

**Abstract**

This study is a depiction and portrayal of the views of Namibian Grade 11 and 12 teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) on the use of English literature in ESL classrooms. The study also presents the rationale and conceptualisation underlying the significance of the use of English literature in the quest to improve English proficiency levels of students. The study was premised on the social constructivist and communicative Approaches which are anchored in the Learner Centered Philosophy; a vanguard of Namibia's epistemology for language learning and teaching. A questionnaire that contained both qualitative and quantitative items was used to gather data. The respondents in general agreed that the study of literature could be used to enhance learner proficiency in the ESL classroom. They agreed that the benefits of literature in an ESL classroom are multidimensional. These benefits include, among others; attainment of pragmatic skills, grammar and vocabulary expansion, extensive reading motivation, intercultural awareness, language skills and critical thinking skills.

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## **Dedication**

This study is dedicated to my mother, Mary S. Masule-Mbidzo, a woman of substance.

## Declaration

I, Agnes A. Simataa hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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..... [Signature]      Date .....

[Student's name]

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## **Abbreviations/acronyms**

<b>ESL:</b>	English as a Second Language.
<b>HOTs:</b>	Higher Order Thinking skills.
<b>BICS:</b>	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills.
<b>CALP:</b>	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.
<b>NSSC:</b>	National Senior Secondary Certificate.
<b>IGCSE:</b>	International General Certificate of Secondary Education.
<b>HIGCSE:</b>	Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

This study investigated the views of Grade 11 and 12 teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) on the use of literature to improve learners' academic writing skills. Waite (2002, p. 514) defines literature as a term which encompasses several forms and genres of written works. These include: writings, literary texts, compositions, novels, poems, report studies, brochures, pamphlets and circulars. In agreement with the above definition Lombard, (2012) defines literature as a phrase used to describe written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, "literature" is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is most generally used to refer to the works of the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction. In this study, the term literature is limited to novels, novellas, short stories, poetry and drama works that Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia use in their ESL syllabus.

This chapter contains the orientation of the study, a statement of the problem, questions about the study, the significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study and definitions of terms that were prominently used in the study.

## 1.1 Orientation of the proposed study

Lucas, Villegas and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) state that academic language pose special challenges for learners. In school, learners use language for purposes different from those used in routine conversations. For example, they are expected to argue points of view, draw conclusions and make hypotheses. Each purpose demands the use of specialised vocabulary and particular language forms. Owing to inexperience with the linguistic demands of the tasks of schooling and unfamiliarity with ways of structuring discourse that is expected in school, most learners regard school language as being more complex and cognitively demanding than conversational language.

Whether one is a student, teacher or businessperson, academic writing skills are necessary in today's world. In addition to this, essays, reports, presentations and research papers are just some examples of documents written in an academic style (Dictionary.com, 1996-2011). Academic writing, when used appropriately, presents a polished and professional image. Furthermore academic writing skills encompass strong composition, excellent grammar and a consistent stylistic approach. Since Namibia is part of the global village and a developing country, it needs scholars that are capable of employing academic writing features in their written work. Dictionary.com (1996-2011) further stipulates that writers seeking to enhance their academic writing skills should focus their efforts on three crucial areas. Two of them are presented below:

1. *Strong writing*: Thinking precedes writing. Good writers spend time distilling information from their sources and reviewing the major points before creating their work. Writing detailed outlines helps many authors organise their thoughts. Strong academic writing begins with solid planning.

2. *Excellent grammar*: Learn the major and minor points of grammar. Spend time practicing writing and seek detailed feedback from teachers, professors or writers you respect. English grammar can be detailed and complex, but strong writers command the major points after many years of study and practice.

Da Silva (2001) explains that Learning ESL is a discovery process. Therefore the teacher's task is to be creative and make this learning process an interesting one, so as to eliminate nuisances and inhibitions and make learning meaningful. Thus the use of literature is an effective way of apprehending the learners' attention. Da Silva further stipulates that literary texts make the teaching/learning process a fun and attractive experience for both teachers and students.

According to Hamdoun and Hussain (n.d) literature performs a crucial function in developing language-learning abilities by training learners to infer meaning through language clues. This in turn enforces stimulating and enjoyable linguistic communication. As a result, literary discourse offers perspective, which inspires learners to think and use language in a sensible and effective manner. The language abilities referred to here could be the four well known language skills; listening, reading, writing and language usage. If the study of literature improves the language skills and abilities of Namibian learners, it is imperative that issues surrounding it should be interrogated.

In support of the use of the study of literature in an ESL classroom, Amer (2003, p. 63) opines that the traditional structurally-based texts and the newer, integrated communicative courses might not be sufficient for the demands of academic classes. On the other hand, a syllabus that is based or that draws heavily on authentic stories, provides a motivating medium for language

learning while fostering the development of the thinking skills that are needed for L2 academic literacy.

