulation, mainly preferred teaching through English rather than through the mother tongue. Formerly disadvantaged learners were further marginalized in this process, as non-English speaking teachers were expected to teach through the medium of English.

According to the Language Policy for Schools in Namibia Discussion Document (2003:3), learners should acquire reasonable competence in the official language English during the seven-year primary education, after which English is to be used as a medium of instruction from Grade 4 as well as in secondary school. Although one can say that the Namibian language policy is monolingual, it is in support of a bilingual education, whereby learners must have two languages as subjects – English and a mother tongue as it states "All learners must study two languages as subjects from Grade 1 onwards, one of which must be English" Language Policy for Schools in Namibia Discussion Document (2003:3). This enables learners to be able to proficient in two languages, especially those who wish to study further to become language teachers. A requirement to study at UNAM when one wishes to become a language teacher is that one should have studied at least two languages at secondary phase level in order to major in English and any Namibian

language. For instance, for HPC, the combinations are English and Oshindonga or English and Oshikwanyama (UNAM, 2019).

The current language policy was approved by cabinet in 2017, and states that "English is a language of wider communication which will enhance greater participation in social welfare activities" (Nakale, 2017). Furthermore, it is stated that English will continue to be utilised "in its capacity as a medium of instruction and assessment throughout the education system in public schools as from Grade 4 onwards" (*New Era*, 2017).

In this case, the adoption of English as the official language was done to unify the nation, as opposed to the usage of Afrikaans, which was mostly used to segregate people based on tribal lines. Furthermore, the choice of having English as an official and a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) was not based on the number of speakers as it was expected (Iipinge, 2013:1) It is worrisome that, after 29 years of independence, English has still not achieved the same status as Afrikaans, considering that it has a higher number of speakers. Although English was opted for because it was considered a non-colonial language for most Namibians, other African states have opted to continue using their former colonial language as LoLT, leading to a huge number of learners in schools who do not possess the required proficiency in the language they are being taught in (Spolsky, 2019:324). This is the case for Namibia as well and Fredericks (2016) argues that although Namibia adopted English as an official language and a medium of instruction, it is used with a very low level of proficiency by officials, including teachers and students because they previously learned and communicated in Afrikaans which held the position of being the official language as well as the medium of instruction. English is spoken by a mere 0.8% of Namibian citizens (Frydman, 2011:182).

English is being used as the LoLT in a multilingual society where Afrikaans and other languages (Oshiwambo) are more present as lingua franca. Our monolingual language policy presents structural constraints which result in teachers lacking the ability to use English correctly. However, these structural constraints also develop because of how the policy is implemented. Although the language policy states that the medium of instruction should be a mother tongue, and that English is only to be taught as a subject from Grade 1 to 3, not everyone is favour of this, as Sibanda (2016) states:

The dominance of mother tongue is regarded as one of the causes of poor performance in the English language. Namibian students are surrounded by a complex linguistic situation that forces them to learn their first indigenous language and they are required to have a good command of English language. The Namibian policy on education stresses the use of the immediate language of community in instruction at the lower level of primary education and combination of English and language of the immediate community at the upper part of primary education. In other words, the policy recommends the use of mother tongue in teaching at primary level. This situation contributes immensely in poor learning of English language right from primary school and it extends to secondary school.

Many learners and students, especially those in remote areas, have no exposure to English outside of the classroom and yet they are expected to possess enough proficiency in English to use it as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT). As Spolsky (2019, 326) states:

It [the home language] is first and obvious, for this is the process involved as children learn proficiency in the language of their environment, their parents and other caretakers, and later, of their peers and other adults. While some argue that the process is purely internal, it is agreed that children normally develop proficiency in the language variety (or varieties) to which they are exposed.

Without the necessary exposure to English in their immediate surroundings, Namibian learners and students alike continue to be deprived of the proficiency our monolingual language policy expects and promotes. Although some schools, especially private ones, start teaching or using English as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) right from Grade 0, this in itself is a structural and social constraint. According to Spolsky (2019:2) "schools in a village do work to introduce the dominant national or regional variety, but in the city they provide a language of wider communication among the linguistically diverse intake as well as a valued language of instruction." Thus in most cases city children have an advantage over village children given their proficiency in the target language (English). Such learners' foundation of English is far better than those whose instruction was received in their mother tongue. One can argue that those learners with a good foundation in English would articulate themselves competently as opposed to those who were first exposed to English only as a subject but not a language of communication. In most

cases, these learners' incompetence is a result of the quality of teaching and the shortness of instruction in the home language. The problem in Namibian schools is that teaching in the home language does not continue long enough. In Cummins's threshold hypothesis and transfer theory (1979) he claims that, for bilingualism to be beneficial in a school context, learners need a particular threshold of language proficiency in both languages for knowledge in one language to be transferred to the other. In other words, three years of teaching in the home language and three years of having English as a subject do not constitute a sufficient threshold level of proficiency for learners to reap the benefits of home language education. Three years do not constitute an adequate among of time to learn English as a LoLT, which means that learners are set up for failure when they switch from the home language to English." Therefore, a good foundation is lacking in most students because a complete or full proficiency is not advocated by the language policy.

Thus, as Spolsky states (2019:9), "to understand language policy requires recognition not just of failures and success or centralized administration, but of the complexity of factors and levels that need to be taken into account". This is what everybody with a stake in education needs to consider if we wish to see positive change as far as language proficiency and language teacher proficiency are concerned. Bokamba (2014:23) asserts that the best language policies for African states are multilingual ones that will enable each state to empower its citizens and yet permit it (the state) to remain a partner or player in the global market of goods, knowledge and politics. This is my position too and the reason why I want prospective English language teachers to improve their English language proficiency as well as their English language *teacher* proficiency.

1.2.3   Teachers' language proficiency and language teacher proficiency levels in Namibia

Much has been said about Namibian teachers' proficiency in English (Smit, 2011). The National Planning Commission of Namibia (2017) states that teachers' proficiency plays a major role in learners' performance. According to Moodie (2015:23), a lack of teacher second language (L2) proficiency and a lack of knowledge about English language teaching (ELT) methodology appear to remain problematic in South Korea, despite reforms to pre-service teacher education. The same could be said for Namibia's in-service teachers. A few years ago, the English Language Proficiency Program test was administered for Grade 5 primary teachers, and revealed that the majority of our nation's teachers' language proficiency was really poor. It further revealed that

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most of the teachers could not sustain a conversation in English. According to Kisting (2011), "a staggering 98 per cent of Namibian teachers – or 22 089 – cannot read, write and speak English well enough". These were the teachers who were teaching the nation.

The terms *language proficiency* and *language teacher proficiency* differ in the sense that language proficiency refers to knowledge of the language, as opposed to knowledge about the language, which then (partly) constitutes language teacher proficiency. Any teacher can possess general knowledge of the language, but teachers need to acquire and possess adequate knowledge about the subject they will be teaching. This was the overall aim of this study – to explore whether narrative writing done over a period of time could favourably affect student teachers' language proficiency as well as their language teacher proficiency of the subject that is English although the fact remains that student teachers' exposure to English is mostly limited to the classroom, especially during the times that they are off campus (like the time they spend on Student Based Studies (SBS).

Several studies nationally and internationally have revealed that language teacher proficiency is a matter of concern (Smit, 2011; Nepolo, 2018). In an attempt to improve Namibian English language teachers and teacher educators, in 2018, UNAM's Faculty of Education received a grant from the United States (US) Department of State for a project entitled *"Building Capacity to Empower Teachers of Namibian Learners in Grades 4-7"*. UNAM then collaboratively worked with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Pacific Lutheran University, and Peace Corps to provide in-depth training and strategies to support learners in developing English Second Language literacy skills. Thus, my colleagues from all the UNAM campuses and I attended these two workshops. The first one took place in February 2019 in Okahandja, and the second one took place in June 2019 in Rundu. These workshops also provided all the attendees with much-needed teacher professional development. For us lecturers at UNAM, these workshops benefitted us in such a way that we gained new content knowledge with regard to English, which we can pass on to our students through the training that we are giving them, as we model what we have learned. They, in turn, will hopefully scaffold it to their future learners.

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

My personal experience as an English language teacher educator at an institution of higher learning such as UNAM and information obtained from several academic and local publications indicate that the quality of our teaching in Namibia needs to improve. In order to promote quality to the learning and teaching of English, language biographies and other types of narrative writing were used in this study with the hope that they could bring about change with regard to student teachers' English proficiency as well as language teaching proficiency. Being future teachers of a nation that is plagued by so much failure in the English language, which in turn affects learners' overall performance, it is imperative that student teachers exit their training having acquired all the content knowledge and language proficiency that will see them through in their teaching. Recent publications in Namibia indicate that a poor pass rate in English has been observed for several years now (Kamerika, 2018; Haifidi et al., 2019).

According to Carstens and Alston (2014), literacy narrative pedagogy plays a role in the attainment of learned knowledge in terms of students' literacy identities as far as a sussessful tertiary education is concerned. Since language teachers are in charge of shaping the proficiency of the learners in their care, they need to possess the necessary language proficiency to be able to excel at their role as teachers. Student language teachers go through four years of teacher training which is meant to enhance their expertise in the learners' target language.

As mentioned earlier, in my experience as a teacher educator, some student teachers who are to become English language teachers upon exiting UNAM are not able to demonstrate the level of proficiency required to prepare learners in their classrooms. When teachers themselves are not very skilful in the language of instruction, the teaching-learning process may be rendered more challenging than is usual. Hence, teacher graduates' proficiency in the language of instruction cannot be assumed to be adequate (Evans & Cleghorn, 2010). This, to my mind, was the second aim of the study. The first aim was to improve proficiency and the second was to promote reflexivity; the ability to recognise one's weak points and areas that need to be developed. I acknowledge that these aims must be seen against the problematic place of English in the Namibian education system. The pursuit of English as a language of access and social mobility means that learners' ability to understand and learn their subjects is sacrificed on the altar of English.

It is against this background that this study investigated whether fourth-year students' use of language biographies and other narrative writing such as journals and essays could advance their English expertise as well as their teaching expertise.

1.4   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Being an English lecturer and teacher educator at UNAM, I have much interest in the issue of L2 education. Having been at this institution for a number of years, one very important realisation has come to the fore. Second language students, especially those who specialise in language teaching, experience difficulties in attaining sufficient proficiency in English. This results in high failure rates at school level as far as the subject English Second Language is concerned, as teachers cannot offer their learners correct and acceptable English. It is against this background that this study strived to investigate whether the use of language biographies, personal journals and writing frames as a form of narrative writing could promote student teachers' English language proficiency as well as their language teacher proficiency.

Regarding language teacher proficiency, the study aimed to investigate whether student teachers possessed the ability to recognise and reflect on the content knowledge of English as a subject they were being trained to eventually be able to teach, as well as to think about how the information about English that they had prior to teacher training impacted on their teaching practices. They may also have thought about language problems they might have had or may have experienced experience during their training with regard to the language that they were learning. The students were all pre-service teacher students at HPC in their final year of Bachelor of Education studies and as Paula Golombek states in Lengeling and Wilson (2017:2) "whether a teacher is a pre-service teacher, beginning teacher, or experienced teacher, she or he needs to be able to articulate how teaching and learning takes place in her or his class".

The focus of this study was on students who specialised in language teaching at senior primary level. This means they were training to teach Grades 4 to 7. Students' contact with English is mostly limited to the classroom context, and local vernaculars are preferred for communication in other contexts. There is limited exposure to English because fourth-year student teachers (the final

year) receive three hours of theory and only two hours per week of practice for the English Language Education module as one of their majors.

Although there are many studies on language proficiency and development, there are not many on developing the proficiency of English language teachers with regard to both language proficiency as well as language teaching proficiency, through narrative inquiry and this is the gap this study aimed to address. Although Borg's research in 1997 specifically focused on studies focusing on second or foreign language learning in terms of what teachers regard as cognition (Borg, 2003:82), it revealed that most studies focused on language teacher proficiency but not much on teachers' general knowledge about the target language. To further stress this, Coffey (2011:19) states that, although a notable body of research literature on literacy narratives exists, a sufficient model for teaching literacy self-narratives in higher education has not yet been fully developed.

The value of biographical narratives is emphasised by several researchers and studies on the topic. According to Busch (2016) language biographies are increasingly being used as an introduction to creative writing and as a preparation for language development. In his summary of studies on narrative research, Barkhuizen (2014) shows that this type of research has been used only once. This was in the case of collective autobiographical writing in teacher training courses in South Africa and in the US, as used by Ball (2000), who found that this autobiographical activity functioned as a readiness task that prepared teachers to consider new and different views, attitudes and visions for language and literacy, inclusion and teaching practices in classrooms (Ball, 2000:321).

Moreover, this study aimed to add to a growing practice of narrative inquiry which Barkhuizen (2008:232) refers to as reflective inquiry:

> Through constructing, sharing, analysing and interpreting their teaching stories, teachers get the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and to articulate their interpretations of this practice. Constructing and thinking about stories in this way, therefore, involves both introspection and interrogation.

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Furthermore, the importance of narrative inquiry is justified by Johnson and Golombek (2011:491), who state that,

> from a sociocultural theoretical perspective, narrative as externalization also takes on a mediational function, in that, as teachers make their understandings explicit to themselves and others, their thinking is laid open to social influence. Their spoken or written words can be used to begin to self-regulate their behaviors and control their own worlds, constituting an initial step in cognitive development. In this sense, narrative as externalization opens up teachers' current understandings (and potentially their ZPD) to social influence and restructuring.

Seeing that narrative inquiry makes use of language biographies and other methods of data collection, Miller (2009:53) and Carstens and Alston (2014:1) argue that language biographies and other types of personal writing are useful in assisting B. Ed. students to manage with different types of literacies, multilingualism and identity. These types of writing shape the educational beliefs and practices of these pre-service teachers to "teach around and across differences". Similarly, Barkhuizen's study (2009) investigated the emerging teacher identity of a pre-service English teacher imagining her future working life. This present study aimed to determine from the written narratives the types of identities participants (who were also pre-service student teachers) had regarding their language teacher proficiency.

Several researchers, like Richards (1998), James (2001), Freeman (2001) and Borg (2003), state that "there is a growing consensus that, in order to understand language teaching better, we need to know more about what teachers know, how they come to know it, and how they draw on their knowledge" (Ellis, 2006:1). Similarly, Goodson (1992), Hayes (1996) and Gutierrez Almarza (1996) have observed that personal and biographical characteristics of teaching which pinpoint what teachers do and think within their global life experience are getting more recognition (Ellis, 2006:1). The above is affirmed by Reeves (2009:109), who states that the knowledge base of teachers and their experiences as language learners are enriched by the usage of biographies, which enables them to teach English to speakers of other languages. Another author who favours the usage of narratives is Hayes (2017:74), who states that,

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as individuals, we create logic out of our worlds via the accounts that we state about our own experiences and so I contend that it is through narrative research in its various forms – such as (auto)biographies, autoethnographies, oral histories, or in-depth interviews – that we can come to an understanding of the relationship between teachers and their social worlds, to uncover and appreciate the meanings of local social practices of language teaching within specific educational contexts.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central research question of this study was: How effective are language biographies and other narrative writing in promoting language proficiency and language teaching proficiency of fourth-year student teachers in the B. Ed. programme at HPC?

Two subsidiary questions guided this study, namely:

- What kind of identities do student teachers construct as far as their language teaching proficiency is concerned?
- What insights into teaching development do student teachers construct as far as continued development of language proficiency is concerned?

Teacher education is regarded as a complex practice that comprises of teacher professional learning, which is encouraged through efforts to prepare teachers for change. However, this view has shifted to teachers being regarded as active learners who are able to shape their professional development themselves through reflective participation in programs and practices (Yang, 2015:13-4). This being the case, this study aimed to question the roles both student teachers and their lecturer play in the development of English language proficiency as well as their language teacher proficiency.

1.6   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is of great importance because it taps into the field of narrative inquiry, which has not been explored in Namibia, because I have applied existing insights to a new context. Secondly,

this study is significant because it develops research methodology. This type of investigation has not been done with Namibian students, and this methodology has also not been used for the dual purpose of developing language proficiency and developing language teacher proficiency in the form of professional identity and reflexivity.

This study also serves as an example where language and language teacher proficiency are promoted within a literacy practice (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000), which is the language teacher education practices as well as in the contexts in which student teachers live out their daily literacy practices. This study filled a gap that existed in the field of second language teacher education, more especially on student teachers' English language proficiency by providing information about the identities and self-awareness (Andrews, 2001; Hiver, 2013; Kubanyiova, 2017; Varghese, 2017) that students construct and have about themselves through the various narratives that they created. As such, narrative inquiry is employed in this study as both a method of data collection as well as a theory in the sense that student narratives are regarded as ideal to provide us with information that can serve to build a theory about emerging English language teacher identities. Such information can benefit student teachers by knowing where and how they consider themselves in terms of their pedagogic content knowledge as well as the teacher professional identity roles they need to adopt during as well as after their training.

With the contribution that this study is making to new knowledge creation, in terms of usage of language biographies, narrative frames and personal journals, student teachers, teachers and other educational stakeholders stand to benefit from this new information as well as the fact that this study filled a gap that existed in the field of second language teacher education, more especially on English language proficiency. It also aimed at providing a critical view of how the current Namibian language policy impacts on the successful completion of schooling because of its insistence on English as a LoLT. The policy does not take the effort or time that it takes to use English successfully as a LoLT into account. Many critics have stressed the role English plays in our society, because when we speak it here in Namibia ultimately we end up promoting its culture (the Patriot, 2018). From a socio-cultural point of view, I question the practicality of using English as a LoLT from the fourth grade onwards, at the expense of the home or community language. This is emphasised in the Education for All document (United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization, 2006:200), which states that language is to be a means to promote meaningful learning and to offer access to a language of wider communication, for higher education as well as for international involvement.

A final contribution of this study is a methodological one in the sense that although many studies have utilised discourse analysis to analyse produced texts in academic contexts, their focus has not been on the language that student teachers have used to demonstrate how they construct their identities in relation to what they have learned during their teacher training as well as to show how they take charge of their learning (agency).

1.7   OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 offers an introduction to this study. It commences by presenting a brief background to this study. It further presents the problem statement and then outlines the purpose of conducting this study. Furthermore, this chapter looks at the Namibian language landscape in terms of how English is aligned as a language of instructions and a language of communication, the Namibian language policy, as well as the level of Namibian teachers' language proficiency. This chapter concludes with the significance of this study.

Chapter 2 offers a review of necessary literature pertaining to this study in terms of the frameworks onto which this study is embedded and the usage of narrative inquiry in teacher education as far as the learning and teaching of English is concerned. The types of identities teachers construct regarding their knowledge of the language and the language teacher proficiency in relation to this study are also discussed. Lastly, this chapter looks at how narrative inquiry informed the professional development of this study's participants.

Chapter 3 provides the methodology of this study. This chapter deals with the qualitative aspects of this study in terms of the approach, the design and how Vygotsky's theoretical framework was the lens through which data was analysed. It also focuses on the analysis of data, which was done using thematic and content analyses.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. This chapter focuses on the results that were derived from the study, which answered the research questions for this study. The results are presented as themes.

Chapter 5, which is the final chapter of this study, offers the discussion of results of this study. The results are discussed in terms of information offering answers to the research questions. A summary and conclusion of the study are also discussed. The study's limitations, the contribution and a personal note are also presented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This study's main aim was to find out how effective language biographies and other types of narrative writing were in promoting language proficiency and language teacher proficiency of language student teachers at HPC. This chapter deals with three main areas where I have situated my study: narrative writing, language proficiency and language teacher proficiency development. Figure 2 below shows where my study is positioned in terms of the areas referred to above.
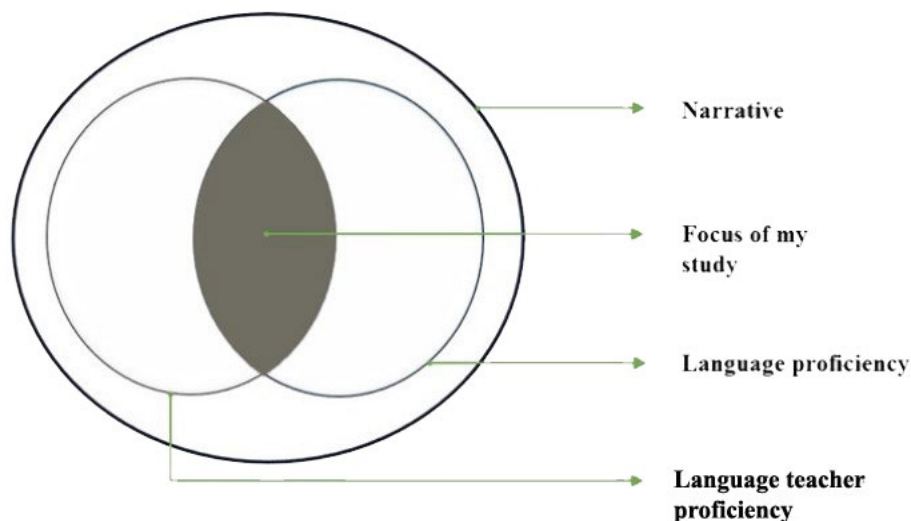
Figure 2:   Location of my study in terms of narrative writing, language proficiency and language teacher proficiency

From the studies (Simpson, 1994; Ball, 2003; Peyper, 2014; Moodie, 2015; Richards, 2017) conducted on second language development in teacher education, specifically regarding the areas of narratives, language proficiency development as well as language teacher proficiency are encompassed in narrative. These three areas are very much interconnected, so distinguishing them is difficult. For any specific teacher, it would be difficult to make sense of any area without bearing in mind the others. Exploring whether narrative and language biographies lead to an improvement

in language teaching therefore means exploring all three areas. Benson's study (2005:11) provides much relevant information for my research, because his study also focused on using personal narratives which concentrated on learners' experiences rather than on their educational experiences.

2.2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

My study is rooted in three theoretical frames: Vygotsky's social constructivism theory (1978), socio-cultural theory as well as in Margaret Archer's (1995) agency and structure notion. In this section, I show why these theoretical frames are appropriate for this study by first dealing with social constructivism, followed by the socio-cultural theory then discussing the notion of structure and agency, and finally showing how narrative theory may offer the opportunity to draw from both these frameworks.

2.2.1   Social constructivism

Vygotsky developed the theory of social constructivism in 1978, and in the past few years there has been growing interest in this theory and its effects for classroom instruction and knowledge acquisition (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996:191). There are three central elements to Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, namely the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the more knowledgeable other (MKO) and scaffolding which is typically associated with the socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky (van de Pol, Volman & Beishuizen, 2010:1). Each of these are discussed in turn.

According to Vygotsky, a person's cognitive structure is an outcome of collaboration in collective groups and cannot be separated from that collective experience. Vygotsky came up with his own interpretations of awareness in a collective setting and came up with the idea of the ZPD, which is "the realm of potential learning that each learner could reach within a given developmental span under optimal circumstances and with the best possible support from the teacher and the environment" (Oxford, 1997:43).

Vygotsky (Bruner, 1984:82) terms the ZPD as the difference between a child's definite conceptual phase and the period where he/she is able to explain difficult concepts with help, and he further asserts that a child's developmental stage determines what he/she is able to do by him-/herself. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978:82) argues that the ZPD points to those tasks that have not yet developed but are in progress, tasks that will complete soon enough but are presently in an emergent form. Although the ZPD seems to point to individual progress, Nyikos and Hashimoto (1997:507) broach the likelihood that the ZPD can refer to a group of learners who, when they get the same instructions from the same teacher, can eventually attain the same zone of potentiality. They proved this point by using conversational journals and self-reports from a group of learners, which backed up this theoretical point (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997:507). Furthermore, Nyikos and Hashimoto (1997:507) are of the opinion that

> it is clear that Vygotsky believed that interaction with others and with the cultural environment contributes to human cognitive development if the interaction takes place within the zone of one's potential development. Current theory posits that language students and future language teachers can obtain opportunities to develop their cognition by actively communicating with others who are more proficient, and thereby expand each other's conceptual potential.

In my study, the concept of the ZPD was critically important to understand the development of language proficiency. Student teachers needed to interact, via their narratives, with me. Narrative writing assumes a reader, who is trying to make sense of what the writer is writing, which results in cognition being stimulated, and thus learning is made possible. During the process of communicating with me as the MKO, the potential for development was enhanced.

Implicit in the concept of the ZPD is the presence of an MKO. According to Bliss, Askew and Macrae (1996:37), the view of the MKO, who is the mature individual, is considered by Vygotsky as the most central point to knowledge acquisition and development. Thus, from a Vygotskian perspective, student (pre-service) teachers got to be involved in social interaction with their mentor teachers and they also interacted with the texts they wrote. The writing of language biographies and narratives was expected to lead to growth in language proficiency as well as development in language teacher proficiency. As the writing was to be done over and over, over a period of time,

the mentor/lecturer as MKO would offer support (scaffolding) to language students in terms of content as well as the language utilised in their narratives. As stated by Vygotsky (1978), societal engagements as well as focused knowledge within the ZPD enables children and their partners to build new awareness. Consequently, considerable education by the pupil transpires via shared contact with a competent instructor (the MKO). The tutor may demonstrate behaviours and/or provide verbal instructions for the child. According to Vygotsky, this supportive or joint discourse makes it possible for the learner to comprehend the teachings of the instructor (who can either be the guardian or teacher), which the learner internalises as part of his/her learned content. His/her future performance is based on that new content (McLeod, 2014:4).

This process of learning is meant to create a shift in learners' cognition because new knowledge will be learned. Clabaugh (2010) states that the MKO's role is to guide and facilitate the learning process, and the MKO is "anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, particularly in regard to a specific task, concept or process". There were various MKOs in this study, because the students were placed in schools where they interacted with support/mentor teachers, who offered them support in terms of the subjects which the support/mentor teachers taught. In addition, they interacted with the lecturer through their narratives. The conditions for learning were therefore optimised. What Vygotsky is saying is that there is cognitive development in the sense that the MKO needs to guide the student teachers to the next level of proficiency, both as language learners themselves and as professionals.

From Vygostky's initial ideas, a variety of authors have developed and extended the concept of social constructivism. Oxford (1997:36) defines constructivism as a philosophical belief by which society build their individual awareness of truth, even though constructivists such as Vygotsky (1978) argue that there actually is no truth given people's ideas or notions. Shor (1992) proposes a theoretical explanation of social constructivism as an approach of creating knowledge about character, school, everyday knowledge and society through reflection and sense creation.

Another aspect of the social constructivism theory is scaffolding. In the context of this theory, Vygotsky considers the teacher as an implementer or monitor. Within this process, the teacher offers support as well as guides the learner, making it possible for the learner's knowledge to grow from simple to complex forms. Eventually the learner is able to direct and empower his/her own

learning so that the support that maintains the education process is slowly but surely removed by the teacher (Oxford, 1997:44). Donato (2000:41) states that, as the child (student teacher) begins to be more responsible for his/her own learning, the adult (MKO and mentor) undoes the scaffold, leading to the child relying on his/her own previously acquired problem-solving processes. According to Rogoff (1994), most social constructivists give prominence to the progression. The student becomes part of the common practices in the immediate surroundings through classroom happenings such as journal writing or essay writing. The HPC student teachers had to participate in the process of writing language biographies in the expectation that I would interact with them and observe an improvement in their language proficiency.

In this section, I have highlighted Vygotsky's socio-cognitive theory as the framework through which I looked at language development, as student teachers moved on to a level of higher proficiency (ZPD) with the help of a mentor (MKO). Since the focus of this study was not only on learning, but also on student teachers' ability to reflect on their learning, Vygotsky's theoretical framework was extended by incorporating Margaret Archer's framework of structure and agency, which is discussed next.

2.2.2 Socio-cultural theory

The second overlapping conceptual framework is socio-cultural theory. This theory is based on the work of Lev Vygotsky. The two main aspects of this theory that many authors focus on are mediation and the zone of proximal development (Lantolf, 1994; Fahim & Haghani, 2012; Fanyu & Wanyi, 2013). This theory is used as one of the frameworks for this study because of its vast influence on the field of education. Additionally, from a Vygotskyian point of view this theory

> regards sociocultural settings as the essential and determining factor in the development of higher mental activities including voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning and problem solving. In sociocultural theory learning is thought of as a social event taking place as a result of interaction between the learner and the environment (Fahim& Haghani, 2012:693).

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According to Fahim & Haghani (2012:695) one of the most important aspects of sociocultural theory is the concept of mediation. Human beings (in this case student teachers) use physical tools to make changes in their environment, and consequently advance their living conditions, making use of symbolic tools, or signs, to mediate and regulate their relationships with the people in their surroundings and thus change the nature of their relations with them. Such attempts at mediation tie in with Archer's framework of agency and structure).

Based on the central tenets of these theoretical frameworks, learning is a product of the experiences learners as well as students encounter in their environments, being their communities or their school grounds. As previously alluded to, many environments that learners and students alike find themselves in are not conducive to learning English as there is no exposure to it and in some cases, teachers tend to use codeswitching indiscriminately in lessons meant to develop English language proficiency.

However, sociocultural theory highlights meaning as the central aspect of any teaching and insists that skills or knowledge must be taught in all its complex forms, rather than presented as isolated, discrete concepts (Fahim& Haghani, 2012:693). I concur with that claim because as Barkaoui (2007:35) states, writers need to possess knowledge in terms of the orthography, morphology, lexicon, syntax, as well as the discourse and rhetorical conventions of the L2 in order to effectively write in an L2. If language proficiency is to be achieved, then instruction of the language has to make meaning to those who are receiving it. Despite their lack of exposure to the target language one should not ignore students' "….mental development that arises as a consequence of the interaction of distinct processes, one with biological roots and the other with sociocultural origins" (Lantolf, 1994: 418). In other words, when students get involved in doing certain tasks with the help of another student or the lecturer, they internalize the way to carry out the same task by themselves (Fahim& Haghani, (2012:694). Consequently, utilising meditational language to help students move into and through their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is of specific importance. The narrative writing that student teachers engaged in was done in terms of "sociocultural orientations [that] highlight the value of modelling target texts, with the latter orientation advocating a broader focus on text forms as well as the contexts, audiences, purposes, and functions of texts. According to Whipp, Eckman & van den Kieboom (2005:37) just as

children acquire knowledge and behaviors specific to the familial and community contexts in which they live, teachers acquire knowledge and behaviors that are a part of the context in which they teach. They further claim that in each case, the number and type of activities taking place within the environment are opportunities that dictate the type and diversity of development, and in the case of our student teachers, they find themselves in environments that do not offer them many opportunities to develop their language teacher proficiency, because the support teachers themselves do not possess much that student teachers can learn from (as pointed out in Chapter 1). The same applies to language proficiency, at most schools, teachers and learners alike tend to communicate in a vernacular, offering no exposure to the student teachers in terms of spoken or written English. From my experience as a language lecturer, I have found that most of our students lack the skills to write a simple email – content-wise, language-wise as well as structure-wise. This is disheartening because most of these students that I come into contact with are in their 3rd or 4th levels of their four-year teacher training studies.

Considering that this study aimed at determining whether narrative writing can promote both language proficiency and language teacher proficiency in the matter in which student teachers articulated themselves, it is important to take note of the claims of Barkaoui (2007:36) who states that sociocultural research perceives writing development as the knowledge of the genres, values, and practices of the target community, and he further asserts that proficient L2 writers are those who can perform efficiently in new cultural settings that they find themselves. Throughout my study, there was interaction between the student teachers and myself, whereby students were considered as "active meaning-makers and problem-solvers in their learning process" (Fahim& Haghani, 2012:694). Sociocultural theory also places much importance on the dynamic nature of interconnections that take place between teachers, learners and tasks and supports the concept of learning which comes as a result of interactions among individuals, therefore, social interaction is assumed to aid or mediate the learning process (Fahim& Haghani, 2012:694-5). Hence it is also important to note that teachers comprehend that the role of an expert is not limited to that of teachers alone, but it can also be applied to those learners who have internalized an aspect of the language and as a result of those. According to Adger (2001:511), Vygotsky's thinking has been interpreted in very different ways. Some of his insights have been highly influential in research on teaching and learning: that individuals learn in their own zones of proximal development lying just

beyond the domains of their current expertise, and that they learn through interacting in that zone with a more knowledgeable individual by internalizing the resulting socially assembled knowledge.

In summing up, the tools (which in this case is the target language English), the mediator and the ZPD all play a socio-cultural role in how the development of language proficiency and language teacher proficiency are carried out. In the next section I will discuss the possible ways in which these tools can be used by the student teachers.

2.2.3   Archer's structure and agency framework

The third conceptual framework which overlaps with constructivism and which guided my work is that of Margaret Archer (1995) who uses the notions of *agency* and *structure*. Archer (1995:153) describes *agency* as the insightful, inventive, original and determined activities of people. It refers to the choices that people create and make in their day-to-day lives which either strengthen prevailing structures and cultures or alter them. Another definition of *agency* is given by Van Lier (2008:172) as the ability to control one's behaviour, to engage in behaviour that affects other entities and the self, and to produce actions which can be evaluated. He further states that agency often involves preference, intentionality, initiative, intrinsic motivation and self-sufficiency.

Golombek, in a recent interview regarding Argentinian teachers' teacher development links agency directly to narrative enquiry by asserting that "For me, narrative inquiry is about teacher development and about teachers taking agency in their development. It is about elevating the role of the teacher in his or her own development, giving him or her a voice" (Lengeling and Wilson, 2017:17). In these few words Golombek links all the major points of my study: teacher agency in their own development through narrative enquiry.

Archer (1995:153) maintains that agency and structure, which have a solid presence, are "pre- and post-dated but at distinctive sequential stages". Porpora (2013:27) similarly states that the idea of structure refers to human associations among human actors – relationships such as authority, competition, manipulation and dependency. The relations referred to here form a multifaceted system, because they can describe the relationships between the mentor and the student teachers,

the lecturer and the students, the students and the course requirements, the lecturer and the faculty management that determines the course requirements, and so on, because "they are relations among social positions that human actors occupy. Thus, it is more precise to speak of structure as relations among social positions" (Porpora, 2013:27). One of these social positions that Porpora is referring to is the fact that these participants were pre-service student teachers who were in the process of acquiring English professional knowledge content and may have been faced with many challenges regarding their studies. What this means for my study is to determine the extent to which these student teachers could ensure that they actually extend their language proficiency as well as their teaching proficiency despite the constraints they may have been facing. It is assumed that the degree to which they can reflect on their own position and their own actions would emerge from their narratives.

As for agency, Porpora (2013:27) maintains that agency is what individuals do with culture, and he provides a good example of what agency is by making use of language, stating that

> none of us individually produces language, which is a collective, emergent phenomenon. On the other hand, it is each of us individually who speaks through one language or another, exercising our own individual capacities as coherent selves to choose what it is we say. It is not rather, as poststructuralists would have it, that language is the agent speaking through us.

Lacroix (2012:7) distinguishes between two definitions of structure. In the first instance, structure can be seen as "the actual organisation of a society":

> Structures are the structures of a society taken as a composite ensemble of distinct units. Two lines of thought are to be distinguished: for some, structures are horizontal patterns of interpersonal relations. For others, they are vertical articulations of institutionalised domains of activity.

The second way in which structure can be defined, according to Lacroix (2012:7), is to see it as referring "to the institutionalised fields of shared actions such as economy, politics, civil society, etc.". In this study, the institutionalised field of shared actions was teacher training education, and

to be more specific, this study focused on the promotion of language and language teacher proficiencies which could either be promoted or hampered by structural constraints facing the student teachers during their teacher training. What was important here was how participants fared in the face of those structural constraints in the attainment of language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency.

As far as agency is concerned, Lacroix (2012:16) disputes that what agency does is reproduce and transform structures and not simply produce them. He further argues that Archer's emphasis is on structures as an impartial truth influenced by other people's activities (Lacroix, 2012:10). I agree with Lacroix's argument because, in the case of our student teachers, they can transform and reproduce structures that they may experience during their training, such as curriculum constraints, a lack of understanding of the language content or an inability to reflect as far as known and limited pedagogical knowledge is concerned. To draw the connection between Archer's framework and the social constructivism theory we can refer directly to Vygotsky (1987:220) when he explains that *conscious* awareness and *voluntary* attention emerge in the ZPD (in collaboration with a more knowledgeable other). It is therefore assumed that student teachers would demonstrate agency by their awareness of problems and voluntary attention in order to learn. In the case of these students it is assumed that their mentor teachers may play a role, but their lecturers or even peers could play the role of more knowledgeable others. Vygotsky himself points out, "[w]hen the school child solves a problem at home on the basis of a model that he has been shown in class, he continues to act in collaboration, though at the moment the teacher is not standing near him (1987:216). I would argue that for student teachers to activate the knowledge they need, even when they are not on campus, agency is needed to become the reflective practitioners that we as lecturers want them to become.

In the context of Vygotsky's ZPD, Fanyu & Wanyi (2013:167) claim that learning helps awaken a number of different developmental processes that can operate only during children's interaction with adults or peers and once these processes are internalized, they become part of the independent development achievement. This in their view is tied to agency in such a way that for those processes to further develop, it is dependent on the individual student as he/she is exposed to new

content at the hands of the teacher or another student. Consequently, learning thus becomes part of him/her as he/she interacts with others.

Touraine (1971:459) on the other hand terms agency as "an organization directly implementing one or more elements of the system of historical action and therefore intervening directly in the relations of social domination". Giddens (1984:25) defines "agency as recursively organised arrangements of guidelines and resources". As Afrikaans was a medium of instruction prior to Namibia's independence, its effects on language teachers are still felt because teachers who trained during that era struggle with the current demands of being proficient in English. Touraine's social domination was relevant to the students in this study in terms of the status of English because even the government demands that teachers must be proficient in English (National Planning Commission of Namibia, 2017). It ironic that the colonial domination of Afrikaans is now substituted by the hegemony of English, so that teachers may have a more favourable disposition towards English, but their proficiency is lacking.

As an example of the interaction between people and structures, Barkhuizen (2009) refers to a migrant woman named Sela who showed her person powers (agency) by first befriending English-speaking youngsters in her communities, and from this interaction, acquiring a high proficiency in English. Despite structural constraints, she managed to enrol in a prestigious English-medium school. Barkhuizen (2009:285) states:

> When she finished school she volunteered to work as a teacher-aide in a rural primary school, where she encountered what she considered to be poor English teaching. She then immigrated to New Zealand and lived in a suburb of Auckland with a high density of Tongan and other Pacific Island immigrants. She soon decided to study to become an English teacher. Sela completed her first degree, followed by a postgraduate diploma in language teaching and learning, and then an MA in the same subject.

Sela encountered several structures in her life. However, she avoided the structures she encountered and their implications. One of the structures was the lack of opportunity for a better school, thus she faced poor English teaching. However, she avoided the constraints and implications of that structure through her agency by deciding to immigrate to New Zealand, where

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she decided to study and get a teaching qualification. A social structure she encountered was segregation in terms of where one lives/resides. She lived in a neighbourhood filled with other immigrants whose English proficiency was not good, so in order to change that, she decided to become an English teacher. Therefore, the intention of the present study was to figure out the point to which these individual student teachers were capable of taking responsibility by placing themselves into a particular structure or fight what they identified as the constraints of the structure (by using their agency) as they tried to improve and develop both their language proficiency and their language teacher professional identity. I therefore agree with Varghese (2017:44), who views "language teacher identity as being created within the co-evolution of agency and structure; how as individuals and groups they can develop and 'make things happen' within structural opportunities and constraints".

As far as language teacher professional development is concerned, agency and structure form part of identity formation as stated by Coldron and Smith (1999:713), who emphasise the significance of agency over social structure and consequently claim that teachers' professional characteristics are a result of the choices that teachers make. Furthermore, Norton (2013:3) argues that language learning or use is not entirely demarcated by structural conditions and social contexts. She further states that language learners who find it hard to speak from one identity point may be competent to reestablish their connection with others and assert different, more powerful identities from which to speak, read or write, in that way improving language acquisition. Contrastingly, however, Rind (2016) claims that identity can be termed as various, conflicting and uncertain considerations of self in relation to agencies. He further conceptualises "the notion of identity in terms of the extent to which it is shaped by structure, but also the extent to which agents can exercise choice and agency in constructing identity" (Rind, 2016:9).

Flowerdew and Miller (2008:201) used life histories to explore individual agency and social structure in the language education of young engineering graduates. The study, which employed narrative enquiry, demonstrated the interaction in language learning regarding social structure as well as individual agency as far as young adult users of English were concerned. It was found that the education the three young adults went through led to their lives being transformed and reproduced as a result of participating in a particular social structure as well as their individual

agency in committing to the programme. They invested in themselves, thus it is felt that, "in order to tilt the balance in favor of agency over structure and to encourage more 'investment' on the part of learners, more attention needs to be given to creating opportunities for 'creative discursive agency' in and outside the classroom" (Flowerdew & Miller, 2008:201). With reference to this study, creative discursive agency meant that participants had the power to create new knowledge through the elicited narratives they produced. They had the power to write whatever they felt they could write, despite the constraints they might have faced in terms of their own language proficiency and the structures within which they taught and learned. The freedom that teachers had to write what they like is unlike the practice that tends to take place in traditional language classrooms, whereby teachers tend to force learners to speak or write while self-regulation (which is one of the aspects of the socio-cultural theory) is not permitted when they are using the target language (Fanyu & Wanyi, 2013:165). Furthermore, these two authors claim that through the process of regulation, a person is regulated by another more knowledgeable or experienced person (e.g. adult, peer, and teacher) in the shared social activity. At this stage, people are able to carry out some tasks with linguistically mediated assistance from a parent, teacher, or more capable peer (Fanyu & Wanyi, 2013:166).

As Mvududu and Thiel-Burgess (2012:108) note, the social standpoint of linguistic education is seen as a collaboration between social structure and individual agency, where specific pupils could be controlled by the social world they dwell in. Consequently, these pupils participate actively in constructing that specific social sphere, exercising agency. This is what this study hoped the participants would do – construct new knowledge about their lives in terms of their teacher training by exercising their power over their own learning despite constraints they may have encountered.

In summing up, both Vygotsky's and Archer's frameworks could be useful in my deliberation of this topic in the sense that language learning in a classroom context takes place through social interaction from somebody who is at a more advanced level of proficiency. Prospective teachers need to be at a high level of proficiency for learners to develop, and for this reason, they should be driven to learn in order for proficiency to develop to a high level. If one had to decide about the best fit for these two theoretical frameworks in terms of the three foci of this study, one could say that social constructivism helps to explain language proficiency development (Mvududu & Thiel-

Burgess, 2012:108), the socio-cultural theory provided a lens through which mediated interaction between the students and their ZPD played out in the narrative writing process and finally, structure and agency are needed to develop reflective language teacher professionals who are, in Vygotskian terms, *consciously* aware and paying *voluntary* attention in the ZPD (Vygotsky 1987:220) to ensure their professional development. Flowerdew and Miller (2008:202) combine these three theoretical frameworks when they state that teachers "are conceived of as individuals with complex social identities that affect the active ways they approach their language learning".

2.3   NARRATIVE INQUIRY (NI)

Narrative inquiry (NI) has been used extensively in academic fields that also involve education, and of late it is being used in studies of educational competence (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). The two authors (Clandinin and Connelly) were the first to use narrative inquiry as a methodology. It is essential to define the term *narrative inquiry*, which to my mind is the umbrella term in which the term 'narrative' is emphasized. Barkhuizen (2016:28) defines narrative inquiry (NI) as a manner in which   research is conducted that concentrates on stories told regarding people's existences. Similarly, Connelly and Clandinin (quoted in Clandinin, 2006) refer to NI as providing a context in which

> people shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made foremost a way of thinking about experience.

According to Golombek in her interview with Lengeling and Wilson (2017: 16-17) on the role of NI in education, the focus is on the teachers, their roles and their own professional development – they are not simply participants in research. She further stresses that "narrative inquiry is systematic self-inquiry done by teachers in their own contexts for their own purposes and in their own language".

This study set out to study *student* teachers, but Barkhuizen's (2008:5) description of what NI involves for teachers, is also relevant for the participants in my study. I therefore concur with

Barkhuizen when he states this type of inquiry "involves teachers exploring the numerous aspects of their particular, local contexts such as the needs and wants of their students, the teaching resources and facilities available, the school and community culture, existing syllabuses and language in-education policies, as well as the wider sociopolitical context (even at the level of the state) in which the teaching and learning take place" (Barkhuizen, 2008:5). It was therefore the hope of this study that, through narrative inquiry, teachers could be empowered to reflect on their teaching and learning and in the process create practical resources (Sarasa, 2015:15).

By his own admissions, Barkhuizen (2008) grasped the impact of narrative inquiry by chance and thus he used it to study two Afrikaans-speaking teachers who migrated to New Zealand, and in analysing the produced stories of the two teachers he took into consideration Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative space which provides context for any story:

  1. the participants in the story - their own experiences and their interactions with others;

  2. the time during which the story takes place, including its temporal connections to history and the future;

  3. the physical settings or places in which the story is located. (Barkhuizen, 2008:2-3).

In order to contextualise the three-dimensional narrative space in this study, the participants, my B. Ed Honours fourth year student teachers, engaged in the writing of narratives, they got to narrate stories of how they had learned new content as far as English as a subject was concerned, and in the process, practise their ability to write in English. So, the writing served two purposes: it gave them extra opportunities to write about things that mattered to them, and in that process they got to reflect on their practice. It was the hope of this study that students would actually get to change their practices and actions as they engaged in narrative writing with the assistance of the mentor. This is what Vygotsky's socio-cognitive theory advocates and how Archer's concept of agency is realized in a particular socio-cultural space.

This inquiry took place during the time that student teachers were on SBS. SBS is normally scheduled to take place at the beginning of the year for all the year levels but the fourth year ones

last longer, so it commences from either end of January or beginning of February till sometime in May. During that time, my participants' involvement in the stay could not have come at a better time. Student teachers were in the middle of teaching practice, which meant they were not really focusing on English as such. Thus, I believe that they had many and interesting experiences because this period is always perceived by students as hectic and pressurized. So, to a certain extent this was a good time for my research. Therefore, the contents of their narratives entailed more of their experiences of SBS, especially the personal journals as well as the narrative frames.

The stories that students produced were located in different contexts as they first wrote about their journeys of learning English in the language biographies, thus in this way, narrative inquiry served as instrument to measure the language proficiency development of student teachers. As I have mentioned before in the second-dimension narrative place, student teachers were on SBS during the time the data for this study was produced, therefore their physical settings differed.

2.3.1 Narrative inquiry and teacher identity

The link between narrative inquiry and identity formation is well-developed. According to Ankiah-Gangadeen and Samuel (2014:61), "narrative inquiry captures the dialectical relationship between individuals, spaces or contexts, and time, and thereby affords a better insight into the deeply textured and complex process of identity development". When identity development is linked to learning, Lave and Wenger (1991:53) focus on "existing associations concerning individuals as well as personal dwellings and involvement in societies of training". The shared involvement of participants in the learning process differs at individual level due to their past experiences as well as their current interactions regarding professional knowledge learned. Each participant would have his/her individual prior learning experiences regarding English as well as different perceptions regarding teaching. Those would then combine with new subject knowledge that they picked up or acquired during their teacher training and practice-based learning. How they viewed themselves on the basis of what they knew and did not know would also be at individual level, as much as they found themselves in a social context.

I concur with Culver (2012:7), who links narrative inquiry, identity formation and learning succinctly by claiming that

narrative inquiry is an enriching process that leads to multifaceted learning. An optimal education cannot be limited to a single subject or narrow discipline – it must also involve assisting learners in the discovery of their identity and with realizing a deeper significance in life, i.e., making meaningful connections between the subject material and the learners themselves.

When participants wrote narratively, it was expected that the exercise would serve as a way of learning or taking stock of what was going on in their lives with regard to the learning and teaching of English, that is, in terms of the skills and content that they needed to be able to consider themselves professional and qualified teachers.

It is interesting to note what Lave and Wenger (1991) state regarding the structure in which learning takes place, thereby building the bridge to Archer's notion of structure and agency. They say that "learning involves the whole person; it implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities – it implies becoming a full participant, a member, a kind of person" (Lave & Wenger, 1991:53). In terms of my study, Archer's structure and agency could mean that student teachers may build language proficiency by willingly responding in the form of narratives in the company of other people (other student teachers and the MKO) to create new knowledge (Mangal & Mangal, 2019:107). It could be expected that student teachers would be able to beat any structural restraints that they may have encountered in the process, because it was hoped that they would use their personal power to overcome those constraints.

According to Sarasa (2015:21), it is possible to liberate and restore narrators when their narratives are told in the target language, provided this process is done in a supporting environment. The positive influence should be observed on both their attitudes as well as the contents of their narratives. Similarly, Johnson and Golombek (2002:5) state that "narrative inquiry allows individuals to look at themselves and their activities as socially and historically situated". One has to point out, however, that this will only happen under the guidance of a supportive MKO.

In summing up, narrative inquiry is a vehicle through which student teachers can relate to their life experiences regarding language learning. Culver (2012:10) maintains that narrative inquiry can at the same time advance language knowledge as well as motivate concentration on lives narrated

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about. Similarly, Clandinin and Connely (2000:42) claim that narrative inquiry has the prospect to cause a sense of meaning and importance for teachers' knowledge, which in turn leads to a renewed effort on their personal trained backgrounds. The question is then, if narrative inquiry is simply about making meaning of our lives, how will it improve language proficiency or develop professionals?

Narratives are used for many purposes, as a teaching strategy/approach (Butcher, 2006; Fojkar, Skela & Kovac, 2013) or a tool for instruction (Szurmak & Thuna, 2013; Gooblar, 2015). However, the focus here is on narratives that have been used for language learning and professional development. Firstly, I discuss what narratives are and what they entail and secondly, I deal with different types of narratives.

2.3.2   Narrative writing

For this study, student teachers had to write down their narratives, not tell them verbally, because the whole point of writing them down was to try and improve their language proficiency through writing (see 4.2). There was a need for interaction between the mentor and the student teachers, and this could only take place if the narratives were constructed in writing (for instance diaries and journals), "which L2 learners write either impulsively or in response to teachers' and researchers' requests because these represent the first source of information about learners' beliefs and feelings" (Pavlenko, 2007:165). According to Lutovac and Kasila (2011:225), narrative consists of structure, knowledge and expertise to create a story. All the above-mentioned elements needed to come out in the student teachers' narratives so that a yardstick could be created by means of which improvement (if present) could be measured.

I agree with the explanation by Toolan (2001:1) which states that "narrative typically is a recounting of things spatiotemporally distant: here's the present teller, seemingly close to the addressee (reader or listener), and there at a distance is the tale and its topic". This process of recounting required student teachers to reflect on how they had come to learn English as well as how they taught it at different times and in different spaces.

In this way, as Bruner (1991:4) points out, narratives organise human experiences as well as the memory of human happenings, expressed as, in some cases folktales and folk lore, but in others justifications or motives for carrying or not carrying out something. In Bruner's (1991:4) view of narrative as a cultural artefact, he points out, crucially, that a narrative is "constrained by each individual's level of mastery and by his conglomerate of prosthetic devices, colleagues, and mentors". This links up with the socio-cognitive theory because the level of mastery is what is intended to be improved through the writing of narratives. It is Vygotsky's belief that human cognitive development is a result of interaction between people and the cultural environment that is in the zone of one's potential development (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997:507).

Since this study aimed to investigate whether a promotion of both language proficiency and language teacher proficiency was possible with narrative writing, I concur with Fujieda (2012:32), who states that the usage of autobiographical narratives can provide a platform for researchers to find out about the issue under study as well as to generate ample explanations through the participants' specific contextual information in terms of their skills and knowledge. Similarly, Culver (2012:6) states that narratives are conceived as displays of distinct and shared practices that turn into existing accounts. Fujieda's statement can be linked to the fact that narratives produced by the participants of this study would serve as a platform for me as a researcher to understand and identify their proficiency levels as well as how they interacted with the English knowledge content during their teacher training.

I also find Klein's (2000) definition of narrative particularly relevant because the types of narratives the participants of this study wrote were elicited from them by me, the researcher. Klein (2000:167) states that, in its most basic usage, narrative is a genre that can be created or elicited. He further states that narratives can be personal: they can be autobiographical, and they can be fictional or non-fictional. My student teachers' writing was autobiographical, in the sense that they wrote their own narratives in an effort to trigger reflection and, possibly, professional growth.

The issue of using narratives to improve the proficiency of student teachers at HPC was embedded in Vygotsky's social constructivism, which states that knowledge is gained through interaction with other people. I considered my student teachers' engagement in narrative writing as a way of creating new knowledge in a social and interactive context, whereby the mentor, who was the

MKO, offered students help in their writing, which was within their ZPD, until they no longer required that assistance. As a result of this transformation, it was hoped that student teachers would develop professionally as well, because they possessed personal powers to make a change in their own teaching lives. It was hoped that student teachers' language would go through some change to the intended ZPD under the guidance of an MKO – the mentor or lecturer. Thus, it is important to take note of Johnson and Golombek's (2011:493) argument that

> a fundamental principle of a sociocultural theoretical perspective is that human cognition is understood as originating in and fundamentally shaped by engagement in social activity, and, consequently, cognition cannot be removed from activity. From this stance, what is learned is fundamentally shaped by how it is learned, and it follows that, when teachers use narrative as a vehicle for inquiry, how they engage in narrative activities will fundamentally shape what they learn.

According to Vygotsky, a variety of inner growing developments simply work when the learner is collaborating with others within his/her surrounding as well as when working with others, which in turn are stimulated through learning. Once these developments are learned, they turn into the learner's self-regulating progressive achievement (Shayer, 2003). In this way, NI is not merely a research methodology, but it becomes a theoretical framework through which learning and professional growth is stimulated.

In any training context, a collaboration is to be expected. In my participants' context, that of their teacher training, different types of collaborations took place, that is, in terms of group work that they had to engage in (whether in class during teaching or outside of class) in their subjects of specialisation. Thus, Vygotsky's idea of a collaboration between a learner and his/her surroundings or others actually took place. Collaboration is also supported by Turuk (2008:244), who stresses that learning in a second-language context should be a collective accomplishment, and not an isolated person's work where the learner works unaided and unmediated. Thus, it is important to note what Vygotsky (1986:34) expects of the movement towards a ZPD: "learners are moved forward through stages of cognitive development through socially mediated situations". This is because the narratives that student teachers had to engage in via writing were planned carefully well in advance, and all participants had to interact with one another as well as with the mentor.

According to Vygotsky, cognitive development is enhanced by social interaction that encompasses supportive or concerted discussion (McLeod, 2014:6). The mentor (MKO), who had a more advanced level of proficiency, offered some assistance until such time that student teachers were competent enough to work on their own without or with minimum help. By looking at their growing independence through the lens of NI, their increasing agency was evidence of their growth as professionals.

2.3.3   Types of narratives

Different researchers use different types of narratives which best fit their studies and which would yield good results for them. In this section, I look at the types of narratives that studies of language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency development have used.

According to Pavlenko (2007:163), in earlier years, researchers preferred to use diaries, language memoirs, journals and linguistic autobiographies when collecting data. This means that, during narrative inquiry, any of the above types could be used as a mean of collecting data. In this section, I discuss different types of narrative writing and how they are used by different researchers.

A language biography is a type of narrative whereby students are asked to provide detail about their language learning histories (Nekvapil, 2003; Apitzsch & Siouti, 2007; Busch, 2016). Busch (2016:5-6) describes a biographical approach as an overarching term that comprises individual language descriptions, writing and discussing personal practices with knowledge, school and language education, as well as working on language biographies. Another description of what a language biography is what Nekvapil (2003:64) terms as a biographic description in which a storyteller uses his/her own language as the main topic of his/her testament, particularly the manner in which languages are attained and the ways in which they are utilised. Researchers like Barkhuizen and Wette (2008), Warwick and Maloch (2003) and Wray and Lewis (1997) have tried to scaffold the writing of language biographies by using narrative frames. Warwick and Maloch (2003:59) regard writing frames as a platform that can provide a "skeleton to scaffold writing". Furthermore, Wray and Lewis (1997:122) state that writing frames are "comprised of a template of starters, connectives and sentence modifiers which gives children a structure within which they can concentrate on communicating what they want to say whilst scaffolding them in the use of a

particular generic form". This means that the mentor facilitates the writing in a collaborative way; thus, knowledge is developed (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 1990). The mentor has a supportive and guiding function in the writing process. Additionally, Barkhuizen and Wette (2008:375) state that narrative frames offer direction as well as care with regard to both the arrangement and content of what is to be on paper. The narrative frame used in this study can be seen in Addendum C.

Another type of (auto)biographical narrative is the diary. Benson (2005:13) asserts that introspective diary study has grown into a reputable research method, even though published studies remain few in numbers. According to Casanave (2011:185), Bailey's (1983) diary study, though dated, provides a good model of what a diary is. In her study, Bailey analysed her own diary of her experiences learning French as a graduate degree requirement and 10 other diaries of native English-speaking language learning. Furthermore, Casanave (2011:185-6) provides another type of narrative. She refers to Spencer's autobiographic diary study (2003, 2009), where Spencer described her own cultural adjustments while teaching in rural China and of her language learning efforts there, in Germany and in Japan. Casanave (2011) comments on the rich manner in which Spencer's reflective narratives in her journals and in letters are written, claiming that they describe her experiences in such a way as to help readers experience what she had lived and felt.

Another type of narrative is a language portrayal. Language portrayals are likewise used for language learning purposes. According to Busch (2016:10), language portrayals arose in the early 1990s. She further states that language portrayals are used by researchers "to visualise individual linguistic resources" (Busch, 2016:10) of their participants. Many other researchers have used language portrayals, which are referred to as language portraits by some, such as Buehner, Krumm and Pick (2005), Jakobsen (2011) as well as Wolf (2014). These authors have used language portrayals (portraits) in their studies of second and foreign language learners. Figure 3 below provides an example of a language portrayal as used by Wolf (2014).

FIGUR 1. Signes sprogportræt

Black = English:
Sometimes think in English and speak it sometimes with my father and mother.

Yellow = German:
Sometimes speak it and sometimes when I am in Germany.

Red = Danish:
I grew up with Danish, and think and speak it almost the whole time.

Pink = Japanese:
I can count to 10 in Japanese and know a few more words.

Light blue = French:
I can say a few words such as 'Bonjour'.

Red/Black = Danish-English,
Sometimes I think it's fun to speak both Danish and English.

Dark blue = Swedish:
I read it sometimes on Wikipedia.

Grey = Norwegian:
I sometimes read Norwegian when on Wikipedia.

Figure 3:   An example of a language portrayal

Language learning histories or memoirs are similarly utilised in NI. Oxford (1996:582) defines them as reflective reports that are written by students themselves about their own language learning process, and asserts that it requires students to pay close attention to an additional view of their individual previously learned knowledge, in the case when they are used as a form of research. Those authors (Simon-Maeda, 2004; Benson, 2005; Flowerdew & Miller, 2008) who have used learning histories in their studies found their usage in their studies useful, because they claim that learning histories can provide data for discussion and reflection in the classroom and can be regarded as examples from which teachers and learners can gain information of practices that result in fruitful learning, because in a learning community grounded in constructivism, as this study is,

students mediate knowledge within a social context (Hirtle, 1996:91). In other words, even when life histories are written by individuals, there is still interaction between the student teacher and the mentor (MKO) in the construction of the history (when it is focused on professional development). I can only repeat Vygotsky's words that I quoted earlier: "[w]hen the school child [in this case the student teacher] solves a problem at home on the basis of a model that he has been shown in class, he continues to act in collaboration, though at the moment the [mentor] teacher is not standing near him (1987:216). Flowerdew and Miller (2008:205), on the other hand, used life histories of the role of English in their participants' existence. Simon-Maeda (2004:405), too, utilised life histories as open-ended and in-depth interviews with teachers of English as a foreign language.

A different narrative type that has been utilised by researchers is an extracted short story of an interview. A *short story of an interview* is a phrase coined by Barkhuizen (2016) to refer to an extract from an interview which is reported as a short story. Its significance in teacher education research can be linked to something Barkhuizen (2016:25) argues is imperative for instructors: to take cognisance of who they are professionally through reflective practice or teacher research, to become aware of and understand their professional identities. This has work-related consequences because the analysis of such teacher stories is a way of raising awareness of teachers' professional identities. An extracted short story of an interview can be used to extract a story that can inform a study about professional identity. Barkhuizen (2016:26) refers to what he calls a "second narrative, the short story". When he used it, he analysed it for content by introducing a method that required a more organised and detailed analysis of the told stories in terms of their different contexts. He suggests that it can be done in two ways: firstly, an analysis of the content or themes of a journal entry the teacher writes, and secondly, an analysis of an extracted short story of an interview. Barkhuizen (2016:25) asserts that narrative analysis can be utilised so that teachers can become more cognisant of who they are in their professional lives. Figure 4 is an example of as short story of an interview, as used by Barkhuizen in one of his studies (2016:37-8).

Sela: I had really really good associates you know
they really really looked after me
[name of high socioeconomic school] was I mean I live in [name of lower
socioeconomic suburb] you know
and [name of school] was quite it was just different
I mean just you know there were Islanders there
but very white sort of culture
it was actually quite funny
because I was in the kitchen
and I went to after the break and I went to take my cup you know return my
cup to put in the dishwasher
and I was just standing there
and everybody smiled alongside me and thanked me
they thanked me [laughs in voice]

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Gary: oh oh that's funny
S: [laughs]
G for doing the dishes
S: yes [laughs in voice]
oh yeah it was quite a joke you know it lasted for quite a while
G: yeah oh my goodness
S: yeah yeah
G: very different kind of school
S: yeah not a single not a single Pasifika teacher when I was there
G: mmmm
S: that's what I remember most about my practicum [laughs in voice]
it was memorable for the wrong reasons
G: exactly
S: yeah quite an eye opener

Figure 4:   An example of a short story from an interview

In her descriptions of different types of narratives and their uses in schools and teacher education practices, Conle (2006:224) states that "stories open possibilities to our imagination. The quality of those possibilities is vital to the quality of our future. A person without access to certain stories is a person without hope, without social vision."

In the context of this study, narratives written by participants could serve as platform where both I as the researcher and the participants could figure out what their hopes were in terms of their teacher training journey and what knowledge they could produce through their narratives as well as that of being future language teachers. This expected reflection would be regarded as one way

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of professional development. Thus, these narratives could "serve as vehicles for discussion of important issues and as means of acquisition of key concepts and practices" (Conle, 2006:224).

In conclusion, narratives such as essays, memoirs and journal writing in this study did not simply serve as experiences of student teachers regarding their language learning experiences, but they served as a vehicle through which language proficiency as well as general language teacher proficiency was to be developed. This ties in well with Vygotsky's socio-cognitive theory because, through narrative writing, new knowledge was constructed, and student teachers reached higher proficiency levels as they reflected on the work that they had constructed. Since the students were not on campus, their socio-cultural environment differed, which meant that they had to construct knowledge that was not the same for everyone. This may have decreased the possibilities of collaboration, but from a socio-cultural perspective, their learning became context specific.

2.4   ROLE OF WRITING IN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

This study worked on the premise that writing done over a period can bring about some sort of positive change. Similarly, many researchers believe that narrative writing is a contributing factor to an advancement of second language proficiency development (Ball, 2000, 2003; Busch, Jardine & Tjoutuku, 2006; Pfeiffer & Van der Walt, 2016; Pfeiffer & Sivasubramaniam, 2016). Taking inot account that writing is the vehicle this study used to determine the promotion or lack of language proficiency and language teacher proficiency, it is important to highlight what writing entail thus Hamp and Heasly (2006: 2) assert that "competent writing is frequently accepted as being the last language skill to be acquired for native speakers of the language as well as for foreign/second language learners." In this study, language proficiency was to be determined through writing proficiency, thus having student teachers writing their narratives was a way in which the promotion of language proficiency was determined.

Pfeiffer and Sivasubramaniam's (2016) study is one of many that made use of narrative writing. Their qualitative approach used journal entries as well as personal-response writing as a vehicle to improve writing ability in an academic setting. They found that a range of writing activities related to daily living could improve students' writing, and that students could at the same time discover their expressiveness, proving that positive results can be yielded through autobiographical writing

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(Pfeiffer & Sivasubramaniam, 2016:95). This means that writing enables new language cognition to be created as students learn from writing and from the responses of the MKO, their lecturer(s). Students' writing, when corrected, becomes new cognition as students engage and interact with the language and reflect on new ways of using the language.

It is important to remember that, by eliciting writing from student teachers, an element of artificiality is introduced. As stated by Pinheiro (2015:3), "the awareness of artificiality leads the reader to bypass questions regarding the truth of the story – questions of whether it actually happened – for the higher, immovable truths from which it derives". This means that, if a student teacher's language proficiency is lacking, he/she might not understand the instruction and may struggle to express his/her thoughts. This might lead to a breakdown in communication, which would make it difficult for the lecturer or mentor teacher to engage with the content of the narrative or to stage an intervention to improve language proficiency.

In their study, Pfeiffer and Van der Walt (2016:57) focused on expressive writing to cultivate higher education students' skills to write academic texts. Their study's aim was to find out whether there had been an overall improvement in writing proficiency and whether this proficiency showed in a specific piece of academic writing, especially from the summary written towards the end of the course. Findings from Pfeiffer and Van der Walt's (2016:72) study indicate that "the writing experience indicated in the students' responses, supports a social view of writing and requires that students use their own experiences to assign a personal view to their writing". They additionally found that "a focus on students' ability to write expressively on personal and community topics led to a gradual improvement in sentence and rhetorical structure which has supported their academic writing development" (Pfeiffer & Van der Walt, 2016:72). Furthermore, Pfeiffer and Van der Walt (2016:61) state that expressive writing can serve as a way to enhance the writing in which students engage, in terms of proficiency as well as accuracy. The same was intended for this study, since participants' writing would be done in the form of journals or diary entries. Although Pfeiffer and Van der Walt's (2016:57) study was done with first-year students in an engineering faculty, it was relevant to my students in the sense that they also got to enhance their language proficiency as well as accuracy, which would eventually lead to the good general communication skills that student teachers require.

Language proficiency is very important, particularly for language teachers. Many studies have looked at how narrative writing can improve the language proficiency of students (Oxford, 1996; Ball, 2000; Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Casanave, 2011; Pfeiffer & Van der Walt, 2016). Varghese, Motha, Park, Reeves and Trent (2016:548) state that "one significant proposition is that who teachers are and what they bring with them, individually and collectively, matters in what and how they teach and thus, to students, families, communities, and institutions". They further claim that these would all come out through the construction of knowledge during the writing of narratives. Similarly, Myers and Myers (1995:85) state that teachers create and improve their understanding, abilities and beliefs in the setting of how they utilise that new acquired information and innovative abilities and beliefs. This is part of improvement as far as student teachers' proficiency is concerned.

What this study aimed to figure out was in what way narrative inquiry would bring about language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency. It is not always so common for student teachers to take into account the fact that the ultimate goal of training is for them to eventually become proficient language teachers. This is affirmed by the following quote from an academic interviewed as part of Norris' (1999:6) research: "As soon as someone uses the term language teacher proficiency, I think tragedy, sadness, distance, cost, opportunity, lack of confidence, lack of awareness of low level of proficiency on the part of the teachers."

Language proficiency is a necessary trait each language teacher should possess. Since this study was interested in finding out whether narrative writing could improve student teachers' language proficiency, I find the above quote from Norris' (1996:6) study relevant to this study because many Namibian's teachers' language proficiency is inadequate for teaching (Haidula, 2013). It is further stated that it is important for teachers to attain proficiency because if teachers of languages do not have the necessary proficiency in order to carry out their duties well, then it is to be expected that anything related to the issue of teaching would be intolerable to other educational stakeholders (Haidula, 2013).

According to Pfeiffer and Van der Walt (2016:61), students have to acquire proficiency in the use of language (either home or second language) in addition to writing techniques, which in turn takes a conscious effort and practice, during the composing of academic texts. As mentioned in the discussion on this study's theoretical frameworks, continuous writing of narratives would be a good way to get student teachers to improve their language proficiency. This would not just be the case in terms of communication, but also in terms of producing accurate language in the target language which they are learning and which will eventually be the medium of instruction for their learners. Pfeiffer and Van der Walt (2016:65) believe that,

> in an effort to prompt students to engage at a more personal level with their writing tasks as well as to provide increased opportunities for writing, practice in the form of journal writing and personal writing seems like an obvious place to start developing writing proficiency.

When students are given the opportunity to engage in writing about their own life stories through biographical writing, a gradual improvement in their language proficiency should be observed by the mentor and hopefully by themselves. Thus, improvement in both language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency would enable a much easier engagement with writing, whether for pre-service or in-service teachers. Pre-service teachers have to acquire academic writing skills because they will engage in a variety of writing during the years that they practise as teachers. As a teacher, one is required to write letters, memos, emails, and so on, thus academic language development also benefits student teachers as they simultaneously acquire proficiency from the writing of narratives as well as from the academic writing courses.

Benefits of the usage of NI in language learning can be noticed in Oxford's (1996:581) study, which offers a view of the intellectual as well as emotional characteristics of linguistic education through students' reflective stories regarding their learning accounts. She further states that the technique involved in the writing of these language learning experiences avails students the chance to express their personal linguistic knowledge acquisition practices and communicate their attitudes towards the said capabilities (Oxford, 1996:581). It was anticipated that participants in this study would also find the continuous process of writing an opportunity to use their own linguistic knowledge acquired from and brought to teacher training. This is because personal

narrative writing is meant to engage students in writing practices that link up with their lives. One does not need to think of ideas to write because the writing is based on the one's real life, not something made up. As a result of this repeated writing, it was hoped that an element of reflection would also surface, just as Oxford's study aimed to do.

Using students' own language to write their narratives blends in with Vygotsky's social cognitive constructivism whereby students get to reflect on their work and in the process end up constructing new cognition. This is, however, to be done in a social context. As Oxford (1997:43) puts it: "Vygotsky's social-cognitive constructivism recognized that constructs have social origins; they are learned through interaction with others. An individual's cognitive system is a result of interaction in social groups and cannot be separated from social life."

With narrative writing in terms of this study, the writing participants engaged in was not meant to be corrected in a way that participants had to see the marks given, so knowing whether there was improvement or not was a challenge. What happened then was that I let my participants write their personal narratives over time, and then I gave them the final task, which was the narrative frame, to test their ability. What the literature says about improvements differs from one study to another: some show that students improve in their academic writing (i.e., they wrote a separate task), while others emphasise the identity formation above language proficiency.

2.5   LANGUAGE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

I believe that language teacher professional development can take place through narrative (writing) because "how we reflect on experience and how we make sense of our experience are often achieved through the stories we tell" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002:4). What this statement meant for my students was that the stories they would tell were part of a discourse from which they could learn something. In addition, "individuals get to look at themselves and their activities as socially and historically situated" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002:5). Furthermore, "when teachers reflect on, describe, and analyze the factors contributing to a classroom dilemma, they confront their emotions, their moral beliefs, and the consequences of their teaching practices on the students they teach" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002:5).

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Kanno and Stuart (2011) studied two beginner teachers to find out how their professional identities as teachers were constructed. Their study was similar to mine as it focused on teachers carrying out their practical teaching just as mine did when they went for SBS. From their findings, Kanno and Stuart (2011) argue that creating a teacher identity is vital to an L2 beginner teacher in terms of learning to impart new practices. Based on those findings, they request for a profound understanding of L2 teacher identity advancement because it is the central amount of the knowledge that a L2 teacher derives from teacher education (Kanno & Stuart, 2011:236-237).

Based on the point of L2 teacher education of students at UNAM, it was the hope of this study that, by the time they exited their training, they would have improved their language teacher proficiency, and that they would maintain that sense of identity during their transition from being student teachers, because as they became teachers, they would encounter challenges during the transformation period. Here, I present how language student teachers are expected to develop professionally through their studies. At UNAM, like at most universities, we have pre-service as well as in-service students majoring in languages. The B.Ed. honours course offered to undergraduates is done over a period of four years, whether it is for pre-service or in-service student teachers. For one to meet the requirements to study and specialise in language teaching (i.e., English and Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Silozi or Koekhoegowab, or English and Oshikwanyama or Oshindonga, and either Mathematics or Social Sciences), one must have a C or better symbols in two languages. An English language proficiency test is not required.

Language students, more specifically the English student teachers, have to do all English Language Education (ELE) modules, which have no prerequisites. In the fourth year, the exposure to English is limited because ELE lessons only commence mid-April, and after a few weeks, classes for the first semester end. Additionally, this module has four hours of theory and two of practice for the first seven weeks after SBS, after which there is only three hours of theory per week. This module aims to provide student teachers with knowledge as well as the methodology they will need to teach English at school level. This is done almost on a daily basis for pre-service students through direct instruction, which is intensive and ongoing, unlike for in-service students. In terms of professional growth, in-service students simply attend workshops which take place occasionally.

It is to be noted that the overall goal of professional development is to improve teacher knowledge and skills (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss & Shapley, 2007).

According to Nagamine (2007:2), a social constructivist approach (which framed my study) is based on the belief that teacher knowledge is a generally constructed entity, so teacher education needs to entail the process of negotiation among pre-service teachers, with lecturers as well as with mentor teachers. As student teachers enter into training to eventually become language teachers, how they identify themselves changes; thus, through professional development they should "[emerge] from a process of reshaping their existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002:2).

Coldron and Smith (1999:712) assert that teachers are engaged in constructing identities as teachers for the duration of their careers. I believe that this is the intent of HPC's student teachers as well, as they embark on the learning to acquire expertise of the subject matter that they would eventually teach. Furthermore, this was the case for this study in terms of the development of language proficiency as well as for language teacher proficiency, through the writing of language biographies as well as other types of narrative writing. I would like to relate my study to Mahboob's (2017) narration of his college days, which sets the pace here regarding language proficiency development, especially in the context of teacher training. He states that "our job was to learn about this language (English) – including the phonology of received pronunciation – with the eventual goal of teaching this to our students" (Mahboob, 2017:49). I hoped that my students would also be in a position such as Mahboob's to indicate what subject knowledge they had learned and the reasons why such learning had to take place. It was thus important to determine whether language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency improved through narrative writing, as it was the goal of this study.

Mahboob (2017:51) elaborates on the context given above by Norris (1999), by referring to the issue of the language teacher identity in terms of professional identity: being classified as English language teachers. He sees

> teacher identity (within a schooling context; so, not including other aspects of teachers' lives) as a combination of a least three aspects:

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1. Teachers' use of language, given the teacher choice of words which would classify him/her as being formal, distant or friendly and open, also depending on whom he/she is interacting with;

2. Teachers' classroom practices, which include both a linguistic dimension as well as other actions and this will impact teachers' self- and other-perceived identities; and lastly

3. Teachers' presentation of curriculum, which is construed through language, is presented and taught by teachers using language and different practices (Mahboob, 2017:51).

As a result, Mahboob (2017:51-52) draws on Jim Martin's "notion of "allocation" (which he defines as the sum of semantic resources that individuals are given or allocated based on who they are, where they grew up, etc.) as well as "affiliation" (which is defined as the groups individuals want to be associated with). In the context of language teacher identity, Mahboob (2017:51-51) refers to it as "beliefs and practices and the way that these are described and taught through teacher education programs; training that leads language teachers to develop explicit and declarative knowledge about language as well as about language teaching/learning". The significance of the two notions, allocation and affiliation, is that despite what linguistic resources student teachers are allocated initially, this should not hamper their academic growth in terms of language proficiency development as they interact with other students, lecturers and mentor teachers regarding the narrative writing that they may engage in. Student teachers would also wish to be affiliated or associated with teachers whose language proficiency as well as general communication skills are considered impeccable.