The Namibian ESL, Higher level syllabus provides for a component of the study of literature. As illustrated in Table 1 below, this component was introduced in order to improve proficiency in both written and spoken English of the learners. The researcher, therefore, felt it necessary to interrogate the views of ESL teachers (as implementers of educational policy) on the use of the study of literature on learners' academic writing skills. Article 3 of the Constitution of the Government of the Republic of Namibia, (1990, p. 2) proclaims English as the official language of the country. This official language must be used in offices, in schools (as a medium of instruction) and in public meetings. To this effect, a language policy was then adopted. According to one of the goals of the policy "the seven-year primary education cycle should enable learners to acquire reasonable competencies in English, the official language, and be prepared for English medium instruction throughout the secondary cycle" (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993, p. 3). This implies that by the end of primary school, Namibian learners should be competent in the English language and should have attained language skills that would enable them to read and write effectively in the official language by the time they are in Grade 8. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) (1993) states that by the end of senior secondary school, learners may need to use English for learning at tertiary level, for employment and for public use in their daily lives. This implies that the teaching and learning of English in Namibian schools should be accorded special attention.

The fact that English is not the mother tongue of many Namibians warrants teaching and learning strategies that would enable Namibian learners to efficiently and effectively acquire a good command of spoken and written English. Therefore, a good foundation of learning English should be laid from primary school. In the same vein, Cummins (2008) draws attention to the distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). According to Cummins, BICS are acquired to a functional level within two years of initial exposure to a second language, whereas at least five years is usually required for learners to acquire CALP. This therefore implies that by the time Namibian learners graduate from senior secondary school they should be proficient enough in academic aspects of the second language (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Many researchers and scholars try to apply various teaching methods not only to increase students' language ability, but also help them comprehend the academic subject matter (Shang, 2006).

The fact that the University of Namibia (UNAM) through its Language Centre introduced three English courses to orient first year students to cope with academic writing, speaking, listening and reading needs suggests that many Namibian learners still struggle with the four skills of the English language by the time they reach the tertiary level. This, therefore, seems to leave much to be desired in the ESL curriculum. It is noted that proficiency in these skills can be acquired in different ways. The focus of this research study, however, is on academic writing through the use of the study literature.



## **1.2. Analysis of the Namibian ESL syllabus**

The Ministry of Education and Culture (1993, p. 53) states that one of the strategic initiatives that the Ministry of Education and Culture launched was a new Senior Secondary Level Programme leading to the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and for some to the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE). The Ministry aimed to assist learners to communicate effectively in both spoken and written English. To complement this initiative, two syllabi were designed; one for IGCSE students and the other for HIGCSE students. The HIGCSE syllabus contained a component of literature use in ESL, while the IGCSE syllabus did not contain this component.

This syllabus was then revised and in 2006 a new ESL syllabus was introduced to address the shortcomings of the previous syllabus. However, these shortcomings are not the focus of this research study. The new ESL syllabus for National Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) is divided into two levels: (1) the Higher level and (2) the Ordinary level. The ordinary level syllabus does not include literature as part of learning content for the learners, whereas according to the Ministry of Education (2005) the higher level is classified into four components of learning content, which are: listening and speaking, reading, writing, language usage and literature. The literature component is then divided into three categories: (1) skills that the learners should acquire, (2) the objectives of studying literature and (3) the competencies that the learners should have acquired at the end of the course. Table 1 below illustrates skills, objectives and competencies of the literature component, as outlined in the English Second Language syllabus higher Level Grade 11-12.

**Table 1: Skills, objectives and competencies of the literature component, as outlined in the syllabus:**

<b>SKILLS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b> <b>Learners will:</b>	<b>COMPETENCIES</b> <b>Learners should be able to:</b>
1. Knowledge with Understanding	Acquire knowledge and understanding of different texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recall and narrate events in the texts studied;</li> <li>• Provide details of settings and summaries of plots, themes and characters;</li> <li>• Explain literal meanings in texts;</li> <li>• Select details relevant to the tasks set and use quotations appropriately; and</li> <li>• Understand intentions of the writer.</li> </ul>
2.critical interpretation	Critique and review texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish different points of view;</li> <li>• Work out various themes, imagery and symbolism in texts studied;</li> <li>• Provide analysis of plots, characters, etc.;</li> <li>• Employ appropriate literary language in their critical analysis of texts studied, e.g. imagery, irony, sarcasm, satire, etc.; and</li> <li>• Identify relationship between characters and plot as well as characters themselves.</li> </ul>
3.Judgement and personal response	Form and develop own ideas and opinions on aspects of the different genre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appraise texts studied;</li> <li>• Communicate an informal personal response to texts studied;</li> <li>• Discuss relationships in texts studied;</li> <li>• Articulate and discuss their own assumptions, feelings and attitudes;</li> <li>• Compare and contrast themes, characters, etc.;</li> <li>• Consider complicated issues; and</li> <li>• Show evidence of capacity for independent thought and judgement.</li> </ul>

*Source:* Taken and Adapted from English Second Language syllabus higher Level Grade 11-12, (2005, p.14).