It seems that what Mahboob is implying is that the subject and content knowledge one possesses is what determines how one is identified, so it seems there quite a strong link between teacher professional development and identity formation. This is further emphasised by Barkhuizen (2016:27), who posits that

teachers, however, are not only cognitive beings, they are also social beings. Inside their classrooms they interact with their learners, they develop relationships with them, and together they construct sociocultural worlds in which they live their teacher and learner

lives together. Outside their classrooms teachers engage with other teachers, other learners, and with administrators in their schools. And even further afield, they are members of many other communities, personal and professional, local and global. Teachers perceived as thinking and social people, then, are not merely implementers of a syllabus or instructors of a linguistic skill like robots in a factory. Teachers being social beings are affiliated to others who are similar, for example in their teaching.

In terms of how identity is linked to how language proficiency develops, I refer to Barkhuizen's (2009:292) example that

> Sela, (the immigrant woman referred to in a previous section here) through claiming for herself an imagined teacher identity in her narrative (big and small) and within a language teacher education discourse, is undergoing teacher development which is impacted upon by her imagining a teaching community, including the immigrant community in which she lives and will work.

Her level of proficiency, although not initially acquired from an academic context, led to her being identified as a proficient language teacher. This was the ultimate goal of this study – an improvement in the language proficiency as well as growth in the professional development of the HPC student teachers, through which they could be comparable to Barkhuizen's research participant, Sela. To stress this point, Richards (2017:7) points out that, for teachers to be competent and proficient at what they do, they need to provide good linguistic representations, to keep on using the target language in the schoolroom, to provide accurate advice on learner language, as well as to offer feedback at a proper level of effort. Richards further deems the onset language proficiency level a teacher requires to be the ability to impart knowledge efficiently as well as to sustain language proficiency in his/her teaching career.

It is to be noted that teachers' identities are not simple and straightforward. For in-service teachers, taking part in teacher professional development can result in a struggle as how to position or identify themselves. Barkhuizen and Wette's (2008) study is an illustration of that struggle to position oneself during professional development. Their study demonstrated professional development with regard to Chinese language teachers in 2006. Using reflective frames,

Barkhuizen and Wette (2008:372) explored the understandings of those teachers in their employed settings, using four one-page reflective frames, which they disseminated at fixed intermissions for the duration of the two-week program. Barkhuizen and Wette found that teachers were conflicted on different aspects related to acquiring socially based as well as subject-centred goals with regard to excelling in continuous activities and passing examinations and progressing expansive proficiency, and their need to get lasting individual variations in pupils' consciousness about themselves as pupils as well as their styles of knowledge acquisition. They further found that the administered narrative frames led to teachers reflecting on their teaching practices and the content of the courses (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008:372). The process of reflection should signify growth and development, which was the aim of this study.

The issue of teacher development for foreign language teachers is also of concern to Ely (1994:336), who suggests that,

> while in teacher training, teachers learn clearly defined skills and behaviors appropriate to second language instruction. Teacher development is concerned with preparing teachers for the exigencies of unforeseen future teaching situations. It attempts to bring about pedagogical development through heightening teachers' ability to observe, reflect upon, and modify their own instructional patterns. Teacher development seeks organic, attitudinal, holistic development along lines suited to the individuals themselves. It attempts not to mold teachers, but rather to empower them, to show them how to consider alternative approaches and choose among them.

What this meant for my participants was that, through narrative writing, they should have demonstrated an ability to reflect upon the pedagogical content that they acquired as well as their teaching ability. The teaching experience and skills were gained through the internship (SBS) they went through during their training. The impact of this on their language teacher proficiency was expected to come out through narrative writing, just as it was demonstrated in Barkhuizen's (2009) participant Sela, who I referred to earlier. Through studying to be a language teacher, Sela

> occupies a discourse of language teacher education, currently being regarded as a pre-service teacher imagining her work in the years to come. Her desire for this investment is

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to yield an improved quality of life for herself and her family. Positioned, then, within the two dominant discourses of immigration and language teacher education, Sela makes identity claims about herself, who she is and who she wants to be (Barkhuizen, 2009:287-8).

When my participants (who were also pre-service teachers) wrote the essay, personal journal and narrative frame, it was hoped that they would also disclose what they yearned to be upon completion of their studies, and as they wrote, the aims of this study would be realised. Their language proficiency would be promoted and their subject knowledge with regard to the teaching of English would also be exposed through their repeated writing. In summing up, student teachers are "active agents, they use and produce knowledge, with their sense of knowing being both personally and socially imbued" Craig (2011:22).

2.5.1   Link between narrative and professional writing

Teachers deal with a lot of writing at school, for instance invitation letters to parents, so every teacher's language proficiency needs to be adequate. At UNAM, English for Teachers is a core module which is offered to all education student teachers in the first and second semesters of the second year. This module educates student teachers on basic aspects of English language like form-filling, letter writing, invitations and diary writing. These types of writing activities prepare students for professional communication once they complete their teacher training, although as Harris (2011:14) argues,

> teachers do not simply need to possess pedagogical knowledge of English but they need to be familiar with forms and uses of it too. Even though the Ministry of Education (MoE) has managed to increase the number of trained teachers to 80%, 69% of college students (student teachers) do not have adequate English language proficiency to understand their study courses properly. It is against this background that English language proficiency needs to be improved.

Furthermore, Harris (2011:18) states that the National Institute for Educational Development indicates that it is a fact known by the government that inadequate English language proficiency

amid instructors leads to insufficient English language proficiency among learners. She further argues that it is necessary to develop professional written communication by improving teachers' language proficiency in general (Harris, 2011:18).

It seems as if teachers themselves feel the need to improve their language proficiency. In Barkhuizen and Wette's (2008:372) study, a large number of teachers participated in a summer educator programme. Findings from the written frames that teachers wrote as part of their programme showed that these teachers had "a preference for instruction that also developed communicative competence, particularly in oral interaction, as well as contributing to students' general academic and personal development" (Wette & Barkhuizen, 2009:208).

Harbon (2016:180) and a colleague, on the other hand, guided language teachers to investigate, reflect on and write their personal and professional narratives. They claim that the process of guided writing aims to assist the writers themselves, then the readers, to acknowledge personal and professional life and work narratives in helping to create who they are now and why they teach the way they do. Furthermore, they stress that those narratives have become points of departure for both pre- and in-service language teachers to start their own identity exploration.

In summing up, narrative writing, which this study hoped to be the vehicle through which language student teachers could improve their language proficiency, can highly benefit students' professional writing because their level of communication will also improve.

2.5.2 The role of personal and biographical writing in the professional development and self-awareness of language teachers

According to Benson (2005:4), (auto)biographical researchers who fall within the narrative inquiry umbrella tend to be concerned with outcomes which are both language-related as well as those are not as far as learning is concerned. These researchers are also interested in how learners differ from one another during the language learning process. Based on this claim, one can see how Vygotsky's ZPD is significant regarding the learning of a language, because in the case of HPC student teachers, the linguistic part would be the enhanced language proficiency and language teacher proficiency. Consequently, narrative inquiry could lead teachers to self-awareness, which

might lead to professional development through their engagement in narrative writing. Self-awareness goes hand in hand with identity. A good example of self-awareness is illustrated in Golombek and Johnson's (2004:310) study, who examined in what way narrative inquiry acted as a socially established tool that aided teachers' specialised progress. They evaluated written narratives in English as a second/foreign language established in diverse instructional backgrounds. Self-awareness for these teachers came to the fore because the connection between emotion and cognition led the teachers to think deeply about what they needed to express through their linguistic capabilities. It was found that, through narrative inquiry, these educators relied on different resources, such as individually owned journals, other colleagues as well as abstract information that allowed them to rethink and relearn fresh experiences of themselves as educators as well as their instructional events (Golombek & Johnson, 2004:310).

Several authors have referred to the issue of identity (Benson, 2017; Donato, 2017; Farrell, 2017). Shulman (1987:19) defines reflection as a process through which the teacher reproduces the teaching and learning that has occurred, and restructures, rebuilds and/or recalls the events, the emotions, as well as the accomplishments experienced during the teaching career. Reflection is an aspect that was expected to come out from the participants' biographical writing, in rating their English learning and teaching competence.

Although my research focused on students in their final year of study, biographical writing can be beneficial at any stage. Busch (2016) states that biographical methods can be specifically interesting as they emphasise the perspective of the experience and speaking subject. Furthermore, several researchers, such as Busch et al. (2006), Ball (2003) and Mendelowitz (2005), state that the use of biographic approaches in educator instruction as well as preparation for academic writing is increasing. Additionally, Benson (2005:14) points out that a much broader range of learners benefit from biographical research because it unlocks the chance of exploring their language practices. Therefore, it is imperative to consider Busch et al.'s (2006:13) statement that "writing stories about their own first encounters with written language allowed students to appreciate first steps in literacy from the learner's perspective, i.e. another perspective than their present as teachers or teacher trainers".

Busch et al. (2006:13) further claim that, when teachers get to write their own language autobiographies, they tend to acquire a profound understanding of general learning as well as language learning, taking into account theories that they have learned during their training. In this regard, my collection of data towards the end of the student teachers' training seemed appropriate, because of the range of modules that they had completed up to that point. The importance of student teacher narratives is the degree to which they were able to reflect on experience and use meta-cognitive skills to question and analyse those experiences.

Pavlenko (2007:165) states that there are various contributions with regard to autobiographic narratives and that, as I made reference to earlier, they "offer awareness into people's private worlds, inaccessible to experimental methodologies, and thus offer the insider's view of the practices of language learning, attrition, and use".

I agree with what Spencer (2009:46) posits, that the keeping of personal language learning diaries and journals offers material that feeds into the reflective process either in the creation of narratives or in supporting the emerging themes. Furthermore, Spencer states that these insights are invaluable material for questioning and informing beliefs about teaching and learning, thus providing a means for teacher development, particularly for isolated teachers. Similarly, Casanave (2011:187-8) adds that "journals can provide research with something extra – a chance to spin wheels; to express emotion; to dialogue with and reflect on oneself; to discover; to reflect on processes, on people, and readings; and to build a chronological and reflective archive". She further states that "journals written in the L2 on any topic, from the earliest proficiency stages, can help researchers to track students' language and writing development over time" (Casanave, 2011:188). This process of reflection is supposed to grant student teachers a chance to assess what they learn through writing, thus leading to a process of professional development in their teaching careers. Though written narratives are assessed, it is not a necessity to have students to see the grades when the assessments are done because this may discourage them from further engaging in the exercise.

A recent study by Ankiah-Gangadeen and Samuel (2014:58-59) aimed to increase understanding of the manner in which the biographical understandings of teachers impacted on how they taught English as well as to pinpoint the key features which formed their education. Some of the aspects

this current study aimed to investigate through personal journals (see Addendum B) were how students found the English module and how this course helped them to teach, especially during SBS. Hence, Ankiah-Ganagdeen and Samuel's understanding with regard to biographical or narrative information teachers produce about their education was significant to this study. It was hoped that participants would identify the knowledge that they had acquired during their training as well from the practice they engaged in during SBS. Since this study worked on the premise that constructing learning and knowledge is a socially oriented activity, it was hoped that other role players' roles in the education of the student teachers would be acknowledged, especially the ways that such role players benefitted and contributed to a positive change in the participants. Additionally, Aniah-Gangadeen and Samuel's biographic study aimed at growth in terms of English language teachers, while this study aimed at discovering whether language biographies could improve my student teachers' language proficiency.

Ball (2003:200), who employed a similar approach of joint autobiographical writing in teacher training courses in two continents, sums it up by stating that "this autobiographical activity served as a readiness exercise that prepared teachers to consider new and different perspectives, attitudes, and visions for language and literacy, inclusion, and teaching practices in the classrooms". Similarly, Busch et al. (2006:15-16) state that "biographies and autobiographies constitute the life history genre which has developed in close connection with contextually determined concepts of the self and the way the self is seen in relation to the collective". Both researchers' studies informed my study as they both utilised biographical writing which involved teachers taking stock of their lives with regard to learning and teaching a language. Another important aspect to note is the issue of reflection, which was also one of the aspects this current study aimed to investigate.

Pavlenko (2003:254) also made use of autobiographies in which pre-service teachers imagined their linguistic and professional memberships by using a data collection method which had proved to be fruitful in previous teacher education research. Participants in the study were required to write a linguistic autobiography reflecting their current understanding of L2 teaching and learning. Roberts (2002:1), on the other hand, states that biographical research seeks to understand the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important, and how to provide interpretations of their accounts of their past, present and future. Thus, here I

refer to recent studies which have focused on the concept of "possible selves" in terms of language teacher development (Kubanyiova, 2007, 2009; Hiver, 2013). This is because such studies make reference to how biographical research exposes teachers' language professional development in terms of how they regard themselves in different ways. Kubanyiova (2017:101) borrowed and adapted the concept of possible selves which was introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986) "as a heuristic that bridges human cognition, motivation, and action". Kubanyiova has worked with three distinctive facets of possible language teacher selves:

- ideal language teacher selves, that is, language teachers' images of who they desire to become;
- ought-to-be language teacher selves, referring to teachers' visual representations of the language educator they feel they are expected to become in and by their particular settings; and
- feared language teacher selves, representing visions of who teachers could become if their desired or ought-to images are not lived up to (Kubanyiova, 2017:102-3).

It was expected that participants of this study would position themselves through their learning according to the possible selves they wish to be identified with, or that the writing that they were to produce would reveal different facets of possible selves as referred to by Kubanyiova.

Based on the concept of possible selves, Hiver (2013:210) also investigated the roles that potential language teacher selves played in the teacher progress selections of in-service Korean English teachers. His findings highlighted definite and likely language teachers' selves, and that lack of self-efficacy regarding language was comparable to lack of self-efficacy in terms of the teaching which was required to facilitate the process of teacher development for the participants. According to Hiver (2013:221), two significant motivational outlines of the participants' possible language teacher selves materialised: teachers were directed by a fundamental necessity either to mend observed insufficiencies of the self, or to boost the self. A third motivation regarding following normative requirements was found to be the least important in motivating choices for teacher development (Hiver, 2013:221). Furthermore, Hiver (2013:215) points out that the findings illustrate that, for each type of possible language teacher self, an essential role is played in

introducing and supporting in-service Korean public school English teachers' enthusiasm for continuing teacher development.

In terms of HPC student teachers, it was expected that the issue of possible selves would also come to the fore during their tenure as pre-service as well as in-service teachers. These student teachers engaged in teaching internships – SBS and/or TP. These internships last for four months in their final year, a perfect time for them to strive for self-efficacy because these studies could be considered as a form of professional development programme. During their internships, student teachers encounter in-service teachers who might inspire them to improve their language teacher proficiency. This can happen while novice teachers are observing experienced teachers, who may be their support or mentor teachers. When this happens, student teachers' self-efficacy will also emerge. As far as his study is concerned, Hiver (2013:216) states that "every participant in my study had a clearly elaborated ideal language teacher self, composed primarily of the positive future self-images they possessed. These included positive future self-images in two categories: self as expert language user, and self as expert teacher." The positive future self-images that Hiver refers to are the aspects that this study investigated. Given that the context in which the student teachers experienced the language teacher knowledge interactions that their support or mentor teachers dealt with in the classroom, it was hoped that student teachers themselves would be motivated by their need to decrease the differences between their present low proficiency selves and the future, ideal, desired selves of proficient English users. The above is consistent with the conclusion of Busch (2004:16), which shows that,

> in their respective conclusions both authors (Tjiotuku and Jardine) agree that writing language biographies has not only made them more aware of their proper language practices, but that they also see fields of application of the biographical approach in their professional life as educators.

Similarly, when Tsui (2007:657-8) explored the complex processes of teacher identity formation through a narrative inquiry of an EFL instructor, he found that teachers' identity formation is highly complex. This can be so because language student teachers are "constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are, in other words, engaged in identity construction" (Norton, 1997:410).

In this study, fairly advanced language student teachers who were users of English, were trying to get rid of problematic areas in their writing, and personal as well as biographical writing were vehicles through which the improvement could be achieved. Given that context, Richards (2017:142) asks this question "Where am I in my professional development?", and answers that "teachers have an 'idea' of what excellence in teaching means and what their imagined self as a mature fully developed teacher would look like". This is quite an important fact because, for a teacher to grow professionally, he/she needs to know where he/she wants to be in terms of his/her teaching. In addition, he/she needs to possess insightful subject knowledge. For me, that is what self-awareness is about – knowing what one's strengths are as a language teacher as well as one's weaknesses. This is affirmed by Richards (2017:143), who states that "teacher learning involves not only discovering more about the skills and knowledge of language teaching but also what it means to be a language teacher". Narratives thus play a role in such a way that teachers discover the learned skills and knowledge when they write about these issues, because through this process, some introspection takes place. This allows them to learn about their strengths as well as their weaknesses with regard to their positions as teachers. As the student teachers engaged in writing of narratives, it was hoped that they would become aware of an improvement in their proficiency regarding teaching the content or simply in their way of communication. Thus, I concur with Golombek and Johnson's (2011:491) statement that "narrative as externalization functions as a means of enabling teachers to disclose their understandings and feelings by reacting and giving voice, oral or written, to what they perceive, creating opportunities for introspection, explanation, and sense-making".

Additionally, Richards (2017:142) has identified two components of development that lead to a teacher's sense of professional identity: Language proficiency, which has to do with possessing an ability more specifically in spoken English, serves an indicator of their professional identity as English teachers and several teachers' priority is a need to improve their language. Another component is the immense content knowledge, which teachers acquire during professional training, some of which they need to master.

Language student teachers are guided to the next level of proficiency by MKOs – language lecturers, peers who are proficient and mentor teachers who are proficient. However, Pavlenko

(2003:257) states that "one powerful discourse that informs pre-service and in-service teachers' views of themselves and of their students is that of standard language and native speakerness". She further claims that, with regard to English education, one is only considered to speak proper English when it resembles that of native speakers of English, who are considered to be the only genuine speakers of English (Pavlenko, 2003:257). For language students, this means that they have to try to perfect their English in terms of language teacher proficiency as well as in terms of general language proficiency so that they bring their English on par with what is assumed as Standard English. It was the hope of this study that participants would also go through this process.

In the same light, language teachers are required to develop a great level of language consciousness, language learning consciousness, and intercultural capabilities to identify their pupils' strong points and flaws during the process of learning a language, so they need to be inspired in order for them to develop the required abilities (Kŏnig, Lammerding, Nold, Rohde, Strauß & Tachtsoglou, and 2016:322). Apart from that, I felt that the above could be achieved through the writing of narratives because, as my student teachers engaged in the writing of narratives, they would become aware of their own language proficiency levels.

Richards (2017), Higgins (1996) and Hendrix and Hirt (2009) all refer to identity formation, and in this case of this study, this was important because the awareness that would lead the participants to identity formation and possible selves was socially constructed through the writing of narratives. Therefore, it is important to take note of Richard's claim that teacher identity is something that is both individual and social in nature. It reflects who the teacher is, the teacher's view of the self and how he/she is positioned in relation to other people. It is not a fixed or static orientation, since it is also shaped by the social context, by those he/she interacts with and the activities in which he/she is taking part. Having the rare opportunity to express and transform one's own feelings through a language learning history is profoundly empowering from a constructivist viewpoint, in which individuals construct their personal sense (Richards, 2017:139).

In summing up, it is important to note that "the relationship between language and identity is not only abstract and theoretical but it has important consequences for positive and productive language learning and teaching" (Norton, 1997:413-414), so self-awareness in terms of language learning can be an opportune time for student teachers to develop professionally.

2.6   CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I demonstrated how the three circles shown in Figure 2 (narrative inquiry, language proficiency and language teacher proficiency) are linked. Vygotsky's socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theory were the lenses through which I looked at my research participants' language development, whereas Archer's structure and agency framework was used to look at their English language teacher professional development. The theory of Narrative Inquiry informed the development of tools through which teacher development (or lack of it) could be tracked and made visible. As student teachers were expected to grow from their initial level to the ZPD, they were expected to experience transformation through investing in their own language learning, because they were availed an opportunity to do so, via the writing of narratives that were formed in a specific socio-cultural context.

Many studies referred to in this chapter employed narrative inquiry, and many researchers have found that narratives are a vehicle through which teachers/educators can tell their stories, big or small. The term narrative is an encompassing one in terms of its use in this study. It is seen as an approach that allows for the possibility to improve language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency development. Furthermore, language teaching and learning are considered to be socially constructed, and in this study, the student teachers engaged with each other, with me as well as with the text in order to improve and to develop in terms of language professionalism or language teacher proficiency. Therefore, in the process of figuring out who the student is in his/her role as a teacher, many roles can come to the fore in terms of possible selves as well as in the process of developing an identity.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research approach, design, data collection methods as well as the theoretical framework used to collect data for this study. It also describes the data collection instruments and selection of participants, as well as data analysis methods. The objective of this study was to determine the language proficiency development as well as professional development of HPC student teachers over a period of time through narrative writing.

The central question of this study was: "How effective are language biographies and other narrative writing in promoting the language proficiency and language teaching proficiency of student teachers in the B.Ed. programme at HPC?" It was also guided by the following subsidiary questions:

1. What kind of identities do student teachers construct as far as their language teaching proficiency is concerned?
2. What insights into teaching development do student teachers construct as far as continued development of language proficiency is concerned?

3.2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/PARADIGM

This section discusses the theoretical framework which guided the research methodology of this study. As discussed in Chapter 2, the theoretical framework that was used for this study was Vygotsky's socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theory. According to this socio-cognitive theory, learners construct knowledge in a group context (for example in the classroom), with the guidance of an MKO (who can be a teacher or the peers).

Every study is conducted in terms of a particular worldview. In this case, Vygotsky's socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theory was the lens through which this study was conducted. This was based on the fact that as people, we observe and construct our own knowledge and understanding of the world through our experiences with other people. This reflection and people's experiences

lead us to understand what we learn. This study was informed by socio-cognitive and socio-cultural theory, (sometimes referred to as social constructivism) because it intended to determine whether language interaction in the form of biographies (essays), personal journal writing as well as writing frames could promote language and language teacher proficiencies. Additionally, this theory proposes that one learns through lived practices, and Mayaba (2015:3) states that this theory advocates that learning takes place when learners engage actively in the process of learning. Similarly, Ismat (1998:2) asserts that "constructivism is an epistemology, a learning or meaning making theory that offers an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn". Based on Ismat's explanation of what constructivism is, my research participants' narrative writing was meant to inform me on whether what they wrote about could actually lead them to acquire proficiency in English as well as the knowledge that they required for teaching purposes. Furthermore, through their writing, the student teachers were expected to reflect on their own language learning and be able to identify themselves accordingly in terms of professional development.

As pre-service teachers who were in their final year of teacher training and had gone through apprenticeship through SBS, the participants had had quite some time to acquire content as well as knowledge on English through their different capabilities as well as the guidance of their teachers/lecturers. Using this theory served as a yardstick to determine whether student teachers could become more proficient through their own writing. Thus, in terms of the aims of this study, I agree with Golombek and Johnson's (2004:309-310) claim that, from a sociocultural viewpoint, transformation of knowledge leads to expansion of advanced intellectual progressions – in this case, improved language and language teacher proficiencies.

According to Oxford (1997:43), Vygotsky introduced the concept of the ZPD, the realm of potential learning that each learner could reach within a given developmental span under optimal circumstances and with the best possible support from the teacher and the environment. On the other hand, with reference to student teachers in particular, Mushaandja-Mufeti (2017:29) states that in terms of her study, the student teachers were the ones to construct understanding based on the learning environment provided by their lecturers through the specific instructional strategies used. Similar to Mushaandja-Mufeti's participants, my research participants constructed their own

knowledge through a social interaction process, which Vygotsky terms scaffolding. The process of narrative writing took place in such a way that student teachers got feedback on what they wrote, which served as interaction for optimal learning to take place. Since people have different ability levels, the cases in this study were classified using pre-determined criteria to identify those who were good, average and poor.

The participants of this study constructed narratives to be read by somebody else, which is a social activity by means of which meaning is co-constructed with the reader (Given, 2008:116). When analysing the students' writing, a constructivist view of learning helped to analyse how the student teachers construct their experiences of teaching and learning English – in Roberts's (2002:8) words, how their reality is formed through all the different types of narratives student teachers wrote.

3.3   RESEARCH APPROACH

Different approaches are used in carrying out research, depending on the type of questions the researcher has and the type of data he/she wishes to generate. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Johnson & Christensen, 2012) are the common approaches researchers make use of.

A qualitative approach offers in-depth, subjective information that depends on the experience and understanding of the researcher as well as the participants, as opposed to a quantitative approach, which depends mainly on numerical data that is regarded as more objective. However, a qualitative approach poses some disadvantages when used; for instance, collected data usually cannot be generalised and findings are only limited to a specific group of people (Daniel, 2016:92-93). However, for this study, a qualitative approach was suitable because I needed to collect data from participants in their natural settings, concerning their own learning processes. Additionally, student teachers' thoughts and behaviour were viewed in a social context. Regarding generalisability, it could not be assumed that the findings could be generalised to the population, namely the rest of the fourth-year English class. Thus, these participants did not serve as a representative sample of the population because each student teacher was an individual with different experiences even though they received the same input from training. The knowledge each participant would create

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would be based on his/her prior knowledge of English and the interaction of pedagogical subject content in classroom contexts, so all of this would affect each participant's language proficiency as well as professional growth.

Williams (2007:67) asserts that qualitative research is an approach that involves an understanding of rich information as it focuses on the practice of recounting, clarifying and deducing collected data. When student teachers wrote different types of narratives on their journeys of language learning and their daily experiences of English learning, they had to clarify as well as recount lived lives and experiences in the personal journals they kept as well as in the essays they first wrote. They way these narratives were written determined whether the continuous writing actually promoted language and language teacher proficiency. Language proficiency (as explained in 1.5 and 2.4) refers to the knowledge of the language, whereas language teacher proficiency is cognition, the knowledge about the language the teacher needs in order to teach the target language, in this case English. The whole process of narrative writing was like a tutorial one because, as student teachers wrote their narratives, I had to assess them and give feedback, and then student teachers got their personal journals back and the process of journal writing went on. A brief explanation of a term (journaling) that can be used to encompass journal writing is given here: Journaling is considered as a practice to improve writing, as Ngoh (2002:27) states that journaling provides students with good opportunities to individually advance their writing skills through the documentation of their thoughts as well as their feelings. Thus, making use of a qualitative approach would benefit this study because Creswell (2013:19) affirms that a qualitative approach focuses on exploring problems to get a deep understanding. This deep understanding which Creswell refers to can be derived from the different narratives the learners engaged in.

There is another reason why I deemed it necessary to utilise this approach. A qualitative approach was suitable for this study because, as Isaacs (2014:318) claims, "the qualitative method is aimed at understanding where, how and under what circumstances human behavior comes into being and what historical circumstances and movements they are a part of". This was particularly useful for this study as the process of writing language biographies and personal journal involved student teachers tapping into their historical journeys of learning languages, particularly English.

The qualitative approach is regarded as a way in which a researcher can discover developments in thought and views which help to dive deep into the phenomena being investigated (DeFranzo, 2011). This was particularly relevant for my study because one of the aims of this study was to understand the identities student teachers constructed regarding their language as well as their language teaching proficiencies.

This study used a qualitative approach to gather information which answered the research questions. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) state that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings and attempt to make sense of, or infer, occurrences in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Additionally, Creswell (2009:37) claims that qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems in inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Having taken all the above in consideration, I opted for a qualitative approach to determine whether language biographies and other narrative writing could improve the language as well as the language teacher proficiency of fourth-year ELE student teachers at HPC. Furthermore, this approach was suitable for this study because the process was interactive, as student teachers had to inform me about their lives through their writing. A qualitative approach allowed me that opportunity. Additionally, the phenomenon under scrutiny could be better understood in context, thus student teachers were able to offer their perspectives in words as they continuously wrote.

To conclude, Yin (2011:7-8) considers the qualitative approach to be naturalistic because conditions through which qualitative research takes place are real-world conditions, tackling issues that may explain human behaviour. I agree with his definition because the student teachers' perceptions of themselves were studied in their natural setting, namely their place of learning, HPC.

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

This study was based on two research designs, namely case study and narrative inquiry. Maxwell (2008:214) claims that research designs are considered differently by people who make use of them. According to him, some designs are constant, typical activities of research conditions and

methods that have their own consistency as well as reason. Other designs are considered as "linear, because of the one-directional sequences of steps that represent what is seen as the optimal order for conceptualizing or conducting the different components or activities of a study" (Maxwell, 2008:214). Below, case study design is discussed first, followed by narrative inquiry.

3.4.1   Case study design

A case study design was opted for in this study because the student teachers who took part in this study were my cases. Having them as my cases enabled me to study them in depth because they were few in number, and with its descriptive-interpretive qualities (Given, 2008:69), a case study design permitted me to study how the narrative writings student teachers engaged in led to the promotion of language and language teacher proficiencies. I also deemed it a suitable design to use in my study because case studies provide an opportunity to carry out a study in depth, which can capture complexities, relationships and processes (Anyolo, 2016:69). Furthermore, this design enabled me to study individual student teachers' proficiencies separately, to avoid generalising the findings. Additionally, a case study design made it possible to provide a detailed account of what student teachers wrote from their respective instruments.

Although there are disadvantages to using case study designs due to the fact that one cannot make generalisations based on the findings, as I have mentioned before, I benefited from case studies because they encourage the use of multiple methods of collecting data, and of multiple data sources. For this study, an essay, personal journals as well as writing frames were used to collect data. The intention to collect data using different instruments was necessitated by the fact that the process needed to be an individually written exercise, which happened as a social interaction between the student teachers as well as the mentor or other peers. The usage of multiple instruments increases the reliability of a study's findings. According to Harrison, Birks, Franklin and Mills (2017:1), case study research has grown in reputation as an effective design to investigate and understand complex issues in real-world settings in a number of disciplines, mostly the social sciences, education, business, law and health, to address a wide range of research questions.

A rich and in-depth description of the research participants' perspectives regarding their language and language teacher proficiencies was done through the case study design, thus the decision to

make use of it. Furthermore, case study research involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting (Yin, 2009). According to Creswell (2003:15), a case study involves a researcher exploring a programme, an activity, an event or individuals in depth. In the case of this study, a judgement (exploring a programme or activity) was made as to the promotion of language and language teacher proficiencies via narrative writing.

According to Anyolo (2016:69), a case study begins with the researcher's statement of interest. The researcher's statement of interest in a study is normally the researcher's own experiences and the literature review about the phenomenon under study. This study's research questions required an extensive and in-depth description of a social phenomenon (Yin, 2014:4). It was for that reason that I opted for a case study design. Only fourth-year B.Ed. students who planned on becoming English language teachers formed the case for this study.

3.4.2   Narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry as a theoretical point of departure led to the use of narrative strategies to structure the data collection process. According to Wang & Geale (2015:195) narrative inquiry amplifies voices that may have otherwise remained silent as it makes use of story-telling as a way of communicating the participants' realities to a larger audience. This is a means to an end as shared stories and experiences of pre-service teachers were told through narratives, thus the choice of this particular theoretical framework and the data collection methods emanating from it. In this chapter the term 'narrative inquiry' is used to refer to data collection instruments.

In the past few decades, narrative inquiry has become a method that researchers use to study teachers' language learning, mostly in their professional lives, as well as their professional development journeys (Coffey & Street, 2008). Additionally, many researchers have referred to how narrative inquiry is utilised to study teachers' lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Ball, 2000; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Tsui & Tollefson, 2007; Benson, 2014; Barkhuizen, 2016).

According to Barkhuizen and Wette (2008:373), narrative inquiry is an appropriate way of investigating teachers' teaching practices as well as circumstances. This is because in educational settings, inquiry into language learning and teaching often leads to how teachers identify

themselves, and finding out about the types of identities these pre-service teachers constructed (Benson, 2014:164) about their teacher and language proficiency was one of the aims of this study. This design was used because, as student teachers were engaged in narrative writing, especially the personal journals which were written for eight weeks, their ways of knowing expanded because of the prolonged personal engagement with the texts they produced. A written text is different from an oral one because it is kept for a long time and student teachers could read it over and over. Written feedback given on the narrative could be referred to as much as the student teacher needed to.

Barkhuizen (2013:1) asserts that narrative research in language teaching and learning is concerned with the stories teachers and learners tell about their lived and imagined experiences in terms of their professional growth and their practices, and learners about their experiences of learning and using languages. In terms of narrative writing, I derived the types of identities that student teachers created about their own learning from the texts they wrote, thus concurring with Barkhuizen's referral to teachers' professional practices.

Johnson and Golombek (2002:5) state that narrative inquiry allows individuals to look at themselves and their activities as socially and historically situated. Golombek and Johnson (2004:310), who used narrative inquiry to study teachers' written narratives, state that,

> ultimately, we are interested in the extent to which narrative inquiry functions as a culturally developed tool that mediates teacher development. Our specific focus is on how engaging in the activity of narrative inquiry enables teachers to externalize their current understandings, and then reinternalize and recontextualize those understandings so that they take on personal meaning and interact with prior perspectives to restructure new understandings and new ways of engaging in the activity of teaching.

The choice to use narrative inquiry for this study fits well with Golombek and Johnson's quote because, although student teachers only wrote narratives, through these narratives they were able to express their understandings of their language learning based on what they were and had learned in their current course/module. It also served as a way of reflecting on whether they were actually skilled and knowledgeable about a language they were going to teach upon the completion of their

studies. The participants were also able to get to the core of their own experience (their language teacher proficiency as well as how they perceived themselves as student and future teachers) via the usage of narrative inquiry. As a result, the impact of those specific features of their lives were studied through the telling of those experiences (Reid, 2017:37).

In summing up, Craig (2011:19) posits that narrative inquiry makes important contributions to the emergence of the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices genre of research and that it requires further emphasis. Therefore, having a thorough understanding of the two research designs (case study and narrative inquiry) enabled me as a researcher to make sure that I elicit appropriate data from the research participants.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

This section refers to the steps taken in conducting this research. Anyolo (2016:70) offers an illustration of the steps (see Figure 4 below) one has to take during the data collection stage.
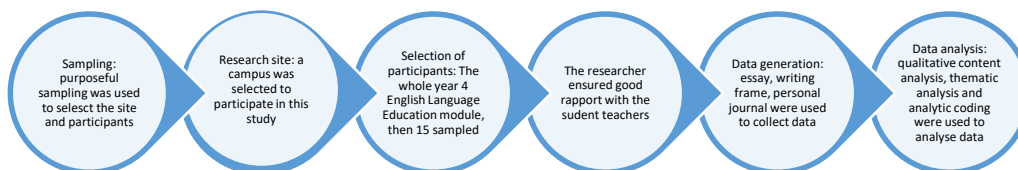
Figure 5:   Data collection process (adapted from Anyolo, 2016)

The steps in the above figure indicate how the research was carried out as far as the data collection was concerned. They are explained further in the sections below.

3.4.3   Selection of research site

According to Given (2008:787), the research setting can be seen as the physical, social and cultural site in which the researcher conducts the study. The research site for this study was HPC, a satellite

campus of UNAM. This campus caters for student teachers in the Faculty of Education specialising in the following phases: junior primary, senior primary and secondary. The phase identified for this study was the senior primary phase since, for this phase, the writing of essays and journals is something that student teachers will actually teach the learners who they are going to teach, so in a way, the participants would be practising as well as gaining skills and knowledge which they would utilise in their teaching careers.

HPC was purposively selected as a research site because of its convenience, meaning that as a researcher, I could conduct my research and simultaneously continue with my daily responsibility of lecturing. HPC was further selected on the basis that it hosts the biggest number of language student teachers, who were my research participants.

3.4.4   Research participants

Creswell (2013:626) defines purposeful sampling as a qualitative sampling procedure which involves the researcher intentionally selecting individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. All the fourth-year students of the ELE module were selected for this study. These student teachers specialised either in English and Oshikwanyama, English and Oshindonga, or English and Social Science.

These student teachers were chosen on the basis of their experience, seeing that they were in their final year and they had been doing prerequisites of this module for the past three years before doing the final module in their fourth year.

3.4.5   Sampling

Kalu and Bwalya (2017:47) state that "sampling in qualitative research plays a vital role, as the essence of most qualitative researches is to study the phenomenon in its natural setting". On the other hand, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:229) state that, when deciding the sample of the study, the researcher has to decide the groups for which the research questions are appropriate, the contexts which are important for the research, the time periods that will be needed, and the possible artefacts of interest to the investigator.

Two types of sampling were used in this study. Those were purposeful sampling and criterion sampling. The initial sample, which was the whole class (made up of 174 students, specialising in languages), was selected using purposive sampling and the 20 student teachers who formed the case where selected using predetermined criteria. As Miles and Huberman (1994:28) put it, criterion sampling refers to all those who meet some stated criteria for membership of the group or class under study.

All the fourth-year students of 2019 who were doing their B.Ed. honours degree at HPC, specialising in languages, were seen as potential participants because they were the student teachers who had the relevant knowledge needed for this study. A relatively small group of participants eventually volunteered to participate, consisting of 20 student teachers, which enabled me to study the phenomenon at hand. These student teachers signed consent letters availed to them to indicate that they were interested in participating in my study. Information letters about the study were also given to the student teachers to keep and to refer to when they needed more information about the study.

Due to the fact that student teachers go for SBS at the beginning of their fourth year, they were only accessible through WhatsApp and email as they were geographically dispersed. Thus, at the beginning of 2019, a message was sent out to all the potential ELE 4 student teachers informing them about this study. They were provided with an information letter about the study and a consent letter that they needed to sign should they be interested in partaking in the study. A language biography (Addendum A) which required students to write a narrative (essay) on how and where they had learned English was then distributed to the student teachers who showed interest in taking part in the study. Student teachers had to write the essay and send it to the researcher via email, and the written essays were transferred to a file to which only the researcher had access. The essays were stored anonymously, but the researcher could identify who student teachers who took part in the study were because further writing was needed from the student teachers, in the form of personal journal writing as well as writing frames. Pseudonyms were then given to all the participants who took part by submitting their essays.

These essays served as a baseline test. The researcher then studied the essays with the assistance of a colleague. For the sake of objectivity, the colleague used a similar rubric (see Addendum H)

to the one used by the researcher to mark the written essays and eventually to assist with the identification and to ensure the reliability of the selections made by the researcher. All 20 student teachers who wrote the essay became the research participants.

3.4.6 Data collection instruments

Multiple written sources of data were used in this study. Narrative data was collected using the following instruments: language biographies (essay) (see Addendum A), narratives/writing frames (see Addendum C) as well as personal journals with the aim to develop student teachers' language proficiency as well as their language teaching proficiency (see Addendum D). The choice for the narratives stemmed from Barkhuizen's (2013:64) belief that "it is through narrative that we make sense of our own and others' experiences".

3.4.6.1 *Essays/language biographies*

Essays and language biographies are tools that have found their place in language teaching, and they are being used as research instruments. Furthermore, an essay is a type of narrative that many researchers have used in their studies (Nekvapil, 2003; Franceschini, 2004). In this study, student teachers received the language biography in the form of an essay (also see Addendum A).

Instructions

Read the prompts given below and write a narrative on the above topic.
Your essay should at least be two pages full.

- Tell me about the language(s) that you spoke when you were growing up.
- At what point in your life did you hear other language(s) (apart from your home language) being spoken? What was/were it/they?
- Tell me the story of your English language learning journey.
- How did it start?
- What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?
- How do you feel about your command of English now, especially when you must teach it?

- How do you feel about English when you use it in your teaching?
- What is your best advice for student teachers of English who struggle with English?

This essay was to be written by all the students who had signed letters of consent. It was regarded as a baseline test, from which I had to select the student teachers who would finally be the case of the study. Twenty student teachers out of a population of 174 student teachers gave their consent to participate in the study, and those were the ones who wrote the essay. The set criteria that I had in place were that from the population of 174 student teachers, I was to select only a total of 15 students who would make up my research participants: five good, five average and five poor. These were the student teachers who would serve as the case of this study. However, the whole 20 student teachers ended up being my case since I had concerns about the number of student teachers who would be willing to continue with the additional writing in a form of a personal journal. Hard copies of the essay topic were distributed to students who indicated that they wished to take part in the study though I had to email a few because they were not on campus at the time as they were busy SBS in their villages or towns which were not in the vicinity of the university.

The essay that student teachers wrote was titled "Language biography on how I learned English", and there were several prompts given on which the student teachers had to base their writing.

A language biography, produced through a productive skill which is writing, was beneficial to this study for several reasons. According to La Luzerne-Oi and Kirschenmann (2018:13)

> (language) biographies are a form of story, and storytelling is a universal human activity. Stories may be fact or fiction, historical or futuristic, serious or whimsical. No matter the story, people (or characters) and their stories are at the centre, and they teach, inspire, provoke, and entertain readers or listeners.

The essays were used to determine the different categories of participants based on how the language was used, that is in terms of knowledge of grammar, the layout, features, content and language conventions (Dorji, 2021:56).

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3.4.6.2   Personal journals

The information that is generated from journals in a teaching career is mostly about teachers' perspectives, their classroom practices, or both. These narratives provide a view into the student teachers' lives (which could be private) as well as into their journey of language learning. Golombek and Johnson (2004) refer to narrative inquiry in the form of personal journals written by teachers. These types of writing are often critical as well as reflective. According to Golombek and Johnson (2004:308), "narratives…demonstrate how teachers' knowledge is bound up in how teachers create instruction in response to their emotions and values, and how they place themselves in relation to others". Furthermore, "because writing is a skill, it makes sense that the more you practise writing, the better you will write. One excellent way to get practice writing, even before you begin composing essays, is to keep a daily or almost daily journal" (Lagan, 2000: 14).

According to Barkhuizen, personal journals, which were submitted in electronic form, were used to collect research data because this was less time-consuming than other data collection methods (Bartels, 2005). Once the case for this study had been selected, those student teachers were then requested to keep a weekly personal journal in which to write at least twice per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) and (refer to Addendum B) hand their journals to the researcher every Friday for at least a month.

The personal journals that my research participants wrote were handed in electronically. This is because some were at schools that are very far from the campus. Most student teachers had a problem handing their personal journals in on time, as they claimed that they had too much to do since they started writing them while they were on SBS. However, there were those who were very committed and made sure that they submitted their journals on time. Despite the fact that the participants managed to submit their weekly journals to me, another alternative might have produced better results. I could have used text messaging or Whatsapp or voice recordings to determine whether there would be an improvement in terms of language proficiency and language teacher proficiency. This would have saved more time for the student teachers and they would not have worried much about the spelling of words, etc. However, the limitation of this route would have been lack of airtime or poor network for some if not most students.

3.4.6.3 *Narrative frames*

Narrative frames, or writing frames as referred to by different authors or researchers, are "starters, connectives and sentence modifiers which gives children a structure within which they can concentrate on communicating what they want to say whilst scaffolding them in the use of a particular generic form" (Wray & Lewis, 1997:122). Other authors define them as a "skeleton to scaffold writing" (Warwick & Maloch, 2003:59), While Macalister (2012:121) states that "a narrative frame has a number of sentence starters with space for respondents to tell their story".

This study used narrative frames adapted from Barkhuizen and Wette (2008) (see Addendum C). Permission was sought and given to use (and adapt) Barkhuizen and Wette's narrative frames (refer to Addendum D). According to Barkhuizen and Wette (2008:375),

> narrative frames provide guidance and support in terms of both the structure and content of what is to be written. From the researcher's perspective the frames ensure that the content will be more or less what is expected (and required to address the research aims) and that it will be delivered in narrative form.

The above statement by Barkhuizen and Wette sums up the reason why narrative frames were used for this study. Since I could not interview the student teachers, I had to make sure that their responses were focused, so using frames provided that kind of control, however this proved to be limiting in terms of content because the participants tended only to fill or complete the starter without much elaboration. As a result, what was written could not really be considered narrative writing. Student teachers who formed the case for this study received narrative frames which had sentence prediction frames. They had to complete the blanks next to those frames. This was the last piece of writing that student teachers had to do.

To sum up I concur with De Fina's (2020:11) feelings on the various way of production of narratives (as this study made use of three instruments, though elicited in a similar context), that:

> Production formats may also be more or less free and or orchestrated depending on the type of storytelling practice, with everyday conversation representing one end of the spectrum, where relative freedom to assume the role of teller and co-teller is usually the norm, many institutional environments at the other end of the spectrum with narrative roles highly constrained by regulations, and a variety of social media environments in the middle as forms of production and participation are orchestrated through affordances offered to users, but also allow for users' influence over their design. Different domains thus involve a variety of conditions that delimit both production and reception.

3.4.7   Data analysis

Data analysis deals with making sense of the collected raw data. Kawulich (2004:97) states that data analysis is the process of reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense out of them. Barkhuizen (2016:25) suggests two ways of analysing teacher stories in the form of a written teacher journal entry; they are content and thematic analysis. In this study I utilised those methods in addition to narrative and discourse analyses. This led to a text and discourse/content analysis as well as thematic analysis, which are discussed below.

3.4.7.1   Content analysis

When data is collected, it has to be studied and thus interpreted. In order for me to locate the required data from my research instruments, content analysis was used. According to Julien (2008:56), content analysis is the intellectual process of categorising qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes. Namey, Guest, Thairu and Johnson (2007:137) claim that content analysis techniques are valued for their efficiency and reliability. Three types of information needed to be uncovered from student teachers' narrative writing:

- the effectiveness of narrative writing in promoting language and language teacher proficiency;
- the types of identities student teachers construct regarding their language teaching; and
- insight into the teaching development student teachers construct as far as their continued development of language proficiency is concerned.

The content of the different texts that student teachers wrote were studied in order to identify themes and patterns which answered the three sets of information needed to answer the research questions of this study.

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998:13), on the other hand, state that during content analysis, categories of the studied topic are defined, and separated utterances of the text are extracted, classified and gathered into categories and groups focusing on discrete or linguistic features of defined units of the narrative. In order for me to determine whether there was indeed change in the student teachers' proficiency or not, I had to look at the content as well as the linguistic features of the essays, personal journals and writing frames. Thus, content analysis was suitable for this study.

To answer the research questions of this study, I needed to study the content that student teachers wrote in their different narratives and, in order to thoroughly analyse the perspectives of my research participants, I also studied the content of what was written. Thus I agree with Zhang and Wildemuth's (2005:1-2) claim that qualitative content analysis is mainly inductive, grounding the examination of topics and themes, as well as the inferences drawn from them, in the data in order to focus attention to distinctive themes that illustrate the range of meanings of the phenomenon rather than the statistical meaning of the display of specific writings or ideas.

For this study, data was analysed according to Miles and Huberman's (1994:10) guidelines, consisting of "data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification".

3.4.7.2   Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was another way data collected in this study was studied and interpreted. Gibson and Brown (2009:128-129) refer to thematic analysis as examining commonality, differences and relationships in data. Given (2008:463) asserts that thematic analysis in a qualitative study considers themes within and across participants or events which can express meaningful patterns, stances of the participants, or concerns. This study used three different research instruments to collect data, so a large set of data was collected. In order to categorise the information properly, thematic analysis was utilised.

Thematic analysis was also used because of the qualities that it provided to me as a researcher. I was able to examine perspectives of my different research participants (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:2) by categorising the collected information into themes that I derived from the narratives written by the student teachers. Furthermore, the usage of thematic analysis provided a flexible and accessible approach that could be modified for the needs of my study (Nowell et al., 2017:2).

As much as thematic analysis has some good qualities, its use also poses some dangers. Nowell et al. (2017:2) state that, when using thematic analysis, a researcher is not allowed to make claims about language use. Moreover, flexibility in thematic analysis can lead to inconsistency as well as lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data.

The analysis of the collected data led to coding of information. The coded information was then written as topics which answered the research questions of this study.

One aspect that qualitative researchers concern themselves with is the issue of trustworthiness of analysed data. According to Given (2008:895), in essence, trustworthiness can be thought of as the ways in which qualitative researchers ensure that transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability are evident in their research. Similarly, Given and Saumure (2008:896) state that "trustworthiness provides qualitative researchers with a set of tools by which they can illustrate the worth of their project outside the confines of the often ill-fitting quantitative parameters".

Given and Saumure (2008:896-897) refer to different aspects of trustworthiness of any qualitative research that were also considered in this study: transferability, generalisability, credibility and validity, dependability, and conformability. I ensured that the scope of this study can easily be recognised by describing the steps involved in carrying it out. In terms of generalisability, my results are particular to the research participants. Similar research participants can be used at a different campus or institution, but the results will not be the same because the environment in which my research participants found themselves would differ from other students at other campuses or institutions in terms of the experiences and contexts.

Credibility and validity of this study were ensured by thoroughly describing the phenomenon in question, which was the promotion of language and language teacher proficiencies through narrative writing. Furthermore, I ensured that I accurately analysed and presented the collected data by means of triangulation of data from the three data collection instruments. This was because both the personal journals and the writing frames were used to measure a similar concept, which was language proficiency. Through this process, my research findings were enriched and strengthened (Rothbauer, 2008:892). In the process of member-checking, the findings from the study were also shown to the research participants to ensure that their experiences were correctly documented.

Although a pilot study was not done, one can replicate this study by going through the steps taken during this study, which was how dependability could be ensured. Although the results may differ because the research site as well as the participants would be different from my participants, it is still possible to replicate the process. In this study, I did not make any claims, and findings were not generalised to all the education students who are specialising in languages that cannot be supported by the collected data, thus ensuring conformability.

I also ensured that the analysis was thorough by using thematic analysis to saturation point. This means "knowing when to stop collecting data" (Wellington, 2015:264). During the analysis of the data, I went through the data to figure out if there was more information that formed part of any of the identified theme, and if none could be found, all the information was collated.

In this study, I analysed the data according to themes, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps of data analysis which involve identifying, analysing, organising, describing and reporting themes found within a data set. Data collected through personal journals was analysed using thematic, content, narrative as well as discourse analyses because many themes arose from the student teachers' writing.

3.4.7.3   *Narrative analysis*

As a research instrument, narrative inquiry can also be regarded as a method of analysis. According to Sarasa & Solis (2017:21) narrative analysis involves the ways in which several stakeholders – teachers, authors and student participants have co-composed accounts and negotiated viewpoints and meanings and this it can be considered as a research method. Unfortunately, the produced narratives in this study were analysed as such instead of studying them as a process of storytelling as De Fina (2020:3) suggests. This is because narratives are regarded "to be embedded within everyday practices and how they are mobilized by participants to carry out social actions" De Fina (2020:4).

As a method of analysis I draw on snippets of data that I extracted from the participants' narratives to demonstrate how the writing of that they engaged in determined the promotion of language teacher proficiency as well as the types of identities they construct regarding their teacher development, which are small stories, defined by Georgakopoulou (2006: (as "tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell. These tellings are typically small when compared to the pages and pages of transcript of interview narratives". Furthermore, Georgakopoulou (2006:5) with a small stories perspective in mind, states that it is not just tellings or retellings that form part of the analysis: refusals to tell or deferrals of telling are equally important in terms of how the participants orient to what is appropriate in a story in a specific environment, what the norms for telling and tellability are. Therefore as De Fina (2008:422) claims, narrative analysis also shows that there are far-reaching connections between the micro and the macro, the interaction at hand, and social roles and relationships that transcend the immediate concerns of interactants involved in local exchanges.

3.4.7.4   Discourse analysis

According to Adger (2015:511) discourse analysis has become an increasingly attractive analytic method for researchers in second language development because of what it can show about that process and what it can suggest about second language pedagogy. Furthermore it is an analysing tool that looks at how students learn through interacting in that zone with a more knowledgeable individual (MKO) and through internalizing the resulting socially assembled knowledge. This is demonstrated via the discourse they produce, which, for this study, could be seen in the written products, because "written language is, of course, an important form of language and important in communication" (Gee, 2017:5).

One of the strengths of using discourse analysis in examining what is produced in writing in this study, is its analytic perspective that helps to clarify the actions in which the primary goal of schools learning is realized (Adger, 2015:503). Using discourse analysis in this case then determines whether some sort of learning has taken place during the social interaction between the teacher and the student teachers, because as Adger (2015:505) claims, each student is engaged in an individual vector of activity involving the full-time teacher but their joint interaction coheres around social relations and the shared instructional task.

In this study discursive analysis was done based on the linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms, specifically looking at word groups, grammar features, rhetorical and literal figures, direct and indirect speech and modalities. Gee (2005:55) claims that all approaches to discourse analyses, in their consideration of form, go beyond grammatical structures and thus "consider patterns across sentences". This is because the analysis included phrases or sentences that were indicating the types of identities that student teachers constructed for themselves as a result of the training that they were undertaking. However, non-standard forms of grammar can also be pattern-like, indicating either the existence of a non-standard variety or fixed errors that indicate areas where proficiency development needs to occur.

3.5   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As in any study, permission to undertake this study was required, thus the researcher obtained permission from both UNAM's as well Stellenbosch University's research, innovation and development committees (see Addendum F and Addendum G).

Participants in the study were given enough information regarding the study and were informed that their participation in the study was voluntarily. Upon thorough understanding of what the study is about, the research participants (the student teachers) signed consent letters (see Addendum E), which meant that they had agreed to participate in this study.

3.6   CONCLUSION

This chapter gave an overview of how the researcher went about collecting data by first referring to the theoretical framework within which the data collected was analysed, defining what a qualitative approach is and also specifying the research design which was used in this study. A qualitative approach was found to be fitting for this study because it provided an opportunity for the participants' experiences to be studied in detail through case study and narrative inquiry designs. Data analysis methods were also discussed. Thematic and content analysis were suitable ways of analysing the collected data because the narratives which were produced needed an in-depth examination in order to determine whether the phenomenon being studied actually took place or not. Therefore, it was not only about the research approach or data collection techniques, but also about the suitability of the approach and the techniques to answer the research questions. The gradual development (or not) of language proficiency and the personal experiences that resulted from students' reflection required an approach where they were encouraged to describe and elaborate in a narrative that produced this type of data.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the data generated from the research instruments used in this study: the essays (language biography), the personal journals of student teachers as well as the writing frames. The data was analysed based on the two theoretical frameworks: Vygotsky's social constructivism theory as well as Archer's notion of agency versus structure. Firstly, the language biographies, which served as a baseline test to group student teachers into different categories, are discussed. Secondly, prompts which participants were supposed to answer or guide their writing of their personal journals and narrative frames served as topics, which are presented. Lastly, content analysis, narrative analysis and discourse analysis of the narratives were done until saturation was reached, leading to themes emerging from participants' writing, which are also presented.

Before I discuss their narratives, I present the profiles of the six participants since these create the necessary context for the analysis of the various written texts.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

The six student teachers who remained in the sample got pseudonyms – Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. So here I provide a shortened version of their personal profiles relating to their language learning journeys which they wrote in their language biographies:

Participant 1 grew up with her grandmother exposed to the only language that people in her community spoke which was Oshikwanyama. She came to notice that English is the country's official language only when she started attending school. Her first exposure to English lasted for an hour that day.

She learned English as a second language through different processes and through her experience of learning English she found it was challenging, demanding, sometimes interesting and also satisfying, and one of the causes of the challenges was the fact that her teacher taught English in the local language. Fortunately for her, she had a very responsible elder sister who took it upon

herself to teach her and her other siblings basic English terminologies which she wrote on large boxes and kept them safe, from where they would then take turns each day reading aloud after school whenever they were free. It was during her pre- and lower-primary phases where she encountered spelling and pronunciation of English words. As she progressed to secondary school, she experienced more problems with English as all subjects were being instructed in English, except for Oshikwanyama. She opted to improve her proficiency of English by reading stories out loud thus helping her to sort out her pronunciation issues as well. She had no interaction with native speakers of English which was challenging for her too. She chose to visit the library and to read newspapers as well as to listen to the radio to gain the exposure she needed as far as English is concerned. Her English teachers also helped by explaining or defining terms she did not understand. At this point, she felt that her English has improved, as she wrote, *"Currently my English is better compared to when I started learning it, as I am teaching English now I do promote interaction in the English class by empowering learners and helping them to develop their communication skills, I motivate my learners to create opportunities for them to interact with one another through commutainment (sic) activities such as group works, role-plays, discussions and pair works".*

Participant 2 was born and raised in the village where Oshiwambo was used as a language for communication. For her, there was no exposure to any type of technology which really made it difficult for her to acquire English, whether spoken or written. In the community where she grew up, English was and it is still regarded as a foreign language.

She was first exposed to English in 2001 when she was enrolled in primary school. In primary schools, grade 1-3 use a mother tongue as a medium of instructions, so to her, English was a strange language and most of the junior primary learners felt the same about it. They only heard English being spoken by the school principal during the morning assemblies, though they hardly understood much of what was said. As time went by she began picking up a few words here and there. In 2nd grade she befriended a non Oshiwambo speaking girl, who was also *"kind enough to teach me some of the things that they see and use every day".* From the home front, she also had some exposure to English whenever her cousins visited them from Windhoek. As she listened to them conversing in English, her English also improved. She was then awarded a bursary to fund

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her secondary education so at high school, she joined the debating club and had access to computers. She practised her English on Children Encarta and took part in English quizzes as well. She was one of the best learners so in Grade 12; she got a C grade in English. Currently she watches educational videos on YouTube and reads stories on Wattpad.

Participant 3 remembers his first language to be Oshikwanyama which he claims to still speak. He was exposed to English and Afrikaans when people at home changed radio channels. Furthermore, as he grew up, those two languages became prominent in his home, particularly when his cousins from the south and who attended private schools came to visit as those were the languages they mostly communicated through. This did not sit well with him as he wrote: *"In the midst of feeling left out and deeply illiterate for not knowing English as those who lived in the south back then or attended private schools, an awakening call kicked in when my little sister who used to run to me asking how to ask someone their name in English got admitted at the local private school. With the belief that private school kids learn English magically and before you know it they speak it better than their native, I felt like I was suddenly losing my honor of being as the smart brother my little sister. I could not stand the thought of her being better than me in English let alone thinking of her correcting my vocab or grammar someday."* Based on that he began on a journey to better his English, claiming that "the motivational proverb (practice makes perfect) and the immeasurable desire to speak English fluently for many reasons" motivated him to perfect his English

As he went on his journey of learning and bettering his English he developed an immense love of English more than for his own vernacular. Others regarded him as the best student in English though to him, he still felt he needed to improve his proficiency in the language. Though he grew up being discouraged to speak English at home, his grandmother fearing that he was gossiping about her, this did not deter him from reading widely, especially short stories to improve his knowledge of English. Writing of words down and checking the meaning of words in the dictionary is what helped him to learn English better. He stated that *"I loved reading word at the glossaries of any book I got and that helped me a lot until I started writing my own words in a small rough book and find their meaning in the dictionary later when I get one. One idea after the other, their combination resulted in me able to communicate in English well".*

Participant 4 grew up in a village in Ohangwena region and he spoke Oshikwanyama since his childhood. At that time he was not exposed to any other language, which led to him to believe that no variety of languages existed in Namibia. He only learned of the fact that Namibians spoke different languages (Otjiherero, Afrikaans, Damara, Rukwangari) when he moved to Tsumeb where he started nursery school. His journey of learning English was difficult especially that his first teacher did not speak the same language he spoke or knew at that time. The language of instructions was English so this was totally a new experience to him. On top of that, he did not know how to read so he had a hard time learning. When his mother realised that he was keen to learn English, as he always asked for translations of terms or phrases that he picked up from school, she instructed his sister to teach him how to read and write in English. He wrote *"She would come home with animated story books for children in kindergartens and read for me. I got to know few words a child from nursery schools could speak. At times, I learned English from the television by watching the cartoons"*.

He then proceeded to other grades at a private school, where he noticed a slight improvement in his English proficiency. Despite this he stressed the challenges that he encountered while learning English that *"It all started at school, pronouncing and writing some words had been a barrier to me and these alter the process of learning. I came to learn that every word has a different way to be pronounced, some words were really hard for me to pronounce them correctly but as time goes I learned how to pronounce them very well and this had changed my accent and I was able to read fluently. I had difficulties of using correct English grammar structure and I came to improve when I mastered the parts of speech. For one to put sentences together properly, must understand what the parts of speech are and how they function in sentences. Using of proper word order had improved me learning the language. I remember sometimes it was difficult for me to catch up with peers who were native speakers of the language and speaks at an alarmingly fast pace. I could tell that excessive reading of novels and other written works has contributed to learning the language"*.

He is of the opinion that he now possesses the knowledge of English as he has now gone through teaching training thus he has the ability to use the acquired knowledge to deliver to the young ones.

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Participant 5 grew up in a village in the northern part of Namibia in Omulonga constituency, Ohangwena region. She was born and raised in that village, speaking and communicating in her native language which is Oshikwanyama. According to her, *"it was a rare and fascinating occasion when a person speaks English in your presence, in fact it I did not have a person that speaks a different language from mine around and in turn, I was not aware of the diversity of Namibian languages"*.

Her exposure to English was at the age of 7, when she started grade one at the village's school. She claims that it was not easy as her first instructions in English consisted only of basics such as letters, sounds of letters and spelling, and this was all new to her. She did not have the luxury of watching TV to be able to learn from it as other kids whose parents owned TV sets in their homes. She questioned the importance of learning English if everyone she knew spoke Oshikwanyama well. To make matters worse for her, English was taught to her in Oshiwambo, and deterred her from being motivated to learn English. Her interest in learning English stemmed from her visit to a town for holidays when she realised that English enabled better communication between people thus from there she made it a point to learn, by reading magazines and practicing speaking English with her siblings. At school she took part in spelling bees and debates and her parent encouraged her to participate. She wrote *"With the help of everyone around me, especially my siblings, my English teachers and very limited but helpful materials, I improved in my vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation and before I knew it, I could read, write and speak English. I became fluent in English when I was in high school though I had some shortcomings like with continuous tenses that I had to master. I did not really understand that continuous tenses shows an action is, was or will be in progress at a certain time and so forth. I loved grammar so much that I did so well though not perfect in my creative writings. I can testify that reading even when not supervised can really help one with learning the language"*.

Participant 6 was born in a village near Ongwediva in Oshana region. Up to the age of 7 she has only been exposed to one dialect of Oshiwambo, which is Oshikwanyama. Her first exposure to English happened at her first primary school, which was simply limited to greetings as well as simple terms (mostly nouns) with their translations, for example "chair " – "oshitaafula", The

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teaching of those terms was illustrated in their written form, their spelling as well as their pronunciation. She recalls to have only learned two sentences, *"Good morning teacher"* and *"Fine thank you, how are you teacher?"*. When she was in grade 4, she started speaking shallow English, phrases only. In grade 5, she got inspired by a classmate who moved from a school in the south of the country. She was impressed by the new classmate as she was fluent in English and she always frequented the library to borrow books after school. Her new classmate and friend was smart and loved reading. Their friendship developed and went beyond the classroom so they started hanging out at school. Participant 6 learned a lot from this girl who helped her with pronunciations and meaning of words I have never come across. She wrote: *"I started speaking English for the first time in that grade. We were forced to present during speaking lessons although it was broken English with wrong grammar"*.

Having provided the profiles of the participants sets a basis on which the different types of analyses of this study were based.

It is important to note that most of the participants here were all highly motivated to get better at English. Despite the number of constraints in their journeys of learning English they demonstrated agency, which shows the power and status of English despite its minority status in Namibia. Most of them got little exposure to English at home which means that their exposure only came when they started preschool, except for Participant 3 who was exposed to both English and Afrikaans at home. Some were unaware of the existence of other languages so hearing and learning English was a memorable experience for them (see Participant 5). It is interesting to note that some participants believe that should they have had access to technology such as radios and television sets in their homes, which would have exposed them to English way before starting primary school (see Participant 2 & 5). Most demonstrated agency by either reading English materials extensively outside of class, soliciting siblings' help to be taught English as well by taking part in activities that would enrich their English vocabulary and extend their command of English (see Participants 3 & 5). Interestingly, Participant 3's learning of English became competitive as he did not want his sister to be better at English than him. From the participants' profiles one is able to deduce that English is mostly limited to school environments therefore "it should be emphasized that exposure can directly improve a target language so that language proficiency may be a result of social

interaction with speakers of the target language" (Al-Zoubi, 2018:153). However, our learners and students are not often exposed to native speakers of English.

In conclusion, given the participants' strong motivation and their efforts to learn English link up with Archer's agency (see 2.2.3) because most of them were able to transform structural constraints into positives in order to achieve acceptable language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency. Additionally, participants' awareness of their shortcomings and efforts to change their individual situations in terms of their English proficiency, validate Van Lier's (2008) definition of agency. Students they were able to intentionally control their actions in ways that resulted in them changing from one level to another – visiting the library in order to widen their vocabularies as well as befriending other learners to learn from them. I believe that they were intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically motivated to change their own situations.

4.3   LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHY/ESSAY

It is important to note that student responses are quoted verbatim. I did not attempt to correct any writing at all. In cases where specific schools' names were mentioned, these are omitted, in order to protect the identities of the participants as well as to keep their information anonymous. The language biography template or essay was given to student teachers to write about their journey of learning English. It was supposed to serve as a baseline test to group student teachers into three categories: good, average and poor. As only a few student teachers showed willingness to participate in this study, I decided as a researcher to keep all 20 student teachers' essays. This was because the likelihood of some student teachers withdrawing from the study was high, and I still needed them to do additional writing (personal writing and the writing frame). Participants were informed of their right to take part in the study and they knew they could withdraw at any time they wished (Creswell, 2013). In the end, only six student teachers continued as participants for this study. The essay was assessed using a rubric (see Table 3).

In Table 2 below, I include the number of student teachers and how they were grouped based on the marks obtained from the essays on their language learning journeys.

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Table 2:   Marks obtained in essays per different categories

Number of (targeted) student teachers	Category 1 Marks obtained 14-20 Good	Category 2 Marks obtained 9-13 Average	Category 3 Marks obtained 1-8 Poor
20	2	13	5

The rubric that I used had the following categories: 'excellent', 'good', 'average' and 'poor'. For this study, I adapted it so that it only had three categories: 'good', 'average' and 'poor' (see Table 3). This was to enable me to choose a total of 15 student teachers, five per category, though in the end, as previously mentioned, I went ahead with all 20 student teachers. Additional writing was elicited from the 20 participants. However, 14 participants withdrew, and the remaining six participants wrote personal journals as well as writing frames. The rubric I used to assess the essays is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3:   Rubric used to assess written essays (adapted from United States Department of Health and Human Services, s.a.)

Criteria	Good	Average – poor	Poor
Structure & organisation (5 pts.)	Introduction, body and/or conclusion may have minor errors, but reader can still follow the flow of the paper (3)	Introduction, body and/or conclusion have significant flaws which affect flow of paper, such as missing thesis, transition, topic sentence (2)	Paper may be missing a paragraph, thesis, or have some other structural error which makes the paper ineffective (1)
Content knowledge (10 pts.)	Student demonstrates knowledge of content, but doesn't elaborate clearly, e.g., details are missing (5-8)	Student touches on topic, but goes off on a tangent (3-5)	Student fails to provide sufficient evidence of engagement with the topic (1-2)
Grammar & spelling (5 pts.)	There are one or two spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors that seem pattern-like (3)	There are pattern-like spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors (2)	Spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors interfere with comprehension (1)

It is clear from Table 2 that the majority of the student teachers fell into the 'average' category and a few in the 'poor' category. Only two student teachers were in the 'good' category. Examples of types of writing that student teachers produced which led them to the three types of categories are presented below.

4.3.1 Category 1: good

Although the rubric above (which I adapted from the United States Department of Health and Human Services, s.a.) was meant to assess all language biographies or essays, irrespective of their content, it included different categories which focused on how participants structured their writing. Secondly, content knowledge was also part of the rubric, and it was determined by the way given prompts were tackled by the participants. The same rubric above in Table 3 indicates that, for a student to be graded in the 'good' category, with regard to structure and organisation, the introduction, body and/or conclusion had to be present and may have minor errors. Minor errors here should not have impeded understanding or meaning. With regard to content knowledge, the students needed to demonstrate knowledge of content as much as they were writing about their own experiences, because they had prompts on which to base their writing. So, if a participant did not elaborate clearly – for example, if details were missing – this would be regarded as not including enough content. Finally, the students were tested on grammar and spelling. With the latter, the 'good' category would mean that there were one or two spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors that seemed pattern-like. A low mark in this category would mean that a student made errors that appeared more than three times and/or that interfered with comprehension.

The essays in the 'good' category had fewer errors compared to those in other categories. However, there were grammatical and spelling errors as in the excerpt below:

> *Few days ago I also heard some adolescene walking in the street speaking a different language, too, that was Damara.*

In the above example, the student was supposed to have written *"a few days later"* instead of simply writing *"few days ago"*. This statement was intended to show an action that would take place in future, so how it read or written, was wrong. Additionally, the word *"adolescent"* was

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incorrectly misspelt as *"adolescene"*. There is also no language known as *"Damara"* – this is an ethnic group found in Namibia. In the second essay, the participant spelled the word *"vernacular"* incorrectly as *"venacular"*. *"Myself"* was also misspelt as *"my self"*.

Apart from the few errors that participants made, they used sophisticated vocabulary and syntactic structures, as in the following example:

> *"Failure to acknowledge excellency is another way of promoting mediocrity" so in the process of learning, credit should be given where it is due.*

The participant's usage of the words like *"mediocrity"* and phrases like *"credit should be given where it is due"* was an indication of a possession of wide vocabulary as well as rich linguistic resources of English.

Through the analysis of data, I felt that the written paragraphs were generally well structured, with topic sentences and illustrative details that followed. Additionally, students possessed enough knowledge of subject content because they mostly stuck to the topic and the given prompts.

4.3.2 Category 2: average

The same rubric in Table 3 was used for this category. According to the rubric as I got it, the content written would be assessed on different predefined criteria. For this category, the following was expected:

- structure and grammar – introduction, body and/or conclusion have significant flaws which affect the flow of the paper, such as missing thesis, transitions, topic sentences;
- content knowledge – student touches on topic, but goes off on a tangent; and finally
- grammar and spelling – there are pattern-like spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors.

As previously mentioned, most student teachers' essays fell into this category. This is because their writing had significant flaws which at times impeded meaning. To illustrate this, I provide excerpts from different students:

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So many believes considering the fact that a child is born, attends no classes or so but before he/she could start school they are already talking.

In the above sentence, it was difficult to understand what the participant meant by what he/she wrote. The same was the case in the example below:

Even though in my growing up I used to hear of other many spoken languages on the radio when people are changing channels, the only two other languages I indebted to have known were English and Afrikaans with English being the most desired during that time.

It is evident from the two excerpts that some participants found it difficult to express meaning in English. Similarly, Carstens and Alston (2014:18), whose students/research participants also had to write essays, came to the same conclusion as they state that "the narrators' difficulty in expressing meaning in English is evident in the conclusions to some of their essays".

In the example below, the participant's sentence was not properly constructed, thus giving an incomplete thought:

If I could advice any student teacher who is struggling with speaking or simply using English correctly in their teaching, considering now on the fact that it is the medium of instruction in schools now.

There was also a repetition of the word *"now"*. The above sentence was supposed to be a complex sentence, but it was incomplete in its construction. It contained two independent clauses that did not reflect independent thoughts.

In the next example, one is clearly able to see that the participant struggled with tense construction and decoding what he/she saw as a difficult task. Additionally, the proper noun *"Oshikwanyama"* was in the first instance pluralised as *"oshikwanyamas"*, and was not written with a capital letter.

When you are child and you are growing you happened to adapt to your surroundings. I grow up with my grandmother I started learning oshikwanyamas that was the only

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language that's spoken around me. Having grown up in a community whereby every word that exists ones mouth is in a local language which is Oshikwanyama was rather comforting until due time come and it was time to go to school.

The above participant switched between tenses in his sentences, which was problematic to the reader and indicated that he/she did not possess basic knowledge of tenses. Additionally, when he/she attempted to write long sentences it tripped him/her up as demonstrated in the above sentence.

In a similar case, another participant who struggled with tense construction stated:

I use be scared of friend to laugh at me once I break English and they use to laugh at my accent.

Although I had an idea as to what they were trying to say, their mistakes were quite distracting. One could clearly see that they had the basic sentence structure under control, but they struggled to construct complex sentences.

4.3.3　Category 3: poor

For this category, the following was expected:

- structure and grammar – paper may be missing a paragraph, thesis, or have some other structural error which makes the paper ineffective;
- content knowledge – student fails to provide sufficient evidence of engagement with the topic; and finally
- grammar and spelling – spelling, grammatical or punctuation errors interfere with comprehension.

As discussed next, it is obvious why the essays that were categorised as 'poor' were in that category.

The participant in the following excerpt used articles inappropriately, which is a common problem with students of English. There was also incorrect usage of tenses: *"My teacher used to code switching"* as well as *"...when time goes, I became better and better"*.

> *My English journey started when I started kinder garden, the grade zero. It was not easy at all, but anyway I tried. I started to learn the vowels and consonants and how they are combined to form words. After I mastered them, I started to learn how to read the words until I know. My teacher used to code switching, and this helped me a lot. I used to get lost, not understanding anything, when time goes I became better and better.*

The usage of *"but"* and *"anyway"* next to each other was also a problem because *"anyway"* could mean "in any case: without regard to other considerations", so using it next to *"but"* was contradictory of what the participant was trying to say. The other problem in the above paragraph was a tense switch from past tense to present tense: *"...I started to learn how to read the words until I know."* A direct object was also missing in that sentence. The same mistake was repeated with regard to a tense switch when the participant wrote *"...when time goes I became better and better."* It would have been correct to simply write *"...with time I got better."*

Another example of what qualified the following writing as poor was syntax. The problem in the extract below stemmed from direct translation. *"Words that I copied sometimes when I took them to my teachers..."* reads more like how one would state that particular phrase in Oshiwambo, as in the example below:

> *Challenges I faced was lack of reading books and dictionary, in order to improve our reading skills. Words that I copied sometimes when I took them to my teachers, to give me the pronunciations and definitions, they don't know them too. Mother tongue influence was the main challenge too, when it came to pronunciation of words and speaking.*

It is interesting to note that the participant was also aware of how mother tongue could play a role in his/her learning of English, though his/her reference here was more about his/her speaking skills. Additionally, the participant seemed to be writing about his/her individual challenges, but he/she

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also made reference to others (*"our"*) when he/she wrote *"challenges I faced was lack of reading books and dictionary, in order to improve our reading skills"*.

In the example below, the participant omitted some words from the sentences that were necessary for comprehension of the two statements. In addition to the omission of words, the second statement's syntactical order was wrong, which also impeded proper comprehension of the idea that the participant was putting across.

> *For one to put sentences together, must understand what the parts of speech are how they function in sentences. Using of proper word order had improved me learning the language.*

It is evident from the analysed data that participants fell into different categories as far as their language proficiency was concerned. As participants themselves alluded to, their poor proficiency in English stemmed from their poor educational backgrounds when they were first exposed to English, though poor language proficiency is not always the result of poor education. Another factor that may have contributed to their language use was the influence of their home/community languages on English. Their linguistic foundations also played a role in the sense that, if they failed to learn their first languages well, that would also affect how they learned their second languages. It is evident from their writing that the academic tone of their essays was also a challenge.

4.3.4   Language biography on "How I learned English"

The essays written by the participants were generated during the time that student teachers were on SBS, as previously mentioned. It was then no surprise that some participants handed in essays which were handwritten due to the fact that sending them electronically would not have been an option. However, there were those who wrote by hand and still handed the essays in electronically as Word documents, so the majority typed their essays and emailed them to me. Once I received the essays, I saved them in a folder only accessible to me in a password accessible personal computer. This was meant to protect the identities of my participants as well as to keep their information safe as had been promised to them prior to taking part in the study. It is interesting to take note of the implications involved in having participants sending in their typed narratives –

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they had access to spellcheck, meaning that they could check the spelling and grammar of their essays (see 4.2).

Those participants who taught at the schools in the vicinity of the campus brought handwritten essays, and at times, I could not make out what was written (See Addendum J). The following are the common topics that emerged from the essays/language biographies titled "Language biography on how I learned English", which were derived from the prompts that I gave them: the participants' journeys of learning English, the challenges they experienced, their present command of English as a language as well as their advice to students learning English. Below is the title of the essay (See Addendum A) that the participants were given to write on:

Essay: Language biography on how I learned English

The prompts given in the essay are stated in 3.4.6.1.

Barkhuizen and Wette (2008) discovered commonalities among teachers' experiences from narrative frames, in a study which was similar to mine. They used an interpretive/constructivist approach as established in 3.2, as the writing of the participants was a socially oriented activity which needed to be interpreted. What makes their approach significant is the fact that it brought about emerging issues which were common to their participants, so I adopted their approach in order to analyse the language biographies, personal journals as well as the narrative frames to also figure out the communalities which emerged from all three. In this study (as mentioned in 3.5), codes were determined using qualitative content analysis. Information was colour coded based on similarity as it appeared in the written narratives. For example, where participants wrote the same thing, such as when they answered the prompt on how they felt when they used English in their teaching, all the participants' responses were coloured in green so that it was easier for me to figure out where those responses were in the essays. It also made it easy for me to extract out other information that I termed as "themes".

4.3.4.1   Participants' journeys of learning English

The usage of the word 'journey' is metaphoric as participants' journeys of learning English did not simply have them stating that they moved from town to town, but involved all the particulars such as one moving from one level of proficiency to another. So, this section dwells on participants' journeys in both of these contexts.

Many participants indicated that they only came to experience English at school because nobody spoke it at home and there was no exposure to it from other sources. Most of the participants also indicated that their journeys of learning English were based on the language they felt they were fluent in. However, there were those who got to learn English only when they moved to towns, because the rural areas where they resided had no competent teachers to teach them English in actual English rather than in their mother tongue. This means that the learning of English was done only long after they were supposed to have learned English, most probably after the primary phase levels. However, given the contexts in which many of the participants lived during their early years of schooling, one would not find this fact surprising because most of them stated that they lived in villages where most habitants tend to communicate in their mother tongues. As Frydman (2011:182) puts it, English is a minority language and an official language of Namibia, used in school contexts as well as official ones. For six years prior to children starting their schooling, the only languages that they are exposed to are their vernaculars. When they eventually come to school, the English that they are exposed to is not correct, based on the fact that the English teachers themselves are not proficient in the language either. This exemplifies the elements of a journey from home to school, where the school represents English to a degree, or from village to town, where the town represents English. Table 4 below illustrates the participants' different journeys of learning English.

Table 4:   Participants' different journeys of learning English

Point of exposure to English	Participant quotes
From home to kindergarten	*"My English learning journey started when I started kinder garden, the grade zero. It was not easy at all, but anyway I tried. I started to learn the vowels and consonants and how they are combined to form words."* *"The time I came to hear other language apart from Oshiwambo is when I started school, the Kinder garden and this language was English. I heard it from my kinder garden teacher. I was a bit confused because I never heard it before. I started to learn English, which is my second language."*
Enabling factors	*"My first experience of learning was challenging and also interesting at some cases. My education in English began at home with my parents communicating with me in English, this was an indeed advantage for me as I was able to learn the English language from them through our conversations and by listening to some words they spoke to me."* *"My English journey started at the age of 4, I started reading short stories and watching television."* *"Firstly, I started learning my English from my parents and housemates when I was young. They liked speaking English in the house whereby I listened to them and start saying or the same words they are speaking, whether they are correct or wrong."*

Point of exposure to English	Participant quotes
From home to primary school	*"At the age of 7, when I was in grade 1 at XZ School, I started hearing English Language, where we were mostly taught nouns and their translations in our vernacular."* *"My very first time I came across to someone speaking English although it was not fluent enough was in 2001 when I was enrolled in primary school. In primary schools, grade 1-3 use a mother tongue as a medium of instructions, English was a strange language to most of the junior primary learners. We use to hear it from our school principal only during the morning assemblies, he speaks as if we all understand."* *"I came to realise that English is actually an official language in our country when I started school .On my first day at school lucky enough that first time I even heard someone speaking English for an hour, because that day it was an official opening for our school we were the first products of that school and I was surprised."*
From one school to another	*"And this was really difficult for me, because teachers at my previous school could translate into Oshiwambo just to make us understand the content of the lesson. Nothing I could do rather than pulling up socks and get used to the new situation."*

As shown in the table above, most participants indicated that their first exposure to the English language only took place at school, during the preschool or primary school phases. Those who experienced English elsewhere stated that they either heard English being spoken at home or somewhere in their environment or surroundings. There were also enabling factors that made it possible for the participants to learn English better. Two types of enablers came out from the data: parents speaking English, which motivated the participants to speak it as well, and cases where participants themselves were motivated and wanted to succeed. It is important to note the usage of a metaphor – *"pulling up socks"*. The participant felt that it was up to him/her individually to catch up and be on par with the rest of his/her schoolmates with regard to being a proficient English user. This is linked to the concept of agency in as the participant was able to act on his/her own behalf to change his/her situation by using his/her own abilities and resources.

There was also an element of mobility, as the participant moved from one school to another (in town). Thus, the participant's awareness of the shift in how English was learned was also referred to when he/she moved to the school in town.

It is interesting to note that most participants found English strange and a difficult language to learn, even though most of them indicated that they managed to learn it despite it being hard.

4.3.4.2   Challenges experienced when learning English

The analysed data showed that most participants experienced problems as far as their learning of English was concerned. These problems included incorrect pronunciation of words, inability to read English words, tense constructions, spelling, limited vocabulary as well as sentence construction. A few participants also alluded to the fact that English was taught in their mother tongue, which proved to be problematic for most of them. Based on the participants' journeys of learning English, it is evident that teachers have a direct influence on how learners learn a second language as most of these participants indicated. The excerpts below exemplify what the participants experienced.

> *My journey for learning English wasn't that easy and burdensome, there had been succession of both good and bad experiences since I was not exposed to town's life were people speaks English every moment.*

It seems that the above participant gave English the status of being a 'town language', implying that one is mostly able to hear English only being spoken in towns. This is not necessarily true.

> *It was really a challenge. First, morning devotions where commenced in English, second, I met learners/ classmates from different schools from different towns. It was only Oshikwanyama lesson was taught in a different language, the rest were taught in English.*

> *The challenges I have experienced are: difficulties in formulation comprehensive sentences. So, I used only simple sentences in my communication. I never know tenses -*

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grammar in particular. I never had a rich vocabulary and as result, other skills such as writing, listening and reading were affected.

Furthermore grammar was that challenging and still a problem too when it comes to speaking and writing also, to minimise this I started spending more time on studying my English summaries and at secondary level I started visiting the library and borrowing some grammar books for English and I am getting better.

Both participants above referred to their weaknesses regarding specific grammatical aspects of English which they struggled with and which they still found problematic. In the latter example, the participant demonstrated his/her agency in doing something about her situation by individually studying as well as reading grammar books. As a result, he/she was of the opinion that he/she was in the process of getting better. Another aspect of journey was also noticeable here, in the sense that participants indicated where they had started off in their different processes of learning English moving on to where they were at the time of writing, that is, moving form a novice to a fluent user of English.

One participant stated:

Words that I copied sometimes when I took them to my teachers, to give me the pronunciations and definitions, they don't know them too.

Based on this evidence, participants' poor proficiency concerning their language could be attributed partly to their teachers' cognition as well as language teacher proficiency. This claim is supported by this statement that "14% teachers do not have a level of proficiency in English language usage desirable to teach at the lower primary phase" (Karamata, 2011). Similarly, Kisting (2011) states: "At primary school level, about 52 per cent of lower primary teachers struggle with the official language, while about 61 per cent face English language difficulties." It is no wonder then participants claimed that their lack of proper language foundations were a result of their teachers who first exposed them to their English.

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4.3.4.3   Present command of English

The analysis of data revealed that the current command of English was regarded as a journey by the participants. As referred to in the previous section, the journey of learning English implies two things: moving from one environment to another, as well as from being a novice to a fluent user of English. From the analysis of the essays, it was evident that participants felt that their command of English had changed from when they started learning English compared to the present.

> *Now that I am an English student teacher in my final year, the future second language developer. I feel proud that I can now teach English, the language that I struggled with my whole schooling life. I feel comfortable and confident to join in social situations where English is spoken and I become being able to interact with many people, gain respect of your family, fluent as I improve English skills. I am now being able to enjoy English films, television, radio, newspapers, books and search the internet. Sometimes being called up to listen and speak to English speaking people in our community.*

The usage of the words such as "final" and "future" indicates the passing of time, moving from one phase to another. Furthermore, the participant made reference to a journey which was not over because she stated that she aimed to be *"fluent as I improve English skills"*. This implies that the participant was aware of the fact that learning is an ongoing, unending process. Additionally, this participant was of the opinion that he/she had endured a long and difficult journey, as he/she stated that he/she had struggled with incorrect English, but had improved at using it in different contexts. In addition, he/she identified him-/herself as someone who was worthy of people's respect, especially that of his/her family, because of his/her proficiency in English. Another aspect that he/she referred to was the fact that he/she was regarded as a proficient speaker of English in his/her community because others relied on him/her to communicate with English speakers when everybody else was probably unable to.

Another participant stated:

As the English teacher now, I feel bad for how we were spoiled by our teachers. Sometimes I feel good because I had this chance to use it, to teach the learners and trained them to love the culture of reading, ask them critical questions that required them to think.

What came out of the above excerpt was an indication of a journey, how the participant had been and how she had changed to become a better teacher. This ties up with Pfeiffer and Van der Walt's (2016:73) role of assisting students in their development of awareness regarding effects of how they see themselves, which in their view leads to students being aware of the available choices and their impact on the process of language learning. My claim is based on the fact that, having undergone training, the participant felt that, due to that training, her pupils could benefit from the choices he/she was given because of his/her experiences and skills. Additionally, this particular participant felt that he/she was in a position to make a significant change as opposed to his/her teachers, whom he/she felt did not do a proper job of teaching him/her in order to have a good command of English. It is also interesting to note that he/she felt that a reading culture could contribute to one's knowledge of a language as he/she stressed that he/she would inculcate the love of reading into her future learners.

4.3.4.4   Advice to English students

The participants' advice to students of English was based on their own understanding and experience of learning English. Participants were of the opinion that other students should read widely, practise speaking English at all times as well use technology to widen their knowledge of English:

My advice to the student teachers that are struggling with English, is that English is easy, the problem is how you are dealing with it. Love the culture of reading, through reading your vocabulary will enrich and that becomes part of your knowledge. Make use of available sources and be friends to internet. Know the spelling and pronunciation of words you come across and this reduced your mother tongue influences. Start to love speaking English most of your time, because practice make it perfect. Make your discussions in English, through this you will learn much better. Take English serious and always try to understand what you are reading, all this lead to a good reader.

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The above participant demonstrated his/her closeness with the English language by using words like "friends" and "love". These words were used figuratively in this context, because English and the internet were both personified. It shows how the participant took the learning of English as a matter close to his/her heart. This was another illustration of the participant's agency towards improving him-/herself regarding the English language.

Similarly, the participant below shared the same sentiments:

> *The advice to fellow student teachers that struggle with English is that, we must not stop learning the language until we become fluent. Develop a habit of reading, this will really help us develop other language skills. Learning if mostly achieved through reading. Let's make sure that we always in good contact with the library and use the dictionary to get definitions, pronunciations of words you will use during lessons. Remember, practice makes perfect.*

Both the participants above attached importance to learning or improving one's English's proficiency through reading. They both stressed the significance of developing and maintaining a culture of reading, especially for those struggling with English. Another student focused more on speaking and listening:

> *If I could advice any student teacher who is struggling with speaking or simply using English correctly in their teaching, considering now on the fact that it is the medium of instruction in schools now. I would say, please; speak English regularly. Joke in English, tell stories in English, read English novels, listen more to English programs on TVs and radios, be whiling to learn, do not make the mistake of thinking you know it all, accept to be corrected, read others pieces of writing and see how they are corrected and never stop learning. Surely before you know it, your English will improve exceedingly in an instant. I could testify to that.*

Although the above participant put a lot of emphasis on listening and speaking, it is evident that most participants' advice to those learning and struggling with English was persistence, as well as remembering that achieving proficiency in English requires time and effort. There is also an

indication that participants insisted on learning English as a journey that it is never over because one is constantly improving and moving towards full proficiency.

4.4 THEMES EMERGING FROM PERSONAL JOURNALS AND NARRATIVE FRAMES

The narrative and discourse analyses of the data collected through the personal journals of the six participants led to the following topics:

- promotion of language proficiency through narrative writing;
- promotion of language teacher proficiency through narrative writing;
- types of identities constructed through language teacher proficiency; and
- student teachers' teaching development.

The instructions to the participants were that they should write a series of personal narratives in which they reflected on their learning experiences in relation to what was covered in the course (ELE module). Furthermore, they were requested to write twice per week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and hand in their journals to me every Friday for the duration of six weeks (see Addendum B). As mentioned in 3.5.4.2, participants handed in their journals electronically. Though the handing in date was Friday, most participants sent their writing only on Saturday or Monday, claiming that they were busy and did not have enough time to write their personal journals. This was inconvenient for me because the marking was supposed to be done over the weekend, but I mostly had to do it on Mondays so that participants could get their feedback before they engaged in another week of writing. The idea was for them to receive corrective feedback, after which I would check whether mistakes they had been making would be repeated or not, because they had to read the comments given in their writing. If similar mistakes were then made, that would mean that they were not going through their returned journals at all. Some participants repeated mistakes even after corrective feedback had been given.

Table 5: Topics embedded in personal journals (See Addendum H) and narrative frames (See Addendum I)

Topic	Sub-topics
Topic 1: Promotion of language proficiency through narrative writing A definition and description of 'proficiency'	Tense constructions
	Sentence constructions
	Subject-verb agreement
	Spelling
	Mother tongue interference
	Sentence fragments
	Omission of words/article
Topic 2: Promotion of language teacher proficiency through narrative writing A definition and description of 'language teacher proficiency'	Student teachers' language teacher proficiency
Topic 3: Types of identities constructed through language teacher proficiency	Teachers' possible selves: • Ideal language teacher selves • Ought-to language teacher selves • Feared language teacher selves
Topic 4: Student teachers' teaching language development	Areas improved through training
	Suggestions on lacking areas

From Table 5, one can see that the analysis of the collected data gave rise four main topics and their respective sub-topics, which are discussed below in an attempt to answer the research questions of this study.

4.4.1   Topic 1: Promotion of language proficiency through narrative writing

The overall aim of this study was to investigate whether narrative writing could promote language and language teacher proficiency. Looking at the participants' written narratives, I determined and comprehended their different levels of English language proficiency, therefore a definition as well as the description of proficiency is given first, before the common language issues in personal journals and narrative frames are discussed.

4.4.1.1   A definition and description of 'proficiency'

This study's main aim was to investigate whether narrative writing promoted language and language teacher proficiency. It was therefore important to establish my understanding of proficiency in terms of language learning. Many researchers (Van Canh & Renandya, 2017) find it problematic to define what proficiency is, whereas others (Cummins, 1984; Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992; Hughes, 1996) claim that one's proficiency is dependent on the particular purposes for which the language is used. Andrews (2001:84) refers to language proficiency as language ability as well as knowledge of the language. Peyper (2014:9), on the other hand, defines language proficiency as the ability to communicate in the target language. Since English as a language can be used to communicate in different domains, this study specifically looked at narrative writing as an instrument through which student teachers could demonstrate their proficiency. However, for this study, language proficiency was more than just one's ability to articulate oneself in the target language, whether through writing or speaking; one should also be able to "demonstrate linguistic competence and also be able to produce a code that is syntactically and lexically complex" (Hakuta, Butler & Witt, 2000:3). The participants were final-year students training to become English language teachers, after all, so the language that they produced should have been reflective of those traits I have referred to. As I pointed out in my discussion of the participants' essays, a major problem that they displayed and struggled with in their writing was complex sentence construction. One would expect that as students almost at the exit stages of their studies they would have few items to deal with language-wise.

As far as the description of proficiency in this study is concerned, Table 7 illustrates the marks that participants in this study obtained in the personal journals that they wrote over a period of six weeks. Two journal entries were expected per week, written every Tuesday and Thursday and handed in on Friday. As their mentor, the MKO (Vygotsky, 1978), I went through the personal journals, mostly just highlighting where mistakes were made or reinforcing good writing by giving comments or corrective feedback. This was done with the intention to figure out whether the input given would be used and integrated correctly in similar and further writing in the following weeks. According to Krashen (1981:1), when error correction is sustained, it helps the learner come to the correct mental representation of the linguistic generalisation, which is why errors were corrected.

However, marks were not given on the returned journals because I did not want to discourage the participants from participating further if they knew how they were performing. Before I present the results of the personal journals below, I first present the rubric that I used to assess the participants' personal journals in Table 6.

Table 6: Rubric for assessing a journal entry

Grading criteria	Good	Average	Poor
Content **(8 pts.)**	Response to assigned topic thorough and well written, with varied sentence structure and vocabulary; opinions always supported with facts.	Response thoughtful and fairly well written; most opinions supported with facts.	Response adequately addresses some aspects of the assigned topic; opinions sometimes based on incorrect information.
Idea development **(5 pts.)**	Excellent use of examples and details to explore and develop ideas and opinions.	Good reliance upon examples and details to illustrate and develop ideas and opinions.	Incomplete development of ideas; details and examples not always evident.
Organisation **(4 pts.)**	Very logically organised; contains introduction, development of main idea (or ideas) and conclusion.	Contains introduction, some development of ideas, and conclusion.	Topics and ideas discussed somewhat randomly; entry may lack clearly defined introduction or conclusion.
Mechanics **(3 pts.)**	Flawless spelling and punctuation.	Few or no spelling errors; some minor punctuation mistakes.	Several spelling and punctuation errors.

Having the above rubric made it easy to continuously assess the personal journals that were written over the six-week period. This rubric was opted for and adapted in line with what I was hoping to see in the student teachers' narratives, and it served as a way to "measure" the promotion or lack of it in the participants' journals. Similarly, Larsen-Freeman (2005) also needed some measure of what her participants were writing to figure out whether what she had hoped for was actually achieved. In the same way, the usage of the above rubric served as a record of how my participants were developing in terms of language proficiency. Although the participants' writing was given back to them with comments (corrective feedback) after I had assessed them, the participants did not receive any marks, scores or grades for their personal journals. This was specifically done to keep them interested in writing further, because knowing how much they obtained might have

discouraged them from continuing the process of journaling. Below are the weekly marks that participants obtained in their journals.

Table 7:   Average weekly marks obtained in personal journals

Participant	Week 1 Mark obtained	Week 2 Mark obtained	Week 3 Mark obtained	Week 4 Mark obtained	Week 5 Mark obtained	Week 6 Mark obtained
1	12	10	10	10	9	8
2	12	11	11	13	14	16
3	16	14	16	17	17	13
4	13	13	15	14	Not completed	Not completed
5	11	12	11	10	8	Not completed
6	12	12	13	11	11	16

Table 7 exhibits the participants' marks, which varied on a weekly basis. As previously stated, the participants of the study wrote personal journals twice per week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The marks for the two entries were added together to give a weekly average. Under normal circumstances, a personal journal does not need to have an introduction and a conclusion. It does not even need to have paragraphs. The point behind having participants write, was to have them continue writing over a period of time. However, for me to investigate whether there was noticeable change in the participants' writing, I had to use a suitable rubric on personal journals to assess the work of the participants. Thus, the rubric in Table 6 specifically looked at content (referring to prompts given here), idea development, organisation, mechanics (referring to spelling and punctuation), as well as grammar and spelling to assess the written personal journals. I was not as strict in marking of the personal journals as I was with the essays, which I used to formatively assess the participants' level of proficiency as far as their writing was concerned. The following were the prompts:

- What struck you as important in this course? Why?
- What do you find particularly easy or difficult? Why?
- How does this course help you when you teach (during SBS), in your opinion?

- What aspect of the language skills do you encounter during SBS, which you feel you did not really learn quite well during your training?
- If there is anything that you could change about this course, what would it be? Why?

The writing was done over six weeks. Much of the writing took place while the participants were still on SBS, which made it hard to get the data as we depended on the internet for communication. Although I needed the participants to write for the duration of the time set, as Table 7 above indicates, Participants 4 and 5 failed to hand in entries in the last two weeks. As a researcher I could not force them to write since they had a right to withdraw from the study any time they wished to do so because their participation was voluntary (Creswell, 2013:136). They did not however withdraw formally, they simply stopped sending their journal entries. When I inquired about their reasons for not sending their journals as per the usual practice, they claimed that they did not have enough time to send at that moment, but they promised that they would continue participating in the study. They never sent those missing entries. I decided to use their data that I had collected till the moment they decided to cease their participation, since they had consented to the study and had participated up to that point without formally objecting to or withdrawing from the study.

The variation regarding the marks the participants obtained was due to a number of factors. One of the factors, which in my opinion played a major role, was time. When participants had enough time to write, they wrote sufficient content for me to work with. If not, they wrote one or two paragraphs which did not answer the given prompts. Thus, the mark for content was affected, leading to a lower mark for the week. Participants themselves also communicated to me that time was a very scarce commodity for them because of their heavy workload.

Participant 1 started off with a high mark of 12, but ended with a mark of 8. As the weeks progressed, the participant wrote less. Contrary to Participant 1, Participant 2 started off with 12 marks, then went down to 11 for two consecutive weeks. However, his performance ended on a high with 16 marks. His language proficiency was notable in the sense that his performance picked up from 11 to 16 marks towards the final weeks of writing. Similarly, Participant 6 started with 12 marks, and a significant change was most noticeable towards the end.

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Participant 3, on the other hand, started off with a good mark of 16, which dropped in the following week but picked up again. However, a significant drop was noted when she moved from 17 to 13 marks. This was due to the fact that the content of her writing decreased. As previously mentioned, Participants 4 and 5 did not complete their journals, which impacted on their measure of language proficiency as compared to the other participants. Participant 5's marks increased with every week the writing took place, so it was hoped that it would have continued in the same way until the final week. Participant 4's marks, on the other, were similar to those of Participant 1 in the sense that they both ended up with a lower mark compared to how they began.

The results highlighted in the table below indicate that language proficiency was promoted through narrative writing for some participants, but for others, there was no significant indication that any change took place at all. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Below, Figure 6 graphically demonstrates the performance of the participants during the period they were journaling.
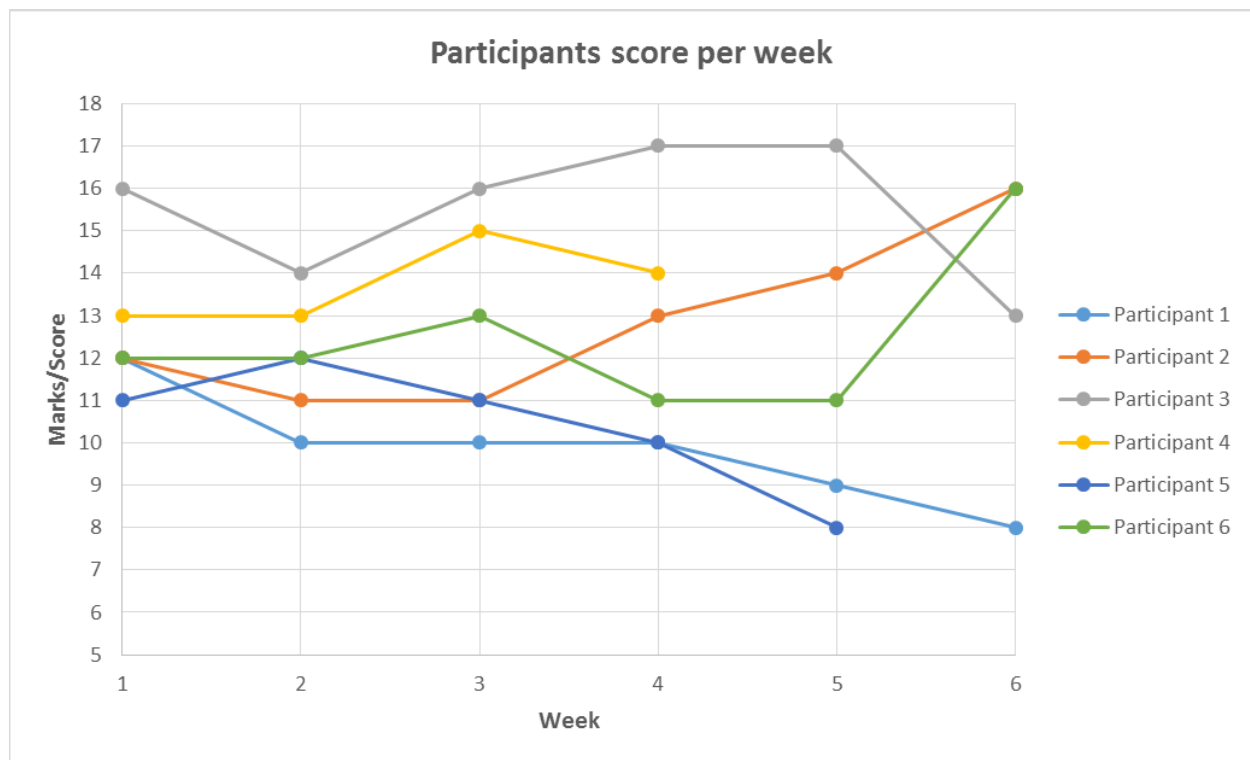

Figure 6:   Graphic representation of the performance of participants on personal journals

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As can be seen in Figure 6, the graphic representation of the marks participants obtained over the period of six weeks varied per participant. This was due to what Larsen-Freeman (2006) refers to as "waxing and waning" of proficiency. This means that participants (in this case) "did not progress through stages of development in a consistent manner" (Larsen-Freeman, 2006:593). There was some noticeable and steady improvement in some participants' performance over the course of some weeks, but a significant drop in the same participants' performance in the following week would also be noticed.

Two of the participants' (Participants 1 and 5) marks moved down from where they started off, and their proficiency just kept going down. Both of these participants belonged to the 'average' category. Although Participant 3, who initially belonged to the 'average' category too, started off with a high mark, the performance went down in the second week but steadily climbed up for about three weeks. However, a steep drop was noticed in the final week. In the case of Participant 4, who was in the initially in the 'good' category, it is interesting to note that her performance was constant for the first two weeks, after which it picked up and finally went down again. A distinctive increase in proficiency was only noticeable with Participants 2 and 6. Participant 2 initially belonged to the 'good' category, so his good level of proficiency was maintained. Participant 6, on the other hand, was in the 'average' category, so her level of proficiency improved. As previously alluded to (see 4.4.1.1), the results shown by Participants 2 and 6 are illustrative of the notion that in adult L2 learning, proficiency fluctuates, and often there is not a steady line of improvement. Furthermore, these types of results would not be a measure of acquiring native speaker proficiency. Consequently, slow and inconsistent progress in improving proficiency (grammatically, structurally and syntactically) as demonstrated by the results would be noted. As previously mentioned, this performance as graphically represented here was influenced by several factors, such as time for writing as well as the content that was narrated. Content in terms of what was written was too little, so that one could hardly use it to determine anything related to the different aspects of the rubric used to assess the writing.

4.4.1.2   *Common language issues in both personal journals and narrative frames*

Through the analysis of the participants' language biographies, personal journals and writing frames, I observed that their writing was not really natural as one would expect of writing done

privately, but rather read as if it had been elicited in a classroom context. It was expected that participants would engage in personal writing better, and that they would feel comfortable producing their narratives as opposed to academically elicited work (which would make them anxious because of the prospect of assessment). There were indications that some of them went back to their notebooks or summary books to refresh their minds on what they had learned in class. Hence, they simply wrote down what they got from their notebooks. The excerpt below exemplifies an instance in which Participant 6 simply copied her notes:

> *Reading is considered as a receptive process where readers receive information and new knowledge. During the extended reading, readers read for general meaning of the text, mainly for pleasure, curiosity or even for professional interest.*

The content that was written was the content that we discussed in the class that particular day. This means that most of the writing was from the notes, so the participant did not really have to think about which words to use and how.

Before I get into the common grammatical features that emerged from the writing of the participants, it is important to note that these grammatical hiccups featured throughout the participants' writing. Some were already noticeable in the essays and kept appearing in the personal journals. The common grammatical features that emerged from the participants' narratives are discussed below.

(a)   Tense constructions

Although some participants used the correct form of tenses in their narratives, most struggled to construct them correctly. In some instances, participants wrote about things which happened in the past, yet they used the present tense. The following extract exemplifies this:

> *We use to hear it from our school principal only during the morning assemblies, he speaks as if we all understand* (Participant 6).

Participant 6's reconstruction of the past event was not properly written. She used the word "use" instead of "used", and the second part of the sentence was written in the present tense as if it was a current situation or a habitual action.

(b)   Sentence constructions

Due to the limited vocabulary that the student teachers possessed, they tended to make poor choices regarding words in their sentences. From the analysis of the written data, it emerged that most participants had difficulties with proper and correct sentence construction.

> *Learning English is the biggest challenge faced by most learners/ students specifically those who were not laid on good foundation like me* (Participant 4).

In the above example, the meaning of the sentence was distorted because the writer made it to look as though he was the one to be laid on a good foundation and not his learning of English. Additionally, from the above example, it is evident that most participants struggled to construct complex sentences.

(c)   Subject-verb agreement

> *…expect the same satisfaction I gets when I watch visit her channel* (Participant 2).

It is evident from the example above that some participants did not adhere to subject-verb agreement. Participant 2 added an "–s" to the verb even though he used the pronoun "I". Similarly, in the example below, Participant 4 used the auxiliary verb "have", which is plural, instead of "has", which would go hand in hand with the word "everyone", thus making it incorrect.

> *Everyone have their own analysis of how what they found would have been put differently* (Participant 4).

The inaccuracy of the sentence did not end there, as the whole sentence's intended meaning was difficult to decipher.

(d)   Spelling

Although there were not many spelling mistakes, some participants made them nevertheless. One of the mistakes made with regard to spelling was a homophone "coarse". This is an easy mistake to make because it has a similar pronunciation with the word "course", which Participant 5 intended to use. As the narratives were typed, it is surprising that spelling mistakes occurred because one would hope that, using Microsoft Word's spellcheck feature, the errors would be identified so some of these spelling errors would not have been part of the text if the participant paid attention to her writing. It means that those spelling errors were highlighted, this particular participant did not just take time to attend to them. It is not clear whether the candidate did not attend to them because of lack of time, or if it was due to carelessness or ignorance on the part of the participant.

(e)   Mother tongue interference

    …all shorts of presentation… (Participant 2).

What the participant wrote in the above phrase is clearly an example of mother tongue interference because he meant to write the word "sorts" but ended up writing "shorts". This is an indication that the participant's mother tongue sounds were transferred into English, which could distort the whole meaning of the sentence. Some Oshikwanyama (one of many dialects of Oshiwambo) speakers tend to sound the 's' sound as 'sh'. Therefore, in this case when the participant was writing, he meant to write "sorts", but due to his usual way of pronouncing 's' as 'sh', the word "shorts" was written when in fact he meant to write "sorts".

(f)   Sentence fragments

Sentence fragments are also mistakes that a spelling and grammar check would have picked up. But as with Participant 5 earlier in this section, the example below shows a mistake that such a check would have picked up and corrected. It would have been highlighted due to its ungrammatical phrasing as no complete thought was expressed.

Throughout my learning and reading of novels (Participant 1).

And all this make things (Participant 3).

Some participants' writing was full of fragments which they intended to be read as proper sentences. However, as shown in the above examples, these fragments read more like headings than sentences because they did not follow the "subject-verb-object" rule.

(g)   Omission of words/articles

The school which structured under a marula tree and it was just a kilometer away from our house (Participant 6).

The participant in the above example, omitted the auxiliary verb "is", so the sentence read incorrectly. The same was the case in the example below, where the participant failed to write the infinitive marker "to":

What a week, I have write my journal (Participant 4).

I think was about five or six years old by that time (Participant 5).

In the example above, the participant omitted the pronoun "I". It is not so common for learners/students of English to omit the pronoun "I", but from experience what happens is that they would normally write a lowercase "i" instead of capitalising it. Additionally, because participants were under pressure as far as time was concerned, it is likely that they did not proofread their work, so it is hoped that some of these mistakes might not have been made if time was not an issue.

(h)   Usage of incorrect words and uncommon words

At the start of the course everything was easy but as time goes on I trucked with some important content in the course. I trucked with one of the reading method, the phonetic method struck with transparent orthography which is the relationship between sounds and

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letters in that language is consistent, direct connection between letters and sound (Participant 1).

In the above example, the participant used the term "trucked", which is not commonly used. Merriam-Webster (s.a.) classifies it an "intransitive verb" that is defined as "to roll along especially in an easy untroubled way". This is an indication that some participants had a wide vocabulary, hence the usage of technical jargon. On the other hand, the participant may have meant that she *struggled* as time went on because she started off by mentioning that the content learned at the start of the course was easy.

In terms of the types of errors student teachers made in their journals and language biographies, Taun (2010: 83) suggests that because writers have to achieve a high degree of autonomy and self-sufficiency, it is very important to promote ways of self-correcting from an early stage. He further claims that teachers need to pay more attention to language items which are considered as important to readers. He stresses the following points that should be kept in mind:

• Concentrate on language errors which have global rather than local effects. This means attending to formal language errors which interfere with meaning over a broader span than the individual clause or sentence.

• Do not attempt to cover too many repairs. It is quite impossible for learners to cope with too many problems simultaneously.

In summing up, Stam (2010:23) states that when assessing students' proficiency, one should take note of two things: performance and production errors because the problem is that learners may produce grammatically correct utterances though they may assign different meanings to semantic classifications. This is illustrated in 4.4.1.2 where examples of how participants made some production errors by either omitting words or producing sentence fragments are included. In cases where performance and productions errors were made, feedback was given (see Addendum K). Javadi-Safa (2018:15) considers writing a cognitive activity, thus it is up to the teachers to help students with improving their writing skills by drawing attention to significance of writing skills, just as I have been doing in the course of this study.

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4.4.2   Topic 2: Promotion of language teacher proficiency through narrative writing

The second topic that emanated from the analysis of both the personal journals and the narrative frames is presented and discussed here. The study intended to explore whether the participants of this study's language teacher proficiency could be promoted through narrative writing. Below, I briefly provide a definition as well as a description of what language teacher proficiency is.

Both content and thematic analysis of this study's research instruments led to the participants providing insight into what they knew as a result of undergoing teacher training at HPC. Regarding language teacher proficiency, participants related it as their ability to teach in the language that they were being trained to teach in the future. However, since student teachers were on SBS during the data collection for this study, I deemed it necessary to find out from them how they found learning English, especially when they used it in their teaching.

In order to present the findings on whether language teacher proficiency was promoted through the writing of narratives, it is necessary to first establish this study's understanding of language teacher proficiency.

Language teacher proficiency is regarded by some researchers as teacher cognition (Cahn & Renandya, 2017), and by others as teacher subject knowledge (Richards, Conway, Rosvist & Harvey, 2013). What this simply means is that a language teacher of English is not just somebody who can hold a conversation or greet in English, but somebody who can for instance carry out important tasks in English without a problem as required by his/her status of being a language teacher. Language teacher proficiency makes reference to possession of academic language knowledge and skills in addition to knowledge about the language that a teacher needs to execute his/her duties of teaching a language.

A good example to explain what language teacher proficiency is, is to consider Borg's (2003) representation of teacher cognition, schooling professional development and classroom practice, which in my opinion encompasses the aims of this study. This is because, prior to teacher training, students possess a wealth of information in terms of what English as a subject is, although this information may be inadequate, thus the need to come for teacher training. The subject content

knowledge (teacher cognition) they end up possessing after professional teacher training is a result of many factors, such as professional coursework, interaction in the classroom with regard to the subject to be taught as well as contextual factors surrounding these particular student teachers.

In the diagram below, Borg (2003) shows the elements that constitute teacher cognition, the first of which is schooling. Results of schooling end in professional coursework – existing or new. He further shows that a teacher's cognition is influenced by contextual factors which in turn translate into a teacher's classroom practices.

Extensive experience of classrooms which defines early cognitions and shapes teachers' perceptions of initial training.

May affect existing cognitions although especially when unacknowledged, these may limit its impacts.

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┌─────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────┐
│    Schooling    │─────────────▶│ Professional coursework│
└─────────────────┘              └──────────────────────┘
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Beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions metaphors, conceptions perspectives.

TEACHER COGNITION

About teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, instructional activities, self.

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┌─────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────┐
│Contextual factors│────────────▶│   Classroom practice │
└─────────────────┘              │including practice teaching│
                                 └──────────────────────┘
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Influence practice either by modifying cognitions or else directly, in which case incongruence between cognition and practice may result.

Defined by the interaction of cognitions and contextual factors. In turn, classroom experience influences cognitions unconsciously and/or through conscious reflection.
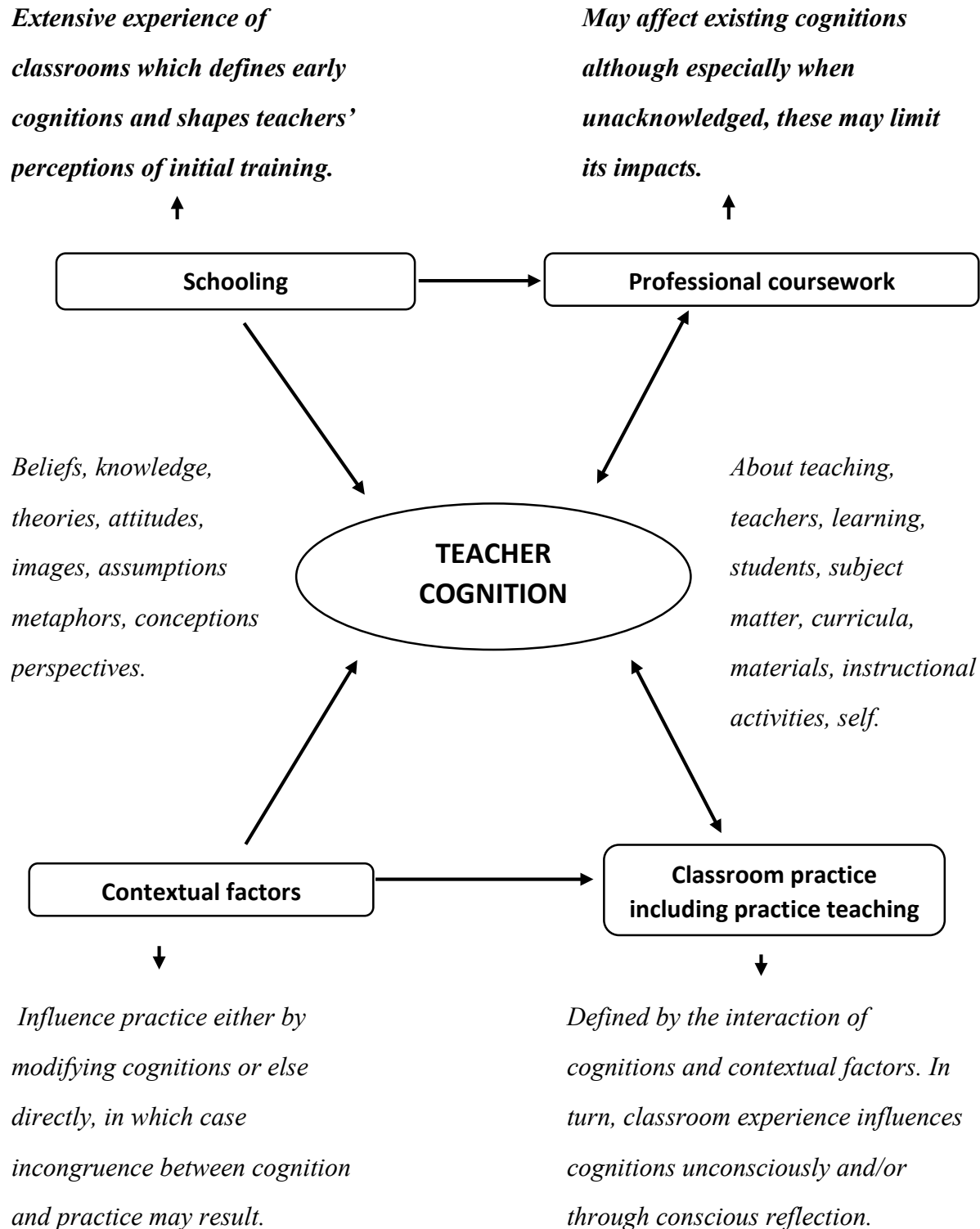
Figure 7:   Teacher cognition (Borg, 2003)

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Borg (2003:81) discusses language teacher proficiency in three ways: teacher cognition and prior language experience, cognition and teacher education, as well as cognition and classroom practice. All three mattered as far as the analysis of both the personal journals and narrative frames was concerned. Since the students were on SBS practice, they had the ideal circumstances to reflect on what they knew and what they need to know to teach English.

Results from the two documents indicate that some participants alluded to how they interacted with the English knowledge that they encountered prior to as well as during teacher training. Some of their responses to the prompts "How does this course help you when you teach (during SBS), in your opinion?' are given below:

Participant 1 states that

> *This course is helping me much during my SBS especially in preparing the reading lesson. During our training we are being taught on how to prepare a reading lesson, which must contain three activities, the pre- reading activities, while reading activities and the post reading activities. In pre reading activities they are done before the reading starts to activate learners' pre-knowledge on the text or story being read, the next one is while reading activities where reading take place and the thirdly post reading activities which emphasises the lesson content.*

Part of what constitutes teacher cognition (Borg, 2003) (see 4.4.2) is professional coursework, which includes subject matter as well as instructional activities. Those are elements that emerge from Participant 1's response (such as phases of a lesson) on how this course has helped her when she taught during SBS.

Participant 5 on the other hand states that

> *What struck me as important in this course (English Language Education 3), is the explanation of the theories of nature of learning to read even though I have learned them already in the first year when I was introduced to Oshindonga Education 2A. These theories are: bottom-up, top down processing and meta-cognitive. An understanding of*

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these theories could be used as the basis for improving the techniques of teaching reading. By doing so, the reading proficiency of learners of English as a 2nd language could be significantly enhanced.

Participant 5's response is based more on schooling, which as previously stated, is part of teacher cognition. He referred to theories of language learning that he learned about.

Participants' responses to this prompt - 'What aspect of the language skills do you encounter during SBS, which you feel you did not really learn quite well during your training?' are also given and briefly discussed below:

Participant 4 states that

> *I personally feel like I am a little inexperienced when it comes to speaking as it combines the hard parts of writing and listening, it requires much more in-depth knowledge of the grammar and pronouncing that you are now required to use in real time. As a teacher, you have to get the pronunciation right, because you have learners looking up to you, this just complicate the matter even more.*

In the case of Participant 4, the visible element of teacher cognition is classroom practice including practice teaching. An element of reflection is noticeable when she refers to her inexperience regarding teaching speaking.

Participant 6 on the other hand states

> *Although I have learned phonetic alphabet in previous years, I feel I'm not fully developed to be a fluent reader. This is because even though we learned phonetics in 3 different modules, it was just phonetic alphabets, repetition of other, with limited word where the emphasis was e.g. bath, cat…, there was no further discussions on other words. I believe that this can not be a barrier towards my profession at all as there are dictionaries where I can further. I can also search for words pronunciations on google voice search.*

Although Participant 6 referred to her professional coursework, more is on the shortcomings that she feels she lacks on her teacher cognition. Despite that she has demonstrated agency by stating that she searches for word pronunciation on Google voice search.

That being said, most participants felt that their teacher cognition concerning classroom practice was still limited; therefore, there was still a need for professional development. These issues will be discussed in more detail in 4.4.5.

4.4.3 Topic 3: Types of identities constructed through narrative writing

The third topic is on how the participants regarded themselves as derived from the written narratives.

This study aimed to figure out what types of insights student teachers constructed as far as their continued professional development was concerned. The analysis of the collected data was done against Kubanyiova's (2017) aspect of possible selves. Possible selves refer to cognitive components of self-awareness with regard to the hopes, fears, threats and goals one has for oneself. In this context, Kubanyiova's (2017) ideal language teacher selves, ought-to language teacher selves and feared language teacher selves were utilised. It is important to note that the relationship between agency and structure in identity formation played a great role in terms of how student teachers took responsibility for their own learning despite the constraints that they might have experienced. These categories are discussed below.

4.4.3.1   Ideal language teacher selves

Participants identified themselves differently based on their different circumstances, subject knowledge or lack thereof. In this category, it was found that some participants actually identified themselves as having acquired a high level of proficiency in English, and Participant 3 claimed to have initiated this by himself, as in the following excerpt:

It is with no hesitation and indeed great appreciation that I can say out loud and with all the confidence that my English stance today was greatly improved by my love for reading novels back then, newspapers and all sort of writings in my childhood.

Additionally, Participant 2 further stated that:

Well, I have changed a little now on my passion and love for novels. Even though I still do pick one of two in a month but I am still looking forwards to new discoveries of the current time.

Although his statement started off by referring to what he had actually achieved in his language learning and thus how he identified himself, the second part was more about how he wished to be, the ought-to self:

This course helped me in various ways such as I got a knowhow on how to introduce several topics in English that I learnt through the presentation that we do. It also helped me in managing the class whereby some of these things I learnt them from the lecturer for instance not allowing distractions as well unnecessary late coming.

Participants were aware of their own shortcomings as far as their language and language teacher proficiency was concerned. The following excerpt from Participant 6 illustrates this:

I struggle with tenses, especially the past tense of most irregular verbs. I never had a reading habit where I could have learned words arrangement in sentences and developed a rich vocabulary that could have bailed me out today.

Participant 1 also identified apostrophe use as a problem, but added other grammatical elements:

I am struck in it because most of the time I do misuse the apostrophe with "its", wrong word used I do struggle with the passive and active voice, and do have a problem on using I and me and mispronounced words.

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Participant 2 shared the same sentiments:

> *It is thus my greatest wish and desire that one of the good days, I wake from my bed and realise my writing skills have improved, but that is only a wish and I so [perfectly know that dreams do not manifest themselves unless acted upon. An English man spoke a well-known saying that, "practice makes perfect and that perseverance brings perfection" so this will serve as my motivation in dealing with my not so prefect writing skill until I could one day gladly testify to it.*

It is interesting to note that participants were aware of their power (agency) over their own learning; that it was up to them to change in terms of their education, specifically regarding their English proficiency as well their language teacher proficiency. They also identified areas they found problematic and thus knew what they needed to do to improve themselves.

Participant 4 stated the following:

> *Most of the learner are really struggling with English and this bought in me the desire and need to help and be a hand for them to know English well and get away from failing English.*

The metaphorical language use here in *"be a hand for them"* indicated a proficient user of English. She demonstrated the passion she would show towards her future learners because the usage of the word "hand" showed closeness to her pupils.

Some participants were of the opinion that, since they had learned English now, they would be better teachers, especially in terms of presenting lessons. Some also felt that they had acquired skills in different areas, as the example below illustrates:

> *Based on my stance now, there is a good chance I will be a great speakers in the future* (Participant 1).

Another participant constructed her identities through the narratives she wrote as follows below:

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> *At times I find myself yearning to learn to get away from the vernacular language and learn to write and speak in more formal ways which does not really come naturally and this course offers the perfect platform to do so.* (Participant 4)*.*

It is apparent that participants of this study knew where they wished to be in future, as future proficient teachers of English.

Finally, some participants indicated their wishes about the type of teachers they wished to be regarding their own proficiency as well as that of their future learners. The below example by Participant 3 illustrates this:

> *Making changes to my teaching practice is something that is very important to me, because I wish to be great teacher in the future and be able to effectively teach. This is probably because I feel like there is a need of serious improvements to the education system, especially when it comes to the teaching strategies which should give more freedom of participation.*

What has come out of both the personal journals and narrative frames is the amount of knowledge students seem to have acquired during their training and they have also stated how enriching and difficult their 'practice teaching' (Borg, 2003) was – there were subject areas that they felt they were in charge of passing onto learners easily and there were also sections of subject knowledge that they lacked. I feel that having them dealing with those above prompts enabled the students to reflect on their practices as well as their teacher cognition.

4.4.3.2   *Ought-to language teacher selves*

The analysis of the data collected indicated that there were certain characteristics or traits that the participants felt they did not necessarily want to adhere to, but realised they needed to develop as a result of their training. Some indicated that they had an obligation to assist their learners, especially those who struggled, as exemplified by the following excerpt:

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It is high time we consider and evaluate our own foundation through the knowledge and content we are giving and exposing to younger ones and instilling in their minds with the excuse of literature (Participant 1).

I feel that the participant is indicating that she and other English teachers should be considerate of the information/content that they are passing on to learners, though the last part of her utterance (excuse of literature) does not make much sense. To me this is an indication of the self she wants to assume.

In the future I am going to try to bring more relevance in my teaching of English with the common languages of our people (Participant 3).

This particular participant is hoping for positive change regarding how learners should be considered, putting importance on learners' learning and the process through which he wishes to accomplish it.

In the future, I am going to try to have my learners be the center of the teaching learning process by ensuring that they take responsibility of their learning progress and I will observe their weaknesses be helped individually (Participant 5).

From the statements presented under the ought - to selves heading, participants clearly knew how they needed to grow academically in terms of the knowledge and skills that they were acquiring at UNAM during their training. Furthermore, they seem to focus mainly on changes to content and pedagogy.

4.4.3.3   *Feared language teacher selves*

The last category/theme in this topic refers to traits that participants in this study did not wish to be identified with. Some participants indicated that they did not want to be identified as incompetent. In the example below, Participant 3 demonstrated dismay at the way student teachers were being trained, which if it continued, would lead him to be a teacher that he did not want to be classified as:

Ever since I have enrolled in UNAM I was taught different types of lesson plan because each and every lecturer has their own preferences. I personally think that UNAM stakeholders must come together and agree on one format of lesson plan and what to include under each component to avoid confusion among the students.

Additionally, some participants expressed fear at being considered inexperienced, as in the next examples by Participant 4:

I personally feel like I am a little inexperienced when it comes to speaking as it combines the hard parts of writing and listening, it requires much more in-depth knowledge of the grammar and pronouncing that you are now required to use in real time. As a teacher, you have to get the pronunciation right, because you have learners looking up to you, this just complicate the matter even more.

From this theme, it is apparent that student teachers saw themselves in a different light, mostly based on their capabilities and learned content. It is pleasing to note that they were aware of who they were in terms of them being student teachers as well as their soon-to-be role of qualified teachers.

In most of the above examples, reference was made to the factors that enabled (enablers) participants an easy passage in their journeys of learning English. Below, I present what I term 'disablers' because these factors hindered proper and efficient journeys to learning English as far as the participants were concerned.

4.4.3.4 Disablers

The information presented here mostly came from the language biographies. Many participants referred to facts that incapacitated their journeys of learning English, thus making it very hard for them to learn English easily.

One participant stated:

Adding to that I realized, in as much as teachers may be trying their best efforts to gives the best education they can, another reason most of the rural children hardly learn fast is lack of encouragement and inspiration or motivation from homes. If parents are themselves not speaking English they will have no desire to encourage their learners to speak it either, not to talk of stopping them from speaking English in their presence thinking children are gossiping them. I remember how my grandmother ones passed a rule that nobody should speak an English word around her else she would hit him/her with her walking stick and apparently that English belong only at school. So I understood thereof how we so lacked not only support but we were also discouraged to find pleasure in learning English or experiencing the fun of speaking it.

Parents who themselves had sent their children to learn were said to be the reason why the learning of English had not been easy for some participants. This was especially true in the case of the example above, where a foreign language was regarded as a means to alienate the grandparent due to her lack of proficiency in the language. Furthermore, opportunities to practise what the participant learned at school were denied to him/her.

Another participant had this to say regarding why it was not easy for him/her to learn English:

Firstly I begin learning English as a second language in grade one but articulation never came easy, more so a challenge because even my respective teacher taught in the local language.

Another participant shared the sentiments of the above participant:

My lower primary teachers were all Oshiwambo speakers and we therefore ended up having Oshiwambo as a medium of instructions even in English lessons and this gave me a little to no motivation to learn English.

The participant below interestingly blamed the lack of ease in learning English on lack of exposure to English spoken by native speakers of the language when he/she stated that:

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No enough interaction with English native speakers was a great challenge too.

This particular participant was of the opinion that, if he/she would have been exposed to native English, his/her journey of learning English would have been different to how it actually took place, as the exposure would have enriched his/her speech in terms of pronunciation as well as the grammatical structures that he/she may have been exposed to.

As there were factors that made the English learning journey easy for some participants, there were also factors that hampered some participants from experiencing a smooth journey of learning English, as discussed above.

4.4.4   Topic 4: Student teachers' language teaching development

Language teacher proficiency involves knowledge and content of the target subject in a way that one can teach the subject, which is regarded as pedagogical content knowledge (Kŏnig et al., 2016:320), and/or being competent or skilled to teach a particular subject, in this case English (Richards, 2017:8). Pedagogical content knowledge is acquired through training, thus the subject content that participants had learned is presented here.

The data analysis surrounding student teachers' teaching development was done in line with Archer's notion of agency versus structure. Further, the analysis of the research instruments (personal journal, essay and writing frame) revealed information about the participants' language teaching development in terms of what they had learned in the English module, and suggestions on what was lacking in their language training are presented here.

The participants indicated that they had progressed in terms of their subject knowledge expertise as well as their teaching practice. Some went as far as indicating what sort of development they had gone through in terms of their teacher training.

4.4.4.1   Areas improved through training

Given the participants' knowledge of English at their entry point into UNAM, most of them were aware of their weaknesses regarding this subject that they would be teaching upon their exit. It is therefore significant to present here how all of them regarded their English teaching development. Table 8 presents participants' progress and examples of their language teacher development.

Table 8:   Student teachers' types of teaching development

Participant	Type of teaching development attained during teacher training	Participant quotes
1	Participant 1 indicated that she had learned how to plan a lesson, and that training had benefited her in a sense that she knew about the stages of the lesson, as opposed to when she started off. Furthermore, she indicated that her proficiency as a student had developed due to the training that she had been receiving.	*"This course develops students' language proficiency as it investigates phonetics (sound system), morphology (word categories and their structures) and spelling rules of a particular language. Learning the sound systems, it is of paramount importance as it distinguishes between the naturally sound of word and their representation in writing. At the end of this module I came to know how to recognize the relationships between letters, combination of letters and their sounds."* *"I was taught in this course how to integrate them in my daily lessons. I found this significant to the learners for the reason that, when I integrate what happens in their surroundings it attract learner's attention and this enable them to always focus their attention to the teacher and fully participate as well as improve their learning."*

Participant	Type of teaching development attained during teacher training	Participant quotes
3	For Participant 3, three topics that training intensively covered were phonetics, which he regarded as very important, literature as a very easy topic, as well as theories of reading development. He also specified the two areas in which he had developed, namely speaking and writing.	*"In English language 2 we learnt a lot about literature. This was the easiest topic I had ever learnt, since I had the background knowledge of the topic. I like reading stories and it was easy identifying different elements of a story. I learnt how to reading the story intensively and understand the hidden message in it."* *"What I found important in this course was the learning of phonetics. It is obvious that one who doesn't know phonetics will experience problem with pronunciation as well as reading."* *"This course was helpful in improving my fluency in speaking and polishing my writing skills. My writing skills drastically improved after I have learnt about writing, specifically the steps of writing process they assisted me in becoming a better writer."*
4	Participant 4 found being trained to create teaching aids significant because it empowered him to accommodate all different types of learning styles. He also felt that theories of reading stood out for him, just as Participant 3 did.	*"I have learned how to design teaching aids. Teaching aids are explained as an integral component in any classroom. Using of teaching aids to me are significant because they help learners improve their reading, speaking, hearing and writing skills. The use of various teaching aids accommodates almost every learner in class as we have different learning styles."*
5	Participant 5 stated that she had learned different things in the English course, such as giving clear instructions to learners, and she was confident of her English teaching skills as a result of being trained to teach. She also felt that she was now a fluent speaker of English.	*"English coarse is also helping me during my SBS since it is in this course were I was taught how to give instructions to learners, I was taught that the instructions should be simple, clear and the language used should be age appropriate and I use this daily during the teaching and learning process of English lessons."*

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Participant	Type of teaching development attained during teacher training	Participant quotes
6	Participant 6 mentioned having learned how marking is done. Additionally, she had learned something about pronunciation, extensive reading as well as question tags.	*"What I found easy and interesting in this course was practice marking learners' narrative pieces of writing. I acquired meanings of (a red ink pen that I have seen in my composition and letters book back those days e.g. Sp- spelling error) I learned to assess different learners' thought to a similar situation which is basically depends on learners' background knowledge, creativity, feelings and emotions."*

Participant 2 was not included in the above table because none of what he wrote related to teaching development attained.

The narratives written by the participants revealed that, apart from acquiring language proficiency during their training, they indicated that they had also acquired and were in possession of insightful subject content, in this case knowledge about the English language and about teaching English, which was their professional development. This revelation ties in with the participants' identities that they had constructed for themselves through their writing, which was where they were at the time of writing, where they wished to see themselves in future in terms of teaching, as well as aspects of learning and teaching English which they feared. The type of self-awareness that these participants demonstrated through their writing was significant for this study because it was expected that "change in progress" (Larsen-Freeman, 2006:590) in terms of promotion of language and language teacher proficiency would actually take place. As a future teacher, one is not a competent teacher without knowledge of the language as well as knowledge about the language.

4.4.4.2 *Specific language teacher knowledge identified by participants*

Participants referred to specific details that they had learned in the English modules, and having taught almost all the modules one has to do if one is specialising in English as a second language from year 1 up to year 4, I have a pretty good idea about the contents of these modules. Results from the personal journals that participants wrote indicate that their writing contained one

dimension – that is, content knowledge of English, which (Richards, 2012:46) refers to as a core of teaching, as Table 9 below shows

Table 9:   Specific content areas learned

Participant	Examples of specific content from the course outline and specific year it was covered	Year taught
1	• Handwriting skills	• 3
	• Decoding	• 2 & 3
	• Letter-sound relationship	• 3
	• Phonetic method	• 3
	• Cross-curricular issues	• 3
	• Syntax	• 2-4
	• Morphemes	• 2-4
	• Fossilisation	• 3
	• The writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, publishing)	• 3
2	• Direct reading thinking activity	• 3
	• Developmental stages of reading	• 3
	• Types of speaking skills:	• 2
	- Interactive	
	- Partially interactive	
	- Non-interactive	
3	• Literature	• 1-4
	• Novel	• 1-4
	• Poetry – haiku, acrostic and cinquain poems	• 2-4
	• Phonological awareness	• 2 & 3
	• Fluency	• 3
	• Communicative language teaching	• 3
	• Morphology: stem, base, prefix and suffix	• 2

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Participant	Examples of specific content from the course outline and specific year it was covered	Year taught
4	• Theories of the nature of learning to read • Morphology • Articulation • Top-down processing • Bottom-up processing • Schemata • Reading techniques: prediction, etc.	• 3 • 1-3 • 2 • 3 • 3 • 3 • 3

5	• Phonemes
	• Coordinating conjunctions
	• Homophones
	• Punctuation
	• Essay writing
	• Degrees of comparison
	• Parts of speech:
	  - Vowels
	  - Consonants
		• 2 & 3
		• 4
		• 4
		• 4
		• 4
		• 4
		• 4

6	• Pronunciation, intonation, fluency and pace • Question tags • Contractions • Phonetics • Phonics • Verbs – singular and plural forms • Setting of different types of questions	• 2 & 3 • 3 • 3 • 3 • 3 • 4 • 3

The table above contains the specific details of the English content knowledge that the participants had learned at UNAM. It is a good indication that student teachers had actually learned something, although I have mentioned that there was evidence that some participants had gone back to their notebooks to copy what they had learned.

Additionally, it is clear that participants had acquired pedagogical content knowledge. A few of them actually remembered what was covered in their first year of training, for example Participant 2 who mostly just wrote about literature in his journals. As Participant 2 did not really abide to the

given prompts (see Addendum B), it is interesting to note that he referred mostly to the content covered in year 1 and 2 of their English language training.

Participant 1 mostly wrote about the content that she learned in year 2 and 3, though much of what she referred to was covered in year 3.

Although participants wrote about the specific content in the above table, they did not indicate that they knew all of it well. Some indicated that they either struggled to teach or had limited knowledge on. This is despite the fact that they were taught that content at UNAM. Another interesting observation is that they also referred to the content that they learned in year 1 and 2, although some participants claimed to have not been taught certain content which they in fact learned in the previous year as well as in their current module.

Participant 3 mostly tackled the two literary genres of prose and poetry, as well as speaking because she referred to speaking skills (pace, fluency as well as intonation).

Unlike the other participants I referred to earlier, Participant 4 and 5 tackled specific content for year 3 (Participant 4) and year 4 (Participant 5). This was not surprising because the content learned was still in their short-term memory. They also both covered content learned in year 1 and 2.

Participant 6 tackled content covered in year 2 as well as in year 4. This is what Borg (2003) refers to as teacher cognition.

4.4.4.3   Participants' deficient areas

From the participants' narratives, there were many areas where they felt the need for improvement and some that required changes. Below, I give a summary of the areas the participants referred to.

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(a)   English language education content

Participant 1 firstly suggested that the timetable should be more flexible so that the English lecturer could deal with the issues student teachers experienced on an individual basis. Secondly, she would have liked their ELE course content to be on par with the content to be passed on to the learners.

(b)   Decoding skills

Some participants suggested that student teachers should be taught decoding skills they could in turn pass them on to their learners, for them to become fluent readers. Participant 6 had a shortcoming with regard to being a fluent reader, so this was how she put it:

> *Although I have learned phonetic alphabet in previous years, I feel I'm not fully developed to be a fluent reader. This is because even though we learned phonetics in 3 different modules, it was just phonetic alphabets, repetition of other, with limited word where the emphasis was e.g. bath, cat…, there was no further discussions on other words. I believe that this cannot be a barrier towards my profession at all as there are dictionaries where I can further. I can also search for words pronunciations on google voice search.*

(c)   Compressed English module

Other participants referred to different areas, such as Participant 3 who stated that the module's content should be reduced in quantity in order to give student teachers an opportunity to learn more by themselves without the pressure to pass the module.

(d)   Pronunciation

Apart from thinking only about their own teaching development, some participants suggested that teachers at junior primary should really put an effort into setting a good foundation for learners in those grades. This, they suggested, would lessen grammatical errors and other sorts of problems that learners may experience later in senior primary phase.

Some participants, such as Participants 1, 2 and 6, drew attention to the fact that their incompetence regarding English skills, especially with regard to pronunciation, was due to the lack of sufficient training, as Participant 2 stated:

> *There is a great need of attention on my pronunciation of some words. I can remember there was a that were I was teaching reading aloud so as a teacher I have to give an example on how to read aloud I have to read aloud to learners and I end up pronouncing words incorrectly to learners. I am requesting more time to be spent on speaking, doing some presentation per week individual during the training.*

Participant 3, on the other hand, was dismayed by the fact that she did not learn much as far as the listening skill was concerned, and additionally she did not believe that speaking was emphasised enough for her to be competent teaching it. Participant 4 felt that some topics that they were taught were irrelevant to their learning, such as articulation. However, he suggested that handwriting should be incorporated into the course outline, though it was already covered in the ELE 3 course.

Participant 5 stated that more effort needed to be made on the practical aspects of the course because that is how students are enabled to see modelled lessons or plan their own lessons.

(e)   Cross-curricular issues

Other areas that some participants pointed out were cross-curricular issues. They felt that it should become common practice that student teachers plan their lessons on cross-curricular issues. Some participants also felt that writing should be introduced in the English course, because most of them felt that they were not properly trained to tackle it during their training, thus it became a challenge during SBS. Participant 4, however, confirmed that cross-curricular issues were taught as he stated:

> *In our daily basis we come across several Cross Curricular Issues and I was taught in this course how to integrate them in my daily lessons. I found this significant to the learners for the reason that, when I integrate what happens in their surroundings it attract learner's attention and this enable them to always focus their attention to the teacher and fully participate as well as improve their learning.*

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Cross-curricular issues were actually part of the ELE 3 course at the time, as the participant alluded.

(f)   Phonics

A few participants pointed out that the inclusion of phonics was non-existent in any of the English modules. As much as these participants suggested those aspects as needing to be introduced or be included in the content that they were receiving, these areas were already part of the course they were registered for. Phonics was covered in year 1 of their training, in the second semester, under the title English Education.

(g)   Making inferences and drawing conclusions

Another suggestion was further work on making inferences as well as drawing conclusions. As mentioned in 4.3.4.3, this is also part of the course outline for ELE 3 as well as being trained on how to grade learners' exercise books, especially the directed and creative type of writing.

(h)   Creative writing

Some participants referred to lack of knowledge on creative writing, particularly with regard to longer pieces. This is how Participant 5 put it:

> *The writing skill was the aspect I encountered during SBS and I did not really learn it quite well during training because I am struggling with marking essays and letters which we did not get much training on it.*

Given what most participants pointed out above, as I alluded to earlier, this lack of subject content knowledge seems to have stemmed from lack of keeping notes about what was covered during each module, or simply remembering what was covered in the course, which one could easily figure out. Course outlines can also provide this particular information, as can keeping portfolios that students can refer back to.

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4.4.5   Results from the narrative frames

The results of the narrative frames are presented here in Table 10 below. The aim of the narrative frames was to study the participants' teacher education experiences holistically, so they were administered last. The other reason for giving them the narrative frames as the last writing task was to determine whether corrective feedback that I had been giving them had served its purpose, if it had actually helped them to improve on the errors that they had been making. Narrative frames had starter sentences that participants had to complete.

Table 10:   Results from narrative frames

Participant	Best thing about teacher training	First teaching experience	My learners …	In own class I had power to…	Reasons for changes to my teaching practice	Difficult time in class during TP/SBS	Research to deal with problem experienced in class
1	• training to become a qualified teacher • acquiring of pedagogical knowledge • becoming a reflective teacher	• lacked knowledge regarding lesson preparation • lacked knowledge about different activities as well as teaching aids for a lesson	• behaved well • asked questions where understanding was lacking • did their homework on time	• punish those who disrupted the lessons, latecomers as well those who did not do their tasks	• to improve the teaching of direct and indirect speech due to mistakes by the student teacher	• preparing reading-aloud activities due to limited knowledge on reading	• to research factors that lead to Grade 5 learners' reading-aloud difficulties and find ways to eliminate those factors.
2	• opportunity to explore leadership skills and to communicate, handle and deal with people with different behaviours, understandings and social beliefs	• was excited at first at the prospect of teaching • did not find it fun to teach • felt uncomfortable when teaching in the presence of support/mentor teacher	• had different characteristics • mostly behaved well • were inspired by the student teacher	• maintain order in the classroom • punish bad behaviour and reward good behaviour	• to be more innovative and open to new things	• explaining new vocabulary to learners due to lack of exposure or prior knowledge	• to find out the importance of practical lessons when learners have to learn new things

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Participant	Best thing about teacher training	First teaching experience	My learners …	In own class I had power to…	Reasons for changes to my teaching practice	Difficult time in class during TP/SBS	Research to deal with problem experienced in class
3	• receiving content that would be required upon completion of studies • practical experiences on how to teach and prepare lessons	• lacked knowledge on lesson preparation, teaching aids and activities • preparation was also lacking	• behaved well • asked questions for clarification or when they did not understand the taught content • showed no disruptive behaviour during lessons • took responsibility for their own learning by completing their tasks on time	• root out undesirable behaviour especially, of latecomers • make rules which learners had to abide to	• to keep on improving problematic areas	• creating pre-listening activities due to lack of knowledge about listening	• to research factors that lead to poor listening among Grade 6 learners
4	• gaining more teaching experience	• was nervous	• were excited	• make rules	• to influence learners' learning for the better	• managing classes • monitoring learners' activities	• to research the importance of classroom management

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Participant	Best thing about teacher training	First teaching experience	My learners …	In own class I had power to…	Reasons for changes to my teaching practice	Difficult time in class during TP/SBS	Research to deal with problem experienced in class
5	- preparing to become a future teacher - learning about strategies to manage future classroom	- did not know learners' names, making it hard to communicate with them - struggled to find appropriate content for different topics - had no proper knowledge on how to use the syllabus and other documents to plan for lessons	were very eager to learn and showed this quality by participating so well in the classroom.	minimise disruptive behaviour	to be a great teacher in future and be able to effectively teach	getting the learners to deliver unprepared speeches due to lack of knowledge on the format of unprepared speech	

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Participant	Best thing about teacher training	First teaching experience	My learners …	In own class I had power to…	Reasons for changes to my teaching practice	Difficult time in class during TP/SBS	Research to deal with problem experienced in class
6	• acquiring both theoretical and practical pedagogical knowledge • writing exams on learned content	• had no idea what the whole process was about • did not practise learner-centred education in class • struggled to link prepared teaching materials with lesson content	• were the best to ever be taught • were disciplined and cooperated with the student teacher • were always eager to have the student teacher in their classes	• teach and communicate with learners present in the classroom • demand that learners only speak English in class • give or deny permission to learners who wanted to go out	• to improve current teaching practices • to be more engaging towards all learners despite their learning styles and capabilities	• using a learner as an example when referring to different types of literary characters	• to explore the inadequate use of teaching aids in Grade 5 to find out why teachers use textbooks only, no other teaching material, as well as how teaching with a textbook affects the learning process

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, narrative frames (see Addendum C), which I adopted from Barkhuizen and Wette (2008), constituted the last task that I administered to the six participants after they completed the process of journal writing. The writing frames are prediction sentence frames which provide the writer with the opportunity to choose and use their own language based on the given sentence starters. Although there were 14 sentence starters, I have only presented seven in Table 10 above because I combined some. Below, I discuss the contents of Table 10 per sentence starter.

4.4.5.1   Best thing about teacher training

Participants alluded to different experiences that they termed as "the best thing" about teacher training. They particularly referred to what they were currently learning, which formed part of the theoretical and practical knowledge they needed to acquire so that they would be in better positions to teach later after completion of their studies. The results also reveal that participants found getting teaching experience a good thing about their training as teachers. Teaching experience was the integral part of the participants' teaching lives; thus, they found it one of the best things about the training that they were receiving at UNAM.

4.4.5.2   First teaching experience

Participants' responses here differed because some narrated that they were nervous because they felt that they were ill-prepared to stand in front of a classroom. Some revealed through their writing that they had no knowledge of lesson planning, which was also was a challenge for them.

4.4.5.3   My learners…

The participants' writing showed that participants were in control of their classes because they indicated that there was no disruptive behaviour from the learners. They also indicated that learners participated in the lesson and were excited to be taught by the participants.

4.4.5.4   In own class I had power to…

Most participants' narrative writing touched on the power that they had to make rules in their classes. This relates to the participants' self-awareness in terms of who they were and what roles were played by the figures of authority inside of their classes, as most of them referred to either curbing bad behaviour or rewarding good behaviour of their learners.

4.4.5.5   Change regarding own teaching practices

Participants' writing revealed that they wished to make changes to their teaching practices, especially to be great agents of change in the lives of their learners. They also wished to engage learners in meaningful learning. If that would happen, participants would have to practise or take a learner-centred approach to the teaching of their learners.

4.4.5.6   A difficult moment in the teaching and type of research to deal with it

All the participants indicated that they had experienced some sort of difficulty during their teaching practice. The difficulties presented ranged from activities that a particular participant had a hard time preparing for, to limited knowledge on particular content. Other issues were on classroom management, so the types of research most participants would have liked to engage in were meant to deal with the types of difficulties they had encountered in their teaching practices.

4.4.6   Common themes from the personal journals and narrative frames in terms of language teacher knowledge

Another thorough analysis of the narrative frames indicated that there were areas that participants were knowledgeable about. In their writing, participants indicated the manner in which theoretical and pedagogical knowledge was acquired, and they also wrote about the specific knowledge they had learned. Another aspect of their writing that came out through the analysis of their writing was how they dealt with teaching aids, which was an aspect that they learned about at UNAM. Additionally, English as a language and a subject was also written down, in terms of how it was used in the classroom as well as how it generally featured in their lives. Below, I present how the

participants illustrated all the above in their writing of their personal journals as well as their narrative writing frames.

4.4.6.1   Acquiring of theoretical and practical pedagogical knowledge

Most participants indicated that what they liked about their training at HPC was acquiring theoretical as well as practical knowledge on how to teach English. One of the participants even went as far as attempting to use figurative language with reference to the training she was receiving:

> *We are being trained on how to prepare a lesson plan which is the backbone of teaching this help the teacher to have knowledge or more information on what he/she is going to teach, prepare activities for each stage plus teaching aids and the wise man says <u>if you fail to plan to plan to fail</u>* (Participant 1).

The correct version would have been "…if you fail to plan, you plan to fail". Although the underlined phrase above was incorrectly worded, it is clear that the participant placed importance on her training because it was her wish not to fail.

Another participant had this to say regarding her training:

> *The best thing about my teacher training is that, during this training we are being trained on what we are going to teach as qualified teachers after we have completed our studies. We are trained on how to prepare a comprehensive lesson plan which is the pillar of teaching this help the teacher to know what he or she is going to present to the learners, how will he/she teaches it, do the learners understand what is being taught. It also helps the teacher in maintaining a standard teaching pattern and does not let the class deviate from the topic. Planning also helps the teacher to be better equipped in answering questions asked by the learners during the lesson presentation* (Participant 2).

Both participants above stressed the importance of planning, and it is clear that they realised that one is not a proper teacher when one does not know how to plan for lessons and teaching. One

thing that the latter participant mentioned was the issue of being qualified. One can only be qualified when one has completed one's studies successfully.

Since most participants referred to knowledge that they were acquiring, it is surprising that Participant 3 referred to his training in general instead of focusing on language aspects of his training, as he stated:

> *The best thing about my teacher training is the, I got the chance to explore my leadership skills and learn more of how to communicate as well as handling and dealing with people of different behaviors, understanding and social beliefs.*

Although the sentence starter in the given narrative frame required participants to tell about the best thing about their teacher training, one would have expected that they would write about it from the perspective of their majors. However, this was not the case with the latter participant because he simply spoke in general terms. No reference was made to the content learned as other participants did.

Some participants also indicated that they were gaining teaching experience. Teaching experience is gained during the time that student teachers go out for SBS, six weeks in year 3 and 11 weeks in year 4. During that time, student teachers practise teaching while being mentored by the support teachers of the subjects that they practise teaching.

4.4.6.2   Limited knowledge on lesson preparation and creation of teaching aids

Most participants shared their inadequacies with regard to areas on which they lacked knowledge. What most came out was the fact that they could not plan lessons because their knowledge on certain domains of the English language was limited. Participant 1 stated:

> *When I first started to teach during SBS I was not well trained on lesson preparation, so this was a struggling stage for me, I have no knowledge on preparing different teaching aids and different activities and most of the time I do not prepare my lessons at all.*

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4.4.6.3   The role of English in the classroom

According to some participants, English served a purpose in the classroom, as Participant 3 stated:

> *English is one of the subjects that has many Games that enables learners to be critical thinkers and to be more focused, when it comes to enjoyment kids usually enjoy games and this could drag them to find learn English better as they also find lessons more fun and enjoyable.*

It is good to note that student teachers were aware of the roles English plays as a language and as a subject. With regard to writing creatively in English, Participant 3 posited:

> *Through creative writing in English, some learners are good at expressing themselves through writing by creating new ideas or stories fast, and enjoying this, they are also having their future goals being secure in the process.*

4.4.6.4   Other general uses for English

Two participants, Participants 3 and 5, discussed the general uses of English at length in their personal journals. Participants 3 stated:

> *By learning English, you will also learn about other cultures. Few experiences will make you grow as a person more than learning the values, habits and way of life in a culture that is different from yours, and this will help you to like and start enjoying and considering English as a fun language or Subject.*

We often talk about respecting the diversity of the cultures that students come from, so it is a good thing to notice that, aside from simply learning English in the context of becoming a language teacher, this participant was aware of the various purposes English could serve in his life.

He further narrated how English could make one's life easy in different contexts:

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You can easily travel anywhere in the world,   English will bridge the communication gap on your travels and make traveling a breeze. In many places where you will travel, people find English important for their businesses. They need to know English in order to communicate with potential clients and customers. In most hotels, at least one employee will speak English often, many of the employees speak English. This makes it easier for both parties.

First and foremost, English is Namibia's official language and lingua franca, and a language that many citizens of this country use for general communication and business transactions. Therefore, it is notable that this participant pointed out other aspects of English and how it could enrich his life in ways apart from the academic ones.

Participant 5, on the other hand, stated:

...learning English a language also improves the quality of life. You will have access to jobs that you could not even take into consideration, not even in your wildest dreams, for example; you can consider having an international career and you can live in as many countries as you want, with the ease of being able to go shopping or negotiate a rent for the house without a translator.

The same participant continued to refer to other non-academic purposes of English:

English is the language of most programmers and Information and Technology (IT) companies and a result, they mostly use English words and syntax in programming computers and phones too. Nowadays, computers are very important and in some cases, e.g. with regards to my country, if you need to search information about something, you have to do it in English as it is difficult to find our native languages used on Google except for first languages.

Participant 5 further added:

I believe that learning English language at the University level is not only important for academic and communication purposes, but it also gives me or us as students an opportunity to have access to a great deal of entertainment and will have an amazing cultural understanding of this entertainment as we do not need translation and subtitles to understand films and movies.

As with Participant 3, this participant also referred to other roles English played in her life, from entertainment to the world of technology. She also alluded to how travels are enabled by the knowledge of English, and that with her knowledge of English, she could enter other professions apart from teaching.

According to Hornberger (2008:386), a teacher should also have an understanding of social, political and economic struggles, thus it is good that both Participant 3 and 5 understood other uses or roles of English as a language.

4.4.6.5 *Prior perceptions about teaching*

It is stated that every teacher brings to the teaching profession prior learning knowledge from different experiences (Borg, 2003; Andrews, 1999, 2001; Moodie, 2015; Richards, 2017). This was also the case with the HPC student teachers. Here, I present findings regarding the participants' prior perceptions of teaching as well as the teachers' roles:

I have learned that a teacher do not just go to writing lessons with a prepared paragraph or sentences, tell learners to keep quiet and listen and start writing what they heard as that, but there must be an activity after writing planned to be done before the lesson content starts in class (the while writing activity) and it has a closing part the post writing activity (Participant 1).

I have come to a realization that learning is not only important for academic purposes, but it's important for one to be able to read different materials that are in English for personal purposes, pleasure and awareness of certain issues, and they'll do this with understanding (Participant 5).

I thought a teacher has little role to play in reading lessons rather than to listen and give chances to different readers. I learned that teachers have to assess readers, by rating their fluency, accuracy and appropriateness when articulating words (Participant 6).

4.4.6.6   General content learned not related to English

The example below refers to hidden aspects of the curriculum, and it is wonderful that the participant was aware of these aspects:

This course has prepared me to deal learners. Its in this course were I was taught that I should be polite to learners, but I should also not be too lenient on them and not let them do whatever they want (Participant 5).

Studies on narrative inquiry have referred to the fact that narratives are a means through which participants can write about their lives in relation to their lived experiences (Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008), so it not surprising that participants wrote about other aspects of their lives which were not necessarily related to language teacher proficiency. What Participant 5 wrote about was the holistic preparation he was receiving in terms of being in control of the classroom.

4.4.6.7   Language domains in relation to learning and teaching of English

Table 11 below illustrates the domains or skills which the participants focused on with regard to the learning as well as the teaching of English.

Table 11:   Different domains/skills focused on by participants

Participant	Writing	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Grammar Usage
1	*"...handwriting is complex perceptual-motor skill, and motor skills, which is developed through instruction. It is an academic skill that allows individuals to express their thoughts and feelings and converse with others. It is a difficult process of handling language by pencil grip, letter formation, and body posture. Handwriting efficiency requires mastery of multiple skills, including vision, coordinating the eyes, arms, hands, memory, posture, and body control, as well as the task of holding a pencil and forming letters."*	*"The phonetic reading method it is important in the course because phonics help children to learn how to spell words, it helps children to recognize and associate sounds of the letters of the alphabet in the word they read and unable learners to decode words and if student teacher do not know anything about phonetics it is hard for them to teach learners phonics."*	*"...there is a great need of attention on my pronunciation of some words. I can remember there was a that were I was teaching reading aloud so as a teacher I have to give an example on how to read aloud I have to read aloud to learners and I end up pronouncing words incorrectly to learners."*		*"...when teaching direct and indirect I will use the information or knowledge we were given during our training."*

Participant	Writing	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Grammar Usage
2			*"What struck me as important in this course was the learning of phonological aspects of learning English; this unit was about communication through speech (speaking). Communication through speech is said to be the most common form of communication."*	*"Personally I found the learning about listening process (steps of listening process) easy. This topic is straightforward, I got to understand the process\steps one goes through when listening. Of course listening requires an individual to pay attention or concentrate, make meaning and understanding of what is communicated and in turn respond back as a way of providing feedback. Basically those listening steps are as follow: receiving, attention, understanding, responding and remembering."*	

Participant	Writing	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Grammar Usage
4	*"I was taught how to develop learner's further writing skills and styles in English…"*	*"Reading as a language skill is not exhausted as other three skills."*	*"I feel that speaking skill was not exhausted as other language skills. In all cases that we did presentations in groups only 1 person or 2 were told to represent the whole group. Without bearing in mind that during SBS each student teacher has to speak to learners. For those that hardly don't present at UNAM will obviously find it difficult to speak freely in front of a class. In future every member of the group shall be allowed to say a word or two."*		*"I found the topic on identifying and explaining simple and complex words easy to learn. It did not take much of my study time on mastering the rules which one should adhere to. I am able to break down words into morphemes that made up a word."*

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Participant	Writing	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Grammar Usage
5	*" I think writing as a language skill is also challenging as it entails perfect grammar to avoid getting penalized."* *"Writing also includes the punctuation rules that one can easily use incorrectly or omit by mistake. "*				*"English grammar is the way in which meanings are encoded into wordings in the English language. This includes the structure of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences, right up to the structure of whole texts. So, one has to master the process of putting meanings in their heads into words and I mean correct words, because if one misspells or use a wrong word, it will change the meaning of what they intended to say or mean."*

Participant	Writing	Reading	Speaking	Listening	Grammar Usage
6		*"I have learned that, a teacher do not just go to reading lessons with a prepared text, tell learners to keep quiet and start reading as easy as that, but there should be before reading activity planned to done in class. This can either be by: giving learners a list of vocabulary from the text to be read to be defined, looking at the text title and predict the text content, by looking at pictures accompanying a text and come up with a short story based on the pictures. Neither the teacher nor the learners read the whole text at this stage, because the main aim here is just to test learner's prior knowledge, catch their interest onto the lesson topic and activating content and formal schemata."*			

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The above table indicates that participants were either knowledgeable or lacked adequate teacher cognition with regard to the English language. Those who possessed subject knowledge of English mostly began writing about what they had learned in terms of the specific skills or domains of English, whereas those who thought that they did not know or still need professional development stated that they found particular skills challenging to teach. This, they stated, was due to limited knowledge or lack of being exposed to the specific skills during their training.

It is also worth mentioning that some participants did not make reference to certain skills, so those spaces next to their 'names' were left blank or they were left out as in the case of Participant 3, who mostly focused on literature in the writing of his series of personal journals.

4.4.6.8   *Figurative usage of English in narratives*

It came to light through the analysis of the written narratives that some participants made use of figures of speech, which is commendable because they were aware of aspects pertaining to making one's language colourful. That said, most of them used "practice makes perfect" and given the context in which it was used, this was to be expected. What other encouragement does one use when trying to encourage someone to keep on practising in order to get better, than that phrase?

Other examples are as follow:

> *A positive mind is said to yield positive productivity. I can say that twice. "Sometimes we seek motivation but at some times motivation finds us." Says the English man* (Participant 2).

> *...it's when I realized that I did not know English and I totally lost hope to an extend that I would never walk in steps with English* (Participant 6).

Participant 3 said it all in the following sentence:

> *Let's make sure that we always in good contact with the library.*

The usage of a metaphor here is an indication that the participant was a proficient user of English. Of course, the sentence was not meant literally because the way it was written, the library was personified. What he meant was that, in order to grow in his journey, he needed to constantly visit the library so that he could get exposure to books and other resources that could enable him to learn English faster and better.

4.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the findings from the narratives that participants of this study produced. Four topics which emerged from the analysis of the narratives answered the research questions, mainly to determine whether narrative writing did indeed promote language as well as language teacher proficiencies. Analysis was done until a saturation point was reached, yielding an extensive number of themes from the participants' writing. This was in terms of content learned, challenges faced during the training and so many more.

From the data presented above, students were aware of the fact that they need to be proficient especially in the English language. Evidence of their agency to improve both their language proficiency as well as their language teacher proficiency is noted. The writing of their personal journals demonstrated the 'waxing and waning' of their language proficiency, which in my opinion could be a result of not paying attention to corrective feedback which I had provided. According to Housen & Kuiken (2009:1) complexity, accuracy as well as fluency can be used to measure progress in learning a language; thus these elements were indicative of the participants' language learning progress. Additionally, as previously indicated, these students were on SBS so they were pressurised in so many areas of their academic lives. I believe that if the writing had been done in a different context, they might have taken time to proofread their work before they submitted it. It is also evident that they were concerned about their language teacher proficiency, that is their subject knowledge and content that they need to possess in order to deliver lessons successfully. I have illustrated in both 4.4.5 and 4.4.6 what participants felt were their weaknesses and strengths regarding what they had learned and what they still needed to learn. It is important to note that "learners' motivation, awareness, self-evaluation, types of materials or facilities that learners' received are the motivators for English language learning especially at tertiary level" (Sultana, 2014:33). It is interesting how some of them went as far as making the learners the centre of

learning in the sense that their ideal selves are aimed at providing the best pedagogy to their future learners.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to answer the research questions of this study and to show what contribution the study makes to the field in terms of establishing whether language biographies and other types of narratives writing promote language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency. This chapter also attempts to answer the research questions, so findings of the study are discussed here. Next, a summary, recommendations and the contribution of this study to the field of language education are presented, followed by limitations of the study, future research possibilities and, finally, a personal note.

5.2   ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The discussion of the results begins by exploring the relationship between narrative writing and the participants' language proficiency, as evident in their personal journals and writing frames. Secondly, aspects of participants' agency and structure are explored. Thirdly, findings on how participants had developed professionally are also discussed.

5.2.1   Promotion of language proficiency through language biographies

Although the language biography was merely used as a baseline test to categorise the participants of this study according to different levels as far as their writing was concerned, its content was analysed. Therefore, the writing products were thematically, content, narrative and discourse analysed. Thus, the results from those analyses are discussed here, based on the topic of the participants' language journeys. This topic was given taking into consideration that all these participants had gone through a process of learning English and were training to become teachers of English at the time. This task was given with Vygotsky's view that, "with constructivism as an educational theory in mind, (on which this study is framed) the teachers should consider what students know and allow their students to put their knowledge into practice" (Amineh & Asl, 2015:9).

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5.2.1.1   Learning English

Results from the narratives that participants produced indicate that it had not been easy for them to learn English, which affected their proficiency in terms of their knowledge both of and about English.

Although most participants possessed conversational competence and could articulate well in English as a language, it is worrying that these students, who were in their final year of receiving ongoing and intensive direct instruction, still made major errors in terms of tense and sentence constructions, made spelling errors, lacked proper knowledge of high frequency words, and so on. According to Donato & MacCormick (1994:453) the development of language learning strategies is mainly a by-product of mediation and socialization into a community of language learning practice. In the case of this study, this would happen at UNAM and the schools where they started with their schooling as well as the schools were they were carrying out their SBS. Similarly, Shohamy (2005:5) asserts that "language is open, dynamic, energetic, constantly evolving and personal. It has no fixed boundaries, but rather made of hybrids and endless varieties resulting from language being creative, expressive, interactive, contact- and dialogue-based, debated, mediated and negotiated". This is the view of a socio-cultural theory and, that students are assisted to reach their ZPD through the process of mediation by the MKO.

Nel and Müller on the other hand (2010:636) state that "the transition which English second language (ESL) students need to make when using English as language of learning in higher education is a matter of great concern in the South African higher education sector", and I agree with them that it is a concern here as well. The participants' lack of language proficiency and inability to make themselves understood can clearly be seen in the following response from a participant:

> *I did not struggle to master all the process of how sounds of speech are produced as most of my counterparts and at the other hand I had became acquicted.*

It was not easy to decipher the meaning of the above sentence due to its grammatical errors as well as incorrect spelling which came to light as result of having discourse analysed the data, as

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McCarthy (1991:709) state that different language areas of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, phonology to either spoken or written language are identified via discourse analysis.

In order to ensure that students of English language are competent, it is worthwhile to consider Richards' (2012:46) dimensions of teacher knowledge and skill that seem to be at the core of expert teaching competence and performance in language teaching:

- Language proficiency
- Content knowledge
- Teaching skills
- Contextual knowledge
- Language teacher identity
- Learner-focused teaching
- Pedagogical reasoning skills
- Theorizing from practice
- Membership in a community of practice as well as
- Professionalism.

It is interesting to note that most of this study also alluded to those dimensions while figuring out whether narrative writing can promote language and language teacher proficiency. For example, participants are proud of their language proficiency, but aware of gaps (see Participants 1, 4 in Section 4.2), they refer to specific content knowledge covered in the courses at UNAM (see Table 9 I 4.4.4.2) and dealt with in schools, like literature (see 4.4.6.2). In terms of teaching skills, they also alluded to them in terms of their current level of competence (see 4.4.3.4), etc.

Learning English by the student teachers is tied to two of this study's frameworks: Archer's framework as well as the socio-cultural framework. It was up to the student teachers' individual willingness to learn English just as much as being provided the knowledge that they require to learn, by being assisted by the lecturer (me the researcher) as Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev & Miller (2003:1) state:

The concept of mediation emphasizes the role played by human and symbolic intermediaries placed between the individual learner and the material to be learned. Psychological tools are those symbolic systems specific for a given culture that when internalized by individual learners become their inner cognitive tools. Beyond their theoretical role the concepts of mediation and psychological tools also have an important applied function serving as a basis for a number of applied programs offering new techniques of the enhancement of students' cognitive functions, development of meta-cognition, and integration of cognitive elements into instructional practice.

The role which the Namibian language policy plays in this regard also has to be noted. According to Frydman (2011:183) it has been demonstrated over the last two decades that for the rural as well as uneducated populations in Namibia, in which exposure to and opportunity to use English is minimal, English has not become a useful means of communication. Many of our student teachers' foundations of learning English are rooted in communities that are uneducated (two participants, Participants 3 and 5 - made reference to their own parents who are uneducated) (see 4.4.3.4) and lack exposure to English (see 4.4.3.4). Consequently, if student teachers do not exercise agency over their own learning, specifically of English in this case, then it would be impossible to acquire content while undergoing teacher training. In addition to this, the impossibility of getting a whole population to use English fluently for no other reason than that part of the world uses it, also contributes to how students do or do not acquire language proficiency.

5.2.1.2   *Challenges experienced when learning English*

Results of this study indicate that participants experienced challenges during their journey of learning English. One of the challenges participants experienced was poor English teaching from teachers (see 4.3.4.1 and 4.3.4.3).

Another challenge that came out from the findings was late exposure to English (see Participant 2 & 5 in 4.2 as well as in 4.3.4.1). This contributed adversely to the students' learning process because, even at the time of the study, students found it hard to attain proficiency because of the very poor foundation that had been laid. On top of that, some participants related being ridiculed

by other learners when they made mistakes, which did not make the process of learning easy. One participant stated that:

> *I have learned English through different process and through my experience of learning was challenging, demanding, sometimes interesting and also satisfying sometimes.*

In their study titled "Academic literacy of South African higher education level students: Does vocabulary size matter?", Nizonkiza and Van Dyk (2015:147) found that students with large vocabularies had higher academic literacy proficiency, establishing a strong relationship between vocabulary size and academic literacy. The participants in this study need to keep the reading culture that they claimed to have in order to improve their language as well as their language teacher proficiencies.

However, Olshtain and Celce Murcia (2000:708) posit that it is important to note that

> learners may never achieve full linguistic competence when they engage in communicative activities and yet they will need to use the target language for various types of communication, writing included. They therefore need to develop communication that overcome and compensate for the lack of linguistic knowledge.

Most participants have made reference to their lack of competence in English, but they have admitted to making an effort to improving their English language skills (see 4.2 and 4.4.6). They have tried to read extensively by getting books from the library or making friends who were better at English then them. In their narrative frames (see Addendum J) they refer to their growth as teachers, in terms of what content they are good at and what they still need to learn.

5.2.2 Research question 1: The relationship between narrative writing and language proficiency

The data from the three different types of writing show that most participants possessed satisfactory knowledge of English. It was usually possible to make out what was written, although there were cases where the writing was produced in a way that was impossible to understand. Findings regarding language proficiency were triangulated from multiple sources used in this study: the language biography, personal journals and writing frames. The answer to this research question is complex, with some data showing improvement.

The essay was written once as a baseline test, whereas personal journals were repeatedly written over six weeks in an effort to increase the participants' opportunities for writing. After this, the narrative frame was administered only once as the final assessment to determine whether the direct instruction that student teachers/participants received during this time of their training as well as the corrective feedback that I gave them made an impact on their language proficiency. In the case of written journals and language biographies, McCarthy (1991:710) states that there is effective communicative interaction among language users, the student teachers, which is achieved because there was a basic sharing of prior content, especially where they referred to their language learning experiences as well as their SBS experiences (see 4.4.3). As a result, content and discourse knowledge between the producers (the participants) and the interpreter (me, the researcher) of the text are noted.

Below, I discuss the data under two headings: data showing improvement in language proficiency and data showing problems with language proficiency.

The most striking result to emerge from the findings from all the instruments is that participants seemed to think that language proficiency consisted of possessing knowledge of the language. This emerged from their learning journeys where they indicated that their proficiency levels were better than when they were at primary school. However, when reading their writing, their language still showed errors which one would not expect at this level. It is important to note that when it comes to language development, "that it is not discrete and stage-like but more like the waxing and waning of patterns; that, from a target-language perspective, certain aspects of the behaviour are

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progressive, others, regressive; that change can be gradual and it can be sudden" (Larsen-Freeman, 2006:590). It is therefore not surprising that there was improvement and regression in terms of the student teachers' promotion of language proficiency as well as on their language teacher proficiency, as shown in Graph 6 (see 4.4.1).

5.2.2.1   Improvements

According to Larsen-Freeman (2006:591) the process of second language learning is complex, gradual nonlinear as well as dynamic. In this study, the baseline essay showed that some students started off as proficient users of English, although the majority fell in the 'average' category (see 4.2.2). The assessment of their journal writing showed some students improving, but their performance was not consistent. Those who scored in the 'good' category in the essays managed to keep the good performance, although the performance of some participants went down. Since the majority scored in the 'average' category, it was important to check whether they improved at all. The results from the journal writing are mixed. There were some participants who started off well, then as the weeks went by, their performance dropped. Contrary to that, some participants started off with lower marks, but as time progressed, an increase in performance was noticed. Firstly, it should be noted that the participants are individuals who came from different linguistic backgrounds, so they have acquired and learned English differently as they have stated in their language biographies. In most cases, language learners demonstrate different attitudes towards learning a new language. It is no surprise that McCarthy (1991:711) argues that regarding students as language learners, their acquisition of world knowledge must be taken into account, especially when analysing the written content they produce. Secondly, corrective feedback that was given to the participants on their written journals seemed to have been taken into account and used constructively, because making a positive change in their writing was noted for some participants.

Finally, in the narrative frames, the same trend of performance was observed because some participants still made similar mistakes, and in some cases, participants simply wrote one sentence per sentence prediction frame as opposed to writing at length as was expected. It should be noted that these narrative frames were not assessed formally as the personal journals because it was just a once-off activity as opposed to a process of writing personal journals.

As shown above and in Table 7 (see 4.4.1), there seemed to be changes in the language proficiency of my participants. This is evident from the participants' scores that went up in some cases and down in others, an indication that different factors influenced these marks. In some cases, participants' writing was limited, with only a paragraph produced, which obviously affected the allocation of marks in terms of the structure, content as well as grammar and spelling. There were prompts that were supposed to guide the participants' writing, thus those who did not write much (either a one-line or no response to the prompts) could not score well. These cases do not necessarily indicate poor proficiency, since a lack of time could equally have had an impact on their efforts. It should be taken into account that "language evolves and changes in the dynamics of language use between and among individuals" (Larsen-Freeman, 2006:591). With this understanding it was to be expected that participants' performance in their written journals would vary, both for each individual over a period of time and among individual participants.

The findings also indicate that the produced narratives included figurative use of language, which indicates that most of the participants, although sometimes writing incorrectly, were proficient and creative users of English. The use of figurative language is an indication that participants were aware of the denotation as well as connotation of words. Idiomatic expressions were also utilised as in this example:

> *Practice makes perfect and that perseverance brings perfection.*

According to Barkaoui (2007:35) "…to be able to write effectively, writers need to learn the orthography, morphology, lexicon, syntax, as well as the discourse and rhetorical conventions of the L2". In cases where participants made mistakes regarding spelling or syntax, I made sure that I offered correction so that they learned how to write correctly and properly in terms of what is generally accepted as 'correct' and 'proper'. It is always expected of English language teachers that they use written language correctly, even in situations where the insistence on 'correctness' can be seen as unrealistic. As has been pointed out by Asheeke (2018:108), "Namibians could not be expected to act and speak in the same way as Americans or British do", although, of course, it is generally expected that they do and therefore the insistence that they should improve their language proficiency.

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It is evident that most participants possessed the lexicon to speak English in classroom contexts, but they may have still struggled to articulate themselves accurately when formulating complex sentences (see section 4.3.2 and 4.4.1.2)

Personal journals were assessed using a rubric, and in the process, the participants' errors as discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.4.1.2, were noted, despite some researchers who caution against error correction for example Carstens and Alston (2014:19) who state that "lecturers should remain cautious of reverting to modernist practices such as error analysis". It was necessary to identify the participants' errors so that the accuracy, fluency and complexity of the language constructed by the participants could be assessed. However, the actual marks were never communicated to the students.

It was noted that the correction that participants received enhanced the quality and accuracy of what they produced "through coaching, training, practice, or scaffolding support" (Thelen & Corbetta, 2002:6). This had to be done so that participants could reach their ZPD, obviously with the guidance and mentorship of the lecturer (me). Over the period of six weeks during which the personal journals were written, scaffolding took place when corrective feedback was given to the participants by the MKO. In this way, as participants wrote, they engaged in social contexts with each other, in terms of sharing information about the tasks that were required from them (personal journals and narrative frames).

5.2.2.2   Regression

Although there is more evidence of improvement, it is obvious from the journal writing that there were ups and downs, with some students even regressing, as was pointed out in section 4.2. Some participants did not show any sign of improvement in terms of the marks that they scored in the personal journals that they wrote over a period of six weeks. Thus, one can say that their language proficiency was not promoted through narrative writing.

It was not the hope of this study to have participants acquire a native-like proficiency, but to check whether, through writing, some sort of change could take place because these were student teachers who would eventually teach English at the specified phase: Grades 4 to 7. If the status quo

continues, a vicious cycle of poor proficiency in English will continue. However, it is more than possible that gains in language proficiency might be more substantial if these student teachers could continue their writing over a longer period of time (see 5.6 for the limitations of the study). This study therefore takes note of what Larsen-Freeman (2006:593) asserts that learners do not advance through stages of development in a consistent way as there is a great deal of variation at one time in learners' performances and clear instability over time. She further claims that variation and fluctuation are to be expected as vital features of dynamic systems such as language development. It is also noted that acquisition of or the development of language tends to differ among different students; "when language is used for mediation as part of a social activity, each person has his/her own personal and unique ways and styles of using language with regard to content, topics as well as ideas" (Shohamy, 2005:6). As much as there were similarities on the prompts given, student teachers wrote about different issues pertaining to what they were learning as a result of their different social contexts and experiences.

5.2.2.3   *Demonstration of participants' agency versus structure*

This discussion firstly focuses on the findings pertaining to how participants' agency was portrayed through their narratives, specifically focusing on issues which shaped and constrained their individual language learning efforts. In order to consider the two notions of Archer, namely agency and structure, the findings are first discussed in terms of agency then later in terms of the structural constrains participants experienced. What agency refers to here is the fact that participants demonstrated how they took charge of a bad situation and acted in different ways that worked in their favour.

In terms of Archer's notion of agency, most participants indicated that they had taken steps to improve their language proficiency and their language teacher proficiency (see Participants 1, 2 and 3 in 4.2). Stating what effort they put in in their learning indicates that they wished to see change in themselves. According to Shohamy (2005:6) language is a unique phenomenon as it is personal and individual and it differs drastically in its usage from one user to another. Consequently, participants could make choices, consciously or not, regarding how they would utilise the language (in all their three pieces of narrative writing that they engaged in) through the selection of words, grammatical structures as well as other linguistic features (Shohamy, 2005:5).

The findings of this study reveal that most of the participants came from diverse linguistic backgrounds as can be seen in their narratives about their different journeys of learning English. As a result of this there is "adaptation in local communities which produces emergence of certain variegated stabilities of structure, meaning and pragmatics…" (Larsen-Freeman, 200:592). Those adaptations stem from the foundation of their acquisition of English. Most of the participants grew up in villages and that is where they were first exposed to English. Most felt that their counterparts who grew up in town were better at English than them. This agrees with Al-Zoubi's study (2018:155) regarding the exposure of students to English, where he found that "urban learners were more motivated towards learning English language than rural learners". He concluded that the attainment of the first language transpires from long periods of cognitive and physical development and of socialization.

As mentioned in section 4.2.4.2, this development was in terms of their language foundations as well as the people who were in charge of exposing them to English as a language as well as a subject. This is stressed by one participant's claim that:

> *During 12 years of my formal education, teachers always argued us for starting sentences with conjunctions so that how I believed it until I was exposed to this activity.*

As previously referred to, participants' revelation that their early teachers influenced how they learned is further stressed here. Given that background, some participants indicated that they pushed themselves very hard to prove to themselves that a positive change was possible and to show their teachers that they could be good as those whom the teachers considered to be the best performers.

Given the constraints participants had to endure during their periods of study, it is important to note that they demonstrated their agency by taking charge of their situations. I referred to enabling factors that made it easy for some participants to learn or the decisions that some participants took in order to make good out of a bad situation, like buying dictionaries or visiting the libraries to read and improve their language proficiencies (see Participant 3, in 4.2). Additionally, some participants indicated that their timetables were full from 07:30 until 18:30 without rest, which affected their learning adversely. Despite this, participants stated that they still made time to come

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to class, as one participant stated that student teachers were aware of the reasons why they were at UNAM and what that meant to them. One can only become skilled and knowledgeable through full participation and attendance of lectures.

According to Andrews (2001:23), double morphogenesis entails individuals and groups acting in situations to defend their vested interests and to realise their projects where they replicate structural and cultural circumstances they are experiencing; however they get transformed unwillingly, and as a result end up as agents of change who are social actors and individual persons. This is what happened with my participants because they were unaware of the two processes that they were undergoing during this study. As they engaged in constant writing, an element of reflection crept in while they were unaware of it, so some got to improve their writing and at the same time got to think about what skills and knowledge sets they had acquired during their training.

The findings show that participants demonstrated agency when they visited the library to search for information about English, as well as when they asked teachers for assistance (see 4.2.4.2). Some of them even went as far as forming friendships with those they thought were more proficient at English (see Participant 4, in 4.2). These are qualities of a teacher who is willing to acquire knowledge about English in order to be well versed in information about and of the language.

A striking observation made from the results is the fact that participants were determined to make a difference regarding the learning of English. This for me is having the power to change one's life, given the realisation that one needs to change for the better. Another enabling factor for the participant quoted below was trying to be better than a sibling (see 4.3.2). This participant asserted that he/she did not want to have a younger sister who knew English better than he/she did, so he/she tried to become better than the sister:

> *It became my strengthening motivation and my driving force to accept that I can and I should learn English fast before my little sister realizes she is the best. It suddenly killed out the false beliefs of thinking that those in the north (towns and cities) or in private schools have special teachers or so and that is why they learn English fast.*

Similarly, willingness to change one's situation in the face of adversity is shown below:

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Even though the process of learning English is tough and needs time, having come to the point where you look back and realise how you struggled coming to where you are at a certain point is so uncontrollably fun. With the fun part of looking back and realise how we seriously broke all the language rules comes also the enjoyment part, where we are suddenly able to express ourselves through this very language by means of writing, speaking and teaching too.

The results of this study also show that students were faced with structural constraints during their learning of English, which would have impeded their language learning. One of the points from the results that can be considered as a structural constraint is that learning grammar only took place in the final year of their teacher training. Having grammar tackled in the final year of the students' training was questionable because most participants felt that they were sent out to schools with insufficient knowledge. As a researcher and lecturer, I share the concerns of the participants because this needs to be addressed, as I suggest in the recommendations.

Other revelations from the findings worth mentioning are the cases where participants felt that lack of tutors for English modules at HPC did not lessen the burden on lecturers, who in most cases were overloaded and had class groups that were too large, thus there was usually no one-on-one assistance for student teachers (see section 4.4.4.3).

Structurally, the Namibian language policy can be seen as a device to perpetuate and impose language behaviour in accordance with the national, political, social and economic agendas (Shohamy, 2005:5). This can certainly be seen in these students' struggles as Participant 1 stated that they were not exposed to native English during his/her journey of learning English (see section 4.4.3.4)

In conclusion, it can be said that this research question can be answered mostly in the affirmative, although the picture that emerges is complex and multi-layered. If improvement is seen simply as a matter of writing correctly, I have to concede that some students did not improve, mainly, it seems, because of time pressure. However, in view of firstly, an unrealistic language policy landscape and secondly, students' willingness to be pro-active in improving along the lines of

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conventional expectations of 'correct' and 'proper' English, the use of writing to improve proficiency shows promise, as will be elaborated upon in the next section.

5.2.3   Research question 2: Participants' teacher professional development

The purpose of narrative writing was not only to improve the participants' language proficiency, but also to develop the ability to reflect on their own professional development as well as on the importance of such development. Results from the written narratives indicate that participants were cognisant of the fact that they had gained a considerable amount of knowledge *of* English as well as knowledge *about* English. However, the point at which their writing really demonstrated reflexivity was in the different identities that were revealed in a close analysis of their responses.

Firstly, it must be said that students struggled to remember what they had learned over a period of four years, because some claimed that they had not been trained sufficiently on certain areas despite the fact that these areas were covered in the course outlines of the various modules that these participants must have studied and passed to have progressed to final-year level (see 2.5 and 4.3.4.2). It is likely that they forgot or missed classes, or that learning was basically done for the purpose of passing examinations and not to retain information and knowledge for future use in their future careers as teachers. One participant stated:

> *I was never introduced to grammar in context, it was always taught in isolation.*

What I instil in my student teachers when I teach them about grammar is that they should try to teach it using a context. For me, the above statement is an indication that one can hope that this participant would do things differently and not teach grammar points in isolation.

However, the instances mentioned above were not as revealing as the teacher selves that emerged from students' writing. Like Hiver (2013:215), I found that "every participant in my study had a clearly elaborated ideal language teacher self, composed primarily of the positive future self-images they possessed. These included positive future self-images in two categories: self as expert language user, and self as expert teacher." In my study, the ideal future self and the ought-to self

that emerged from the participants' writing showed their ability to reflect on their professional needs and shortcomings (see 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2).

Professionally, a teacher should be exemplary and be in possession of knowledge, skills as well as practices of a teaching profession. This is because the knowledge base and identity of a teacher in a specific area of expertise constantly change due to the interaction between the ever-changing characteristics and practices of that specific teacher (Pennington & Richards, 2016:10). The participant below demonstrated his/her awareness of his/her developmental needs in terms of learning English:

> To speak, listen, write and read English at my own command it's a big achievement that I never thought if it would happen. It is of good importance as it will help me to assess to what extend would I help my learners. I am very happy to teacher English. , because I will make sure that what happened to me and my former colleagues would not happen in future. I strongly believe that English would only pleasant or enjoyable to learners if it's being taught by a well-equipped teacher.

This participant realised the importance of developing from one level of proficiency to another, thus he/she made reference to his/her current state of knowledge and how he/she had reached this stage. The participants also brought to light through their narratives the realisation of what they had learned, such as acquiring speaking skills through the presentations they held during English classes.

With ELE being a module that focuses on the methodology of English, students felt that they had also acquired skills which would enable them to teach English in an effective manner, as one participant stated:

> I have learned on how to use the syllabus during the training, to plan our lesson and how to grade the essays and letters. I ever learned how to formulate up different topics from the syllabus.

Another similar example was given by another participant in terms of methodology. The participant narrated:

I learned that teachers have to assess readers, by rating their fluency, accuracy and appropriateness when articulating words. Reading lessons have three stages: Pre reading, while reading and Post reading. Today we covered up to first part of the While reading-initial reading.

In terms of methodology, Kŏnig et al. (2016:322) emphasise that EFL teachers need to be experts in the methodology as well as knowledge of phonological instruction. Additionally, they state that teachers require definite abilities to produce motivating expansive learning settings and chances for emerging content-related skills (Kŏnig et al., 2016:322). Knowledge of methodology in terms of the target language that the participants were learning and being trained on would be beneficial to both themselves and the learners who would be in their care in their upcoming teaching careers.

The next section explores the types of identities participants constructed about themselves as projected in their different narratives.

5.2.4   Participants' identities and self-awareness

According to Pennington and Richards (2016:6), in teaching, identity emerges as a dynamic construct that is shaped by the context in which the teacher works (e.g., teaching young learners or adults), and that may have different features at different times. It needs to be noted that "individual identity constructions are always dynamic and at the same time multi-faceted, as reflected in the concepts of fluid, situated and multiple identities" (Breidbach & Kuster, 2014:137). Given Pennington and Richards's concept on which identity is constructed, the findings of the current study further indicate that, during their teaching practice, some participants were aware of their ignorance of certain aspects of what they should have known yet did not know, so learners corrected them. This is something that I as a lecturer have observed during visits to my student teachers where, in some cases, wrong knowledge is imparted to learners. Sometimes student teachers also mispronounce words, which is a worrisome fact that needs immediate attention.

However, it is clear that most of the participants had some awareness regarding the teacher knowledge which they would require in their future careers as English teachers. This would be beneficial for the participants/students because an awareness about what one possesses in terms of knowledge and skills is fundamental. Table 12 below shows the instances where each participant demonstrated awareness of the need for teacher development.

Table 12: Participants' demonstration of teacher development

Participant	Teacher development needs
1	*"The writing skill was the aspect I encountered during SBS and I did not really learn it quite well during training because I am struggling with marking essays and letters which we did not get much training on it."* *"I would like the phonetic topic to be covered from first year to fourth year in all semester because phonetics it is the important part of English development if someone do not know anything about phonetic it's hard for them to read, speaking, wring and listening as well. So study teachers need more knowledge on phonetics so they will teach it well to their learners in future."*
2	*"In my own opinion I think we need to be taught various strategies on how to go about listening."* *"During my School Based Study I observed that some learners have a problem with reading comprehension. Having realized this problem I found out that I was not competent enough to tackle it. For that reason I feel like I did not learn this skill quite well during my training."*
3	*"Reading as a language skill is not exhausted as other three skills. During SBS I found out that many learners do not read and this obstructs their performances in their school subjects. During our training in this course we were not told what to do in order to encourage learners to read."* *"Reading as an aspect of the language skills, I feel I did not learn it quite well during my training. We were not taught on how to stimulate learner's interests in reading through regular exposure to interesting books and through discussions in which they supposed to respond to many kinds of texts. I believe it's a reason most of the leaners speaks English fluently but they cannot read neither write proper English."*
4	*"Reading as a language skill is not exhausted as other three skills. During SBS I found out that many learners do not read and this obstructs their performances in their school subjects. During our training in this course we were not told what to do in order to encourage learners to read."*

On two separate occasions, Participant 2 referred to his need to be trained more on reading skills, which he felt he had not been taught well. However, the same participant stated the following at the beginning of this process of journal writing:

> *In this course I was taught how to conduct reading lessons and guide learners to read with accuracy. It really helped me conducting reading aloud lessons during SBS.*

This is quite a contradiction because, if reading lessons were modelled to them as students, those modelled lessons must have also referred to reading as a skill.

It is interesting to note that the participants were also aware of their shortcomings in terms of their teacher pedagogical knowledge, like Participant 1 who stated that:

> *I have to take this blame because its myself that did not use this time I had to practice from early age.*

It is interesting to note that this participant regarded learning as an individual activity, which is not the case as far as the social constructivism theory is concerned, where knowledge is constructed in a social context.

In noting their shortcomings and development needs, participants took on the dual role of being teachers as well as being students, still undergoing training and getting the information of and about the English language (see 4.3.1). In terms of the role of being students, the feared language teacher selves (see 4.3.3.3) were demonstrated where participants indicated that they lacked certain skills such as correct pronunciation, which they wished they had so that they could transfer that knowledge and skills to their own learners (taking the role of the ideal language teacher selves, see 4.3.3.1).

In the above regard, the interactions that students had with the learners and their mentors as well as their lecturer were the ones that reinforced new thinking, which in turn would lead to the creation of new identities based on specific situations during their learning or teaching.

5.2.5   CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The diagram below illustrates the methodology as well as the complexity of language proficiency development and its link to agency and language teacher development. It is illustrating the contribution my study makes: methodologically, empirically as well as conceptually.
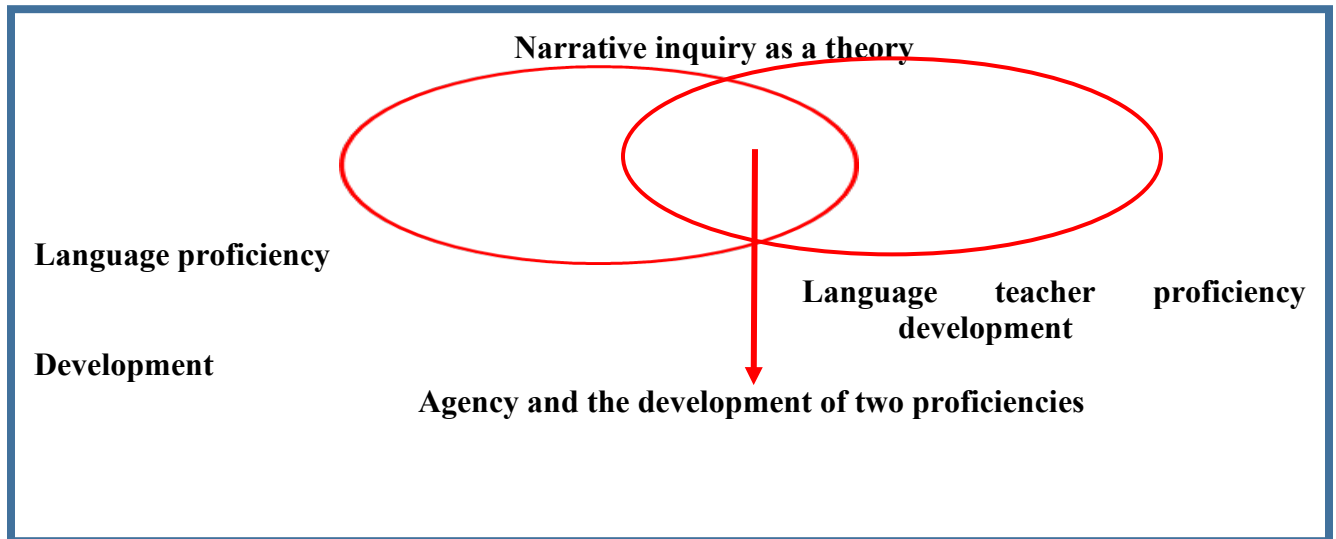

Figure 8 Contribution of the study

The initial contribution this study is making is by demonstrating how narrative inquiry theory served two purposes – as a methodological approach as well as a data collection method. Narrative inquiry as a theory (the blue square) encompasses language proficiency and language teacher proficiency development. In other words, agency drives language proficiency which in turn drives language teacher proficiency development through narrative inquiry. Data was collected through narratives, thus narrative inquiry informed how the data were to be collected.

The second contribution which is conceptual, is illustrated by the way in which both language proficiency and language teacher proficiency are driven by student teachers' agency despite structural constraints such as a monolingual language policy that impacted on their language learning situations. Another structural constraint is limited exposure towards a language in which they are expected to develop proficiency. Given the aim of this study, which was to investigate whether expressive and narrative writing could promote language proficiency and language teacher proficiency, the language proficiency that students had to develop was done through writing, thus this study was mostly confined to determining the promotion of the language

proficiency through this vehicle – expressive writing. Writing was deemed appropriate for this study because it can be assessed in a way that students can come back to it as opposed to when they are interviewed orally. Generally, knowing a language in terms of conversational competence does not equate to the language proficiency that language student teachers need to possess to be able to teach English to their future learners. With regard to language teacher proficiency, this study is making a contribution because it is important to create an awareness as to what subject content knowledge pre-service teachers need in order to cater sufficiently for the learners they are going to have once their teacher training is completed. I believe this study has made a contribution in that regard.

A study based on pre-service student teachers provided a more suitable context as they had been receiving ongoing and intensive direct instruction. The development of the two proficiencies depended on students' own agency. A MKO can supply all the necessary input needed to learn but if students had no power and will to acquire that subject knowledge or at least try to, nothing would happen. Additionally, in terms of their identity as teachers, (regarding who they wish to be and who they fear to be) the issue of identity is already set from when the student decides that s/he wants to become a teacher, thus an element of self-awareness regarding their language proficiency and language teacher proficiency emerges from their own writing.

Narrative inquiry enabled me to find out how students construct identities about themselves which I derived from their narratives because they were telling stories about their lives, particularly about their teaching and learning as well as writing about their development as future language teachers. Thus, there is also knowledge contribution in a form of firstly, testing a theory and secondly developing and implementing a model that other researchers can emulate and utilise in their own contexts.

Lastly, this study has also contributed to a call to review the current monolingual language policy which is of now, is very restrictive in its structure. It does not promote proficiency of indigenous languages while it emphasises the promotion of other cultures as Frydman (2011:183-4) states

> It has been demonstrated over the last two decades that for the rural as well as uneducated populations in Namibia, in which exposure to and opportunity to use English is minimal,

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English has not become a useful means of communication. English has therefore become the property of only some of Namibia's population, and as such it is difficult to imagine how it could play a significant role in uniting the Namibian population into one nation.

Therefore the findings of this study may add to the literature by other authors who are calling for an alternative language policy as this current one is not beneficial to everyone.

5.3   CONCLUSION

Although this study set out to determine whether language proficiency and language teacher proficiency can be stimulated through narrative writing, as well as to see the development of the student teachers' ability to reflect on their learning during the course prior to journal writing, the timeframe set for data collection proved to be limited as it was done over a period of 6 weeks. Therefore, the promotion of language and language teacher proficiency could not be sufficiently established due to the limitations of the instruments utilised in this study. Furthermore, students faced challenges relating to second language (L2) – English acquisition which I have referred to earlier. However, the degree of this improvement could only be measured to a limited extent, especially for the participants in this study, whose improvement was affected by factors such as the time, manner and context in which narratives were generated.

Just like Larsen-Freeman (2006:590) I found that

> characteristics of learner language, that is that its development is not discrete and stage-like but more like the waxing and waning of patterns; that, from a target-language perspective, certain aspects of the behavior are progressive, others, regressive; that change can be gradual and it can be sudden.

The average marks the participants obtained on a weekly basis are illustrative of the above statement (see Table 7).

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It is important to note that narrative inquiry can serve as an effective tool in teacher education in terms of acquiring information about one's practices as a teacher or for teachers to conduct research on their students. A wealth of information can be derived through its usage, as in the case of this study.

This study also benefitted the participants in the sense that they participated in continuous tasks where corrective feedback was given, which in turn served as new knowledge as well as skills that they may not necessarily have acquired during the lessons they attended. It was also beneficial to student teachers because their participation in the study led them to be more proficient in knowledge both of and about the language, English. These findings respond directly to both Vygotsky's and Archer's assertions that learning and knowledge creation are social constructs which require one's own initiative (Vygotsky, 1978; Archer, 1995).

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study are twofold. Firstly, recommendations emerging from this study are presented here. Secondly, the results of this study exposed a number of recommendations from participants regarding the English modules they took at UNAM.

The value of narrative writing was demonstrated, albeit to a limited extent. The first recommendation is therefore that writing of this kind be introduced much earlier in student teachers' programmes. Writing ability improves with more writing, and if the students' writing could improve in the limited time they had for this study, one can only imagine how much they would improve in the four years of study.

This recommendation touches on the way in which the upper primary English courses are designed. In their narrative reflections, it was revealed that students felt the order of how the modules were taught was not right. They felt that grammar should be tackled earlier than the current arrangement (in year 4). It is necessary for lecturers and curriculum experts to take note, since these students experienced the practical aspects of teaching and therefore had a keen sense of what was needed when they go into the schools. Their perceptions resonate with my own because I am of the same opinion that this revisit must take place as soon as possible.

Since students' narrative writing showed a lack of language proficiency as well as knowledge of what was actually covered in their courses, two recommendations can be made:

- Firstly, it seems imperative for UNAM and the Faculty of Education to consider administering proficiency tests for admission as opposed to only administering these tests to final-year education student teachers as is the current practice. This would greatly narrow down the number of prospective students to be admitted to the education courses, who in most cases enter in the system with poor proficiency and are nevertheless expected to become language teachers upon completion of their studies.
- Secondly, mandatory keeping of portfolios should become part of all the language teaching courses. It was revealed in the study that students easily forget what they have learned (see 4.3.4.3) as the participants claimed in their narratives, because they referred to content that I know had been covered as not having been taught in the course.

Since the narrative writing in this study showed how student teachers were able to reflect on their language learning as well as the requirements for further development as language teachers, it seems important to pay attention to the gaps they experienced when teaching (these are also not included in their programmes):

- The importance of reading in language proficiency development seemed to emerge in almost all the participants' writing. A recommendation is that extended reading programmes must be introduced so that students acquire a polished vocabulary, which they may encounter during reading rather than in spoken language.
- As far as the teaching of reading is concerned, student teachers felt that decoding skills should be included in all the modules of the language courses, not just in some modules. For participants, decoding encompassed the ability to apply their knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly pronounce written words.
- The reading theories which explain the developmental stages of reading should be taught at a different time as they are currently not being taught in the appropriate phase.

As is clear, all of these recommendations focus on the importance of increasing language proficiency as well as language teacher proficiency in the course of the student teachers' studies. However, some student teachers also showed how they used their agency to improve their own proficiency. This might be something that teacher trainers could tap into and strengthen, because this would enable student teachers to extend their own training beyond the limits of formal education.

5.5   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate whether narrative writing would play a role in the promotion of language and language teacher proficiency of HPC year 4 English language student teachers. Although the aim of the study was to have a case of 15 participants only, it was hoped that a large number of student teachers would take part in the first part of the study, which was language biography writing. However, this did not materialise due to factors that were previously referred to such as time. Many students indicated that their schedules were too full, and participation in this study was just going to add onto it, while others felt that writing would just take up their time so they declined to participate.

Based on the findings of this study, that there was some indication of promotion of language proficiency and language teacher proficiency and regression of the two in some participants. Taking into account the Namibian language policy, it is no surprise that findings of this study are the way they are, because of the nature of how student teachers have been exposed to English but mostly the way the policy is structured and implemented. When Namibia opted for a monolingual language policy at independence, the following was not well thought out:

- Most former teachers were trained in Afrikaans and other languages like German, thus their English proficiency was not sufficient;
- Some teachers' training may not have included mother-tongue teaching thus they might be experiencing problems now;
- The implementation and interpretation of the language policy was left to individual principals and individual schools to deal with, so those who learners who had been in the English stream in Grades 1-3 have the easiest transition (Ashton, Iijambo,

Matengu & Kalenga, 2008:24) as opposed to those who strictly followed the language policy and were taught in mother tongue and English is exposed to them as any other subject (and in most cases, as the results of this study indicate, English is mostly taught in mother tongue) ;

- The indigenous languages are not developed to the level that they can assist in the facilitation of mother tongue acquisition; as well as

- The lack of English exposure to most school going learners.

Another factor related to time was the time that the study was conducted – it was during students' SBS placement, so communication with them was not easy. I could not put this research on hold to wait for the students to come back to campus because I did not have this luxury, so I proceeded anyway, knowing that I was likely to experience challenges. Fourth (final) year students normally carry out their SBS at the beginning of the year at the start of the first semester, so it was a challenge to get hold of most of these students. As stated earlier, most of the communication took place through email and WhatsApp as most students were geographically dispersed around the country. Some of them had no access to electricity at their homes or even at the schools where they were busy with their SBS. Given this background, only a few students responded to the call to participate in this study, causing the number of anticipated participants to go down significantly.

Having as small a case as I had in this study did not give me an opportunity to categorise the participants as poor, average and good as initially planned. As a result, I was only able to determine whether there was promotion of language and language teacher proficiency among the six participants. I was not able to check for the anticipated change among these aforementioned groups. However, having a smaller group also made the analysis more rewarding, because I could do in-depth analysis.

Given the circumstances under which the study took place and the narratives were generated, I am reluctant to generalise the findings of this small group to the bigger population at HPC. It is also my feeling that, given the time, the quality of the narratives would have been different. Constantly having to be reminded that they had to send their personal journals to the lecturer on a weekly basis was a big headache to the participants. This did not also sit well with me because it felt like

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I was pressuring them into taking part in my study, though I knew they had consented to participate.

If this study were to be redone, I would opt for third year students who have more time on campus and additionally I would have enough time to elicit the needed data from them. Furthermore, the study would be a longitudinal one, which can continue into the students' fourth year. Instead of asking participants to write they would be asked to talk to me because speaking can be done though voice recordings or through WhatsApp voice messaging which would not be as time consuming as writing was. This would give students ample time to orally narrate their stories (Georgakopoulou, 2007:32) , and there would be constant interaction with me as opposed to when they are differently located in terms of their geographical locations. It would enable the participation of many students because they would not be faced with too many constraints as the present participants were.

5.6   FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

A comparative study could be carried at all the UNAM campuses which offer language teaching courses in order to investigate whether the language and language teacher proficiencies of student teachers at those particular campuses could be promoted through the usage of narratives, since the students come from different linguistic backgrounds.

Another possible study could be a similar but longitudinal study, for a much longer period than I had in this study. Having more time for a similar study would yield different results as, instead of carrying out the study only in the final year of study, it could be conducted from the third year, and in this way, students would have more time and be willing to participate in the study. With the current study, students felt that they had no time to partake in any other activities as they felt that they were overloaded with too many academic responsibilities.

Another research possibility is to replicate this study in terms of its methodology because the usage of narrative inquiry to study investigate both the language and language teacher proficiency has not been done in Namibia or in the SADC region. Therefore, if such a study is carried out, much-

needed knowledge would be created in the field of L2 education as well as in teacher training education.

5.7   PERSONAL NOTE

Conducting this study was not an easy task, given that within this period I gave birth twice, first in the year I registered and then in the third year of this journey. Despite having these quite young bundles of joy to properly look after during their early years of their lives, I multitasked and managed to still conduct research, travel (for a few supervisory visits to Stellenbosch), teach/lecture and supervise my own undergraduate students.

I have learned that to succeed at this, one has to put in a lot of sleepless nights, long hours and to also persevere and continue with the process until the end. Thus, this process also taught me to prioritise in terms of my schoolwork as well as my job and to realise that, for me to succeed, I had to be accountable for my actions because nobody was going to hold my hand through this process. I learned to OWN it!

I have realised that, as much as one is a teacher of a particular subject, it is not until one goes through this journey that one realises that there is quite a magnitude of information that one lacks in one's own area of specialisation. Therefore, I appreciate and value the contributions of my supervisor as well as my students who participated in this study, for opening my eyes to a wide world of knowledge that I lacked. I still cannot claim to know everything to be known, but I have learned so much that I am hoping to pass onto my current as well as my future students, as well as to share with colleagues.

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ADDENDUM A   LANGUAGE BIOGRAPHY/ESSAY

Dear Student Teacher

You are expected to write this essay because you have given consent to take part in the study: **Narrative writing and language biographies on English language learning: The case of Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus student teachers.**

Adapted from:

Essays, UK. (November 2013). Language Learning Autobiography Example. Retrieved from *http://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-language/an-language-learning-autobiography-english-language-essay.php?vref=1*

Essay: Language biography on how I learned English

Instructions

Read the prompts given below and write a narrative on the above topic.

Your essay should at least be two pages full.

-Tell me about the language(s) that you spoke when you were growing up.

-At what point in your life did you hear other language(s) (apart from your home language) being spoken? What was/were it/they?

-Tell me the story of your English language learning journey.

-How did it start?

-What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?

-How do you feel about your command of English now, especially when you must teach it?

-How do you feel about English when you use it in your teaching?

-What is your best advice for student teachers of English who struggle with English?

ADDENDUM B PERSONAL JOURNAL

Journal writing (March-April 2019)

<u>Instructions</u>

Because you are a fourth-year student teacher of English Language Education module, and you have given consent to participate in this study, you are requested to write a series of personal narratives in which you reflect on your learning experiences in relation to what is covered in the course (English Language Education module).

You are requested to write at least twice per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) and you should hand in your journals in to the researcher every Friday.

The following prompts can guide you in your writing (but feel free to write anything regarding this module that you may think is important):

- What struck you as important in this course? Why?
- What do you find particularly easy or difficult? Why?
- How does this course help you when you teach (during SBS), in your opinion?
- What aspect of the language skills do you encounter during SBS, which you feel you did not really learn quite well during your training?
- If there is anything that you could change about this course, what would it be? Why?

ADDENDUM C   NARRATIVE FRAME

A Narrative Frame (May 2019)

(Adapted from Barkhuizen's and Wette's Narrative Frames, 2008)

Instructions

Because you have given consent to participate in this study, you are kindly requested to partake in the following type of writing, a writing frame.

Task:

In your journal, use the given starters to complete those sentences in your own words. You are free to write as much as you deem necessary as a response to the given starters below.

Second language teaching and learning

1. I am an English student teacher. The best thing about my teacher training is that…

2. When I first started to teach during SBS,…

3. The place where I taught is…

4. My learners are/were…

5. In my own classroom, I had the power to…

6. Making changes to my teaching practice is something that…

7. This is probably because…

8. In the future, I am going to try to…

9. I remember once in my classroom I had a very difficult time trying to…

10. The main reason for this problem was that…

11. I tried to solve the problem by…

12. It would have been very helpful if…

13. In relation to this difficulty, the type of research I'd like to do would… (you can refer to your current research project here)..

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14. The aim of the research is/would be to…

ADDENDUM D   PERMISSION LETTER/EMAIL FROM PROF GARY BARKHUIZEN

Dear Meameno

Thanks for your message. Yes, I'm happy for you to use the frames. You will no doubt reference your sources.

Not sure if you know, I wrote a follow-up article on narratives frames published in 2014, to address some of the inappropriate ways researchers were using frames in their work. See attached.

All the best with your study
Gary

Professor Gary Barkhuizen | Head of School | School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics | University of Auckland | Private Bag 92019 | Auckland 1142 | New Zealand | Phone: +64 (0)9 9238197 | Email: g.barkhuizen@auckland.ac.nz| http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/people/profile/g-barkhuizen

Sociolinguistics Symposium 22 (SS22)
Wednesday 27 – Saturday 30 June 2018
University of Auckland, New Zealand
www.ss22.ac.nz

ADDENDUM E   PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Narrative writing and language biographies on English language learning: The case of Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus student teachers

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ms M.A. Shiweda, a lecturer in the Department of Education in Languages, Humanities and Commerce (ELHC) at the University of Namibia.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether the use of language biographies as a form of narrative writing can bring about improvement in student teachers' English language proficiency as well as in their teaching proficiency.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: engage in different types of narrative writing to be used for analysis.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

No risks or discomfort is anticipated since the questions do not focus on intimate personal information.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Students and the broader community is expected to benefit from a clearer understanding of how narrative writing can bring about improvement in student teachers' English language proficiency as well as in their teaching proficiency.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of not publishing names with the data, keeping the data on a secure computer and by keeping all recordings safe and coded. Recordings will not be used for broadcast purposes and students may ask for copies. <u>The results will be disseminated in scholarly articles and conferences and completed articles will also be e-mailed to the participants for comment.</u>

6. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Ms M.A. Shiweda or my supervisor, Prof C van der Walt at 021 808 2284 or at cvdwalt@sun.ac.za

8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms. M.A. Shiweda (081 2582404, e-mail mshiweda@unam.na).

DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.

- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.

- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by Ms. Meameno Aileen Shiweda.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   **Date**

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator,** I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition I would like to select the following option:

_____   _____

Signature of principal investigator   Date

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ADDENDUM F   UNAM ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: HPC /417/2018   Date: 14 September 24, 2018

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University Of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: Narrative writing and language biographies on English language learning: The case of Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus student teachers

Researcher: MEAMENO AILEEN SHIWEDA

Faculty/ Campus: Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus

Take note of the following:

(a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
(b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
(c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
(d) The UREC retains the right to:
(i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
(ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

Dr. J.E. de Villiers: UREC Chairperson

Ms. P. Claassen: UREC Secretary

ADDENDUM G   SU ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC Humanities New Application Form

15 January 2019

Project number: 8480

Project Title: Narrative writing and language biographies on English language learning: The case of Hifikepunye Pohamba Campus student teachers

Dear Ms Meameno Shiweda

Your REC Humanities New Application Form submitted on 6 November 2018 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)   Protocol expiration date (Humanities)

15 January 2019   14 January 2022

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines. If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (8480) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project. Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Research Protocol/Proposal	M.A. Shiweda PhD Proposal 03/10/2018		1
Informed Consent Form ethics_	Informed Consent Form_students		
Edited 0		3/10/2018	1
Information sheet	Information Letter		
MA Shiweda July 2018		03/10/2018	1

Data collection tool   Research-instruments 2018   03/10/2018 1

Proof of permission   Permission to use Research Instrument - Gary Barkhuizen 2018 03/10/2018   1

Proof of permission   M. A. Shiweda Ethical Clearance Letter 2018   03/10/2018 1

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research:

Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2. Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using only the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, it is your responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You may not initiate any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related

injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouche within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7. Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC.

8. Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions or interventions) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10. On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

ADDENDUM H   PARTICIPANTS' WRITTEN PERSONAL JOURNALS

Week 3 Tuesday, 02 April 2019

What a year! I had so much to do, let me see, I have to write about my course that I am doing. This course is helping me much during my SBS especially in preparing the reading lesson. During our training we are being taught on how to prepare a reading lesson, which must contain three activities, the pre- reading activities, while reading activities and the post reading activities. In pre reading activities they are done before the reading starts to activate learners' pre-knowledge on the text or story being read, the next one is while reading activities where reading take place and the thirdly post reading activities which emphasises the lesson content.

During this course I have learned that a teacher do not just go to writing lessons with a prepared paragraph or sentences, tell learners to keep quiet and listen and start writing what they heard as that, but there must be an activity after writing planned to be done before the lesson content starts in class (the while writing activity) and it has a closing part the post writing activity.

I realized that there is no reading ELO in our course outline, so I am suggesting that reading must be introduced in so that students get to acquire polished vocabulary that they may encounter during reading rather than in spoken languages.

Friday, 05 April 2019

Hopes and dreams, I think is a bit hard, handwriting is complex perceptual-motor skill, and motor skills, which is developed through instruction. It is an academic skill that allows individuals to express their thoughts and feelings and converse with others. It is a difficult process of handling language by pencil grip, letter formation, and body posture. Handwriting efficiency requires mastery of multiple skills, including vision, coordinating the eyes, arms, hands, memory, posture, and body control, as well as the task of holding a pencil and forming letters. And during our

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training we did not get much training on how to teach learners on how to write and this must be done from first year suggest.

The course is really helping me during my SBS. I have learned on how to use the syllabus during the training, to plan our lesson and how to grade the essays and letters. I ever learned how to formulate up different topics from the syllabus.

If there was something I could change about this course then is to include decoding teaching in all the four modules of this course and just not in some module. This is because decoding is the ability to apply your knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly pronounce written words. Understanding these relationships gives children the ability to recognize familiar words quickly and to figure out words they haven't seen before. I suggested that because if students get the good training on decoding it obvious they will apply or use that knowledge during the teaching and they will produce good reader

English journal

28.03.2019

<u>Writing</u>

Writing is defined by the dictionary as the activity of composing texts for publication or the process of using symbols such as letters of the alphabet, punctuations and spaces to communicate ideas and thoughts in a readable form. I could not agree more. That is so perfect and true.

This very component is considered as one of the most important elements of any usable language, which then includes English. During my time as a student throughout my entire schooling life, this is the skill I will never brag to have fully known. To this day, I still struggle to put pieces of writing together in a well organised, written manner. At times I may be good at following the format, but

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there are times I do mix up ideas that needed to be separated or failing to use correct punctuations in the text, which leads to wrong interpretation of the text to the readers.

It is thus my greatest wish and desire that one of the good days, I wake from my bed and realise my writing skills have improved, but that is only a wish and I so [perfectly know that dreams do not manifest themselves unless acted upon. An English man spoke a well-known saying that, "practice makes perfect and that perseverance brings perfection" so this will serve as my motivation in dealing with my not so prefect writing skill until I could one day gladly testify to it.

Thursday, 08 April 2019

It is Thursday and this writing is becoming interesting. I consider this topic as important because I have learned the five key areas of reading, phonological awareness, phonemes, and phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. I also struck the topic of fluency as very important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. In addition to that I have learnt that fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the words, they can focus their attention on what the text is about and use their background knowledge. In other words, fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same times. Less fluent readers, however, must focus their attention on figuring out the words, leaving them little attention for understanding the text.

In English language 2 we learnt a lot about literature. This was the easiest topic I had ever learnt, since I had the background knowledge of the topic. I like reading stories and it was easy identifying different elements of a story. I learnt how to reading the story intensively and understand the hidden message in it.

This course helped me to demonstrate the ability to ask questions. Throughout my teaching practice I was able to give learners the reading comprehension activities with different levels of questions which enables the learners to read and understand texts, and this helped learners to answer high order questions.

Writing skill is one of the four language aspect. In my own perception I think writing was not taught quite well, because we only learnt about the writing process as a theory but students did not test their abilities to write through practicing.

Ever since I have enrolled in UNAM I was taught different types of lesson plan because each and every lecturer has their own preferences. I personally think that UNAM stakeholders must come together and agree on one format of lesson plan and what to include under each component to avoid confusion among the students.

Tuesday, 26 March 2019

As time passed, our Lecturer for English Language Education 1 taught us a topic on morphology which explains the general morphological features of a language. Morphology, in linguistics, is a study of the internal structure of words and of the rules of how words are formed. Since my childhood I had been struggling with the internal construction of words, and learning of morphology is of vital importance as I came to know that languages vary widely in the degree to which words can be analyzed into word elements or morphemes. There are numerous examples such as ""replacement," which is composed of **re**, **place** and **ment**. Another example is walked, from the elements **walk** and **ed**.

I found the topic on identifying and explaining simple and complex words easy to learn. It did not take much of my study time on mastering the rules which one should adhere to. I am able to break down words into morphemes that made up a word.

This course is much helpful especially when I am teaching during school based studies. As I have learnt the spelling rules (orthography of the language), it is helping me when teaching during SBS simply because the content which I was taught in theory lessons at UNAM I came to practice it during SBS. By bearing in mind the spelling rules had made me spell most of English words without difficulties.

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Writing as a language skill should be considered most. As a final year student teacher, I have encountered that learners are fluent speakers of English but problem comes in when writing the words that they can pronounce fluently. Most of them can speak a word but if you ask that particular learner to write it down, he/she will not get it right.

If there is anything I could change about this course I would make the course at the level of the learners we teach (grade 4 to 7 learners). I have noticed that most of the thing that we covered in this, we don't even teach them during SBS. One example can be, we did a topic on ARTICULATION but in reality this topic is not even in the syllabus for the above mentioned grades. The point is that, we should only be taught things which we are going to teach.

Tuesday, 26 March 2019

This course provided and keeps providing me with the skills and knowledge required for me to develop the academic English skills of my learners. This course offers me an opportunity to properly learn English and be able to communicate with the English speaking nations and because of it I can even get an opportunity to study in different countries and speak with people from this countries. I find phonemes to be an easy topic in the English coarse, they are the smallest parts of sound in a spoken word that makes a difference in the word's meaning. For example, changing the first phoneme in the word *cat* from /c/ to /p/, this changes the word from *cat* to *pat*, and this in the end changes the meaning. I find it so easy to change a single sound in a word to another sound and end up with a different word that has a different meaning. This course has prepared me to deal learners. Its in this course were I was taught that I should be polite to learners, but I should also not be too lenient on them and not let them do whatever they want. English coarse is also helping me during my SBS since it is in this course were I was taught how to give instructions to learners, I was taught that the instructions should be simple, clear and the language used should be age appropriate and I use this daily during the teaching and learning process of English lessons. If there was anything I could change about this course, I would have it have more practical lessons as this will enhance students understand of theoretical part of the module.

Thursday, 28 March 2019

I believe that learning English language at the University level is not only important for academic and communication purposes, but it also gives me or us as students an opportunity to have access to a great deal of entertainment and will have an amazing cultural understanding of this entertainment as we do not need translation and subtitles to understand films and movies. A human mind can not just be about serious topics all the time, one needs to take a moment to read a novel or watch a film for personal pleasure and knowing English helps to understand them (books and films) with a

greater comprehension. As a student teacher, I have to encounter all languages skills daily in my teaching and learning process. I think reading is a little bit challenging to learners as there are a bunch of rules they have to follow while they are doing it, ranging from the letter sounds, to the punctuations and at the same time understanding the meaning of the content that you are reading. One thing I would change about this course is for it be given a more accommodating timetable that can enable the lecturer to pay more attention to students individually as this will enable him or her to find out their difficulties in English and help them while its still early.

Week 2

Tuesday, 26 march 2019

We had a hectic lesson today where we tackled on planning reading lessons. Reading lessons have been a challenge ever since I became a student teacher in 2016. I wondered how and what can I teach in reading lessons. I thought a teacher has little role to play in reading lessons rather than to listen and give chances to different readers. I learned that teachers have to assess readers, by rating their fluency, accuracy and appropriateness when articulating words. Reading lessons have three

stages: Pre reading, While reading and Post reading. Today we covered up to first part of the While reading- initial reading.

I have learned that, a teacher do not just go to reading lessons with a prepared text, tell learners to keep quiet and start reading as easy as that, but there should be before reading activity planned to done in class. This can either be by: giving learners a list of vocabulary from the text to be read to be defined, looking at the text title and predict the text content, by looking at pictures accompanying a text and come up with a short story based on the pictures. Neither the teacher nor the learners read the whole text at this stage, because the main aim here is just to test learner's prior knowledge, catch their interest onto the lesson topic and activating content and formal schemata.

During the while reading stage, I have learned that it has two parts: the initial and focused reading. We ended at initial reading. During the while reading stage, several reading strategies are made to activate strategic competences... such as skimming the text for global understanding, skipping unknown words, using a dictionary to look up for meanings of unfamiliar lexicons, asking questions and make predictions.

ADDENDUM I: PARTICIPANT'S WRITTEN NARRATIVE FRAME

Second language teaching and learning

I am an English student teacher at HP Campus in my fourth year of studying. The best thing about my teacher training that, during this training we are being trained on what we are going to teach as qualified teachers in the field. We are being trained on how to prepare a lesson plan which is the backbone of teaching this help the teacher to have knowledge or more information on what he/she is going to teach, prepare activities for each stage plus teaching aids and the wise man says if you fail to plan to plan to fail. The second is that we were trained on how to reflect on the lesson taught for us to know what went well in the lesson and were improvement needed.

When I first started to teach during SBS I was not well trained on lesson preparation, so this was a struggling stage for me, I have no knowledge on preparing different teaching aids and different activities and most of the time I do not prepare my lessons at all.

I did my first SBS at Ondjondjo Combined School just for observation in phase 1 and phase 2 and 3 I have done it at Olupandu Primary School in Omusti Region.

During SBS my learners used to behaviour well, ask were they do not understand and do they work on time especially the homework given.

In SBS phase 3 I was given a classroom and in my classroom, I had the power punishment learners that do disturb the lessons and others, make noise, late comers and those that do not do their school work.

Making changes to my teaching practice is something that I am concern with and finding ways to improve it. This is probably because during practical's I used to do some few mistakes especially on direct and indirect speech. In future when teaching direct and indirect I will use the information or knowledge we were given during our training.

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During my SBS I remember once in my classroom I had a very difficult time trying to come with pre activities for reading aloud. The main reason for this problem is that I was not having much knowledge on reading. I tried to solve the problem by giving an example reading as teacher. It would have been very helpful if I have searched for information on reading aloud and prepare pre activities.

In relation to this difficulty, the type of research I do like to do research on factors that lead grade 5 learners reading aloud difficulties. The aim of the research is to find out factors that drive learners to reading aloud difficulties and how to get eliminate those factors.

ADDENDUM J: PARTICIPANT'S HANDWRITTEN ESSAY
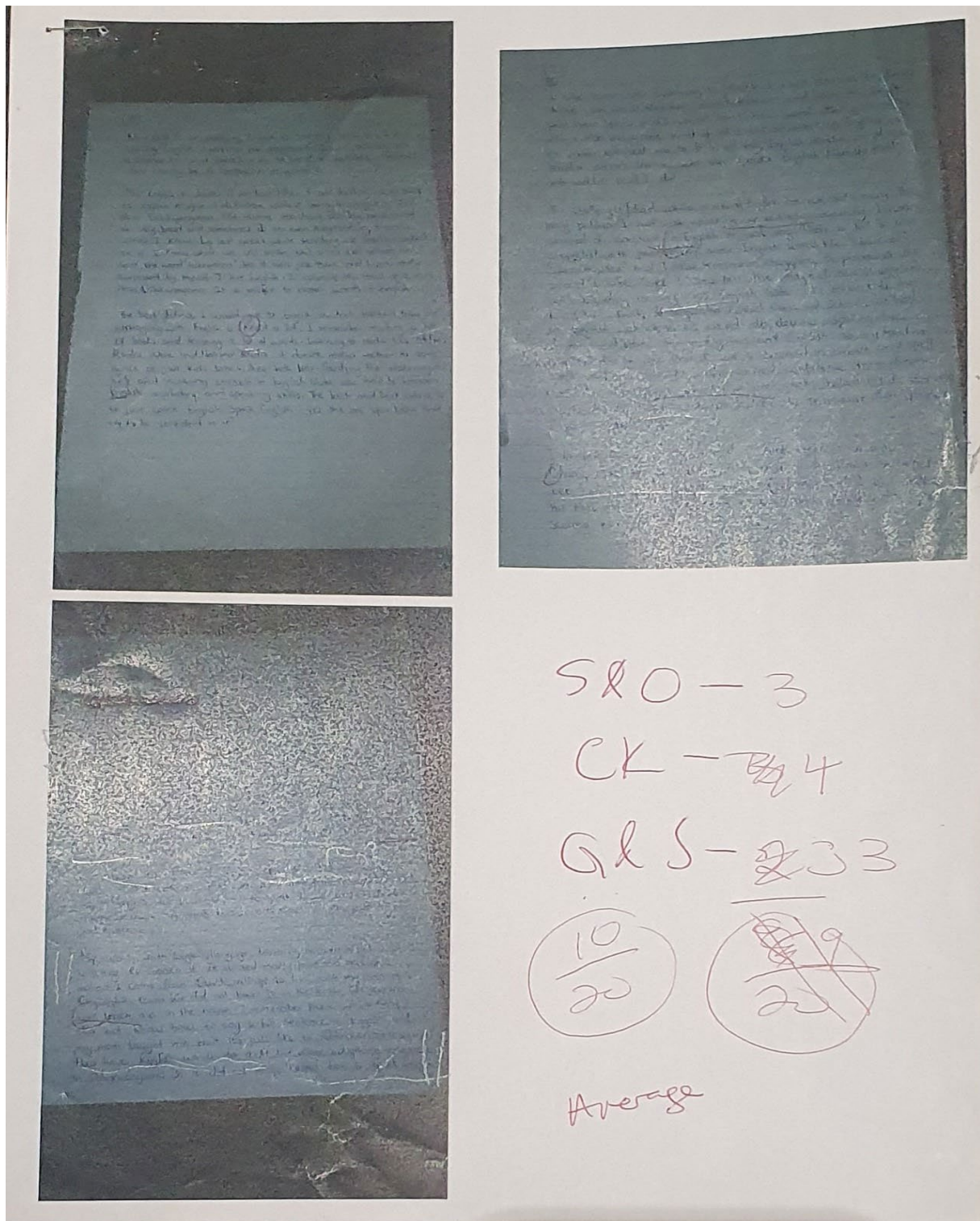
ADDENDUM K: FEEDBACK GIVEN TO PARTICIPANT

a suggestion on how to

M N

begin your journal!

Tuesday, 26 March 2019

wish more writing for this week.

no proper title!..

As time passed, our Lecturer for English Language Education 1 taught us a topic on morphology which explains the general morphological features of a language. Morphology, in linguistics, is a study of the internal structure of words and of the rules of how words are formed. Since my childhood I had been struggling with the internal construction of words, and learning of morphology is of vital importance as I came to know that languages vary widely in the degree to which words can be analyzed into word elements or morphemes. There are numerous examples such as ""replacement," which is composed of **re**, **place** and **ment**. Another example is walked, from the elements **walk** and **ed**.

I love this!

ability y self awareness

I Sounds like a story!

I found the topic on identifying and explaining simple and complex words easy to learn. It did not take much of my study time on mastering the rules which one should adhere to. I am able to break down words into morphemes that made up a word.

to master

very

This course is much helpful especially when I am teaching during school based studies. As I have learnt the spelling rules (orthography of the language), it is helping me when teaching during SBS simply because the content which I was taught in theory lessons at UNAM I came to practice it during SBS. By bearing in mind the spelling rules had made me spell most of English words without difficulties.

(SBS)

Construction of the sentence!

Writing as a language skill should be considered most. As a final year student teacher, I have encountered that learners are fluent speakers of English but the problem comes in when writing the words that they can pronounce fluently. Most of them can speak a word but if you ask that particular learner to write it down, he/she will not get it right.

say

If there is anything I could change about this course I would make the course at the level of the learners we teach (grade 4 to 7 learners). I have noticed that most of the thing that we covered in this, we don't even teach them during SBS. One example can be, we did a topic on ARTICULATION but in reality this topic is not even in the syllabus for the above mentioned grades. The point is that, we should only be taught things which we are going to teach.

S — 4
C — 4
G — 2

10/20

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