A critical analysis of Table 1 reveals that Higher Level learners are encouraged to become critical thinkers, readers and writers through the skills, objectives and competencies of the

literature component , whereas Ordinary Level learners are deprived of that opportunity as they do not have a literature component in their curriculum. They also do not have an alternative to the study of the literature component.

There are multiple benefits for proficiency in the English language. One of the primary benefits of learning English is that it is often considered the language of global business. The international business community often uses it for communication, even among people who do not speak the same native language. Speaking and understanding English can enable easily communicate with others and find more job opportunities not only in his or her home country, but around the world as well. There are also many professional informative publications printed in English, which means it is often an essential language for anyone working in academia or research.

In addition to this, for many people the benefits of learning English include broadening their employment opportunities, since it is used so commonly in business. People who speak two or more languages are often ideal candidates for jobs in travel, international business, or translation. Many government agencies and employers that offer work with the general public, such as positions in law enforcement or healthcare, often look for multilingual candidates.

Many of the most prominent and well known publications throughout the world are written and printed in English. Scholars interested in doing research at an academic level, or working on new scientific developments, should consider the benefits of learning English to read these periodicals and publish their own work. Publication in peer-reviewed journals is often required for someone who wishes to remain in academia, and the ability to read and write in English may

be necessary to maintain such a position. Even learning about current events often requires an understanding of the language, since so many global publications and news websites use it.

Many nations in the world teach English as a requirement in schools. It is estimated that over a billion people in the world speak English on at least a basic level. For many people, the benefits of learning English involve the new opportunities that become available to someone who understands it. Anyone interested in attending a university in the United States of America (USA), for example, needs to speak it or be able to pass a test proving that he or she is proficient.

In the Namibian context, reading a good story or novel can encourage learners of ESL to acquire a great deal of new vocabulary. It further helps them to expand their language awareness. This means that using the study of literature in an ESL classroom can help them become more sensitive to some of the overall features of the English language. The wide-spread of the English language cannot be overemphasised as it is usually used at international gatherings. Many African countries, including the Republic of Namibia, adopted it as their official language after their political independence. This fact requires that Namibian scholars are taught the language efficiently. For this reason every teaching method or technique must be explored and used to ensure that by the time a Namibian learner graduates from senior secondary school she/he is capable to effectively and efficiently communicate with other speakers of English. This is echoed by Lazar (1993) who states that English is now used internationally or globally for communication. This is a call for the effective use of the language across the globe. Furthermore, literature texts that are written in English reflect the rich and fascinating diversities of today's world. These texts are written by authors from different parts of the world. This means

that by exposing students to the use of literature in English they are asked to think about the range of cultures from which literature in English is produced. The Office of the President (2004) in the Vision 2030 document stipulates that Namibian students as part of the global world should acquire language skills that would enable them to effectively participate in a Knowledge Based Economy (KBE). This is envisaged in vision 2030 of the Republic of Namibia as follows:

General secondary education is an essential foundation for the human resources required to build a sustainable competitive economy. In an information age with globalisation of markets, secondary education develops and reinforces the capacity for continuous learning and flexible skill training. National competitiveness and international cooperation, especially in high value added economic activity; depend on knowledge, skills and competencies associated with abstract reasoning, analysis, language and communication skills, and the applications of science and technology. There is much evidence to suggest that export-led growth is associated with investments at post-primary levels (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007, p. 23).

Reading is one of the effective methods of acquiring a language. Therefore Namibian learners need to be encouraged to do so through the study of literature. According to Soanes and Hawker (2008, p.851) to read is to “look at and understand the meaning of written or printed matter by interpreting its characters or symbols.” Therefore the study of literature would enable Namibian learners increase their understanding of written texts as proficient reading depends on the ability to recognise words quickly and effortlessly. In academic writing students are required to think critically thus reading literary texts can assist Namibian learners to infer meaning of written texts and in turn be able to write critically. Literary texts require that the learner is actively involved in interpreting the unstated inferences and assumptions of a written text. Therefore encouraging learners to

handle the multiple ambiguities of the literary text helps them to develop their overall capacity to infer meaning and this can be applied in their own academic writing.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

With the adoption of English as the official language in Namibia, senior secondary school learners are expected to communicate clearly in writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. In order to assess their writing skills they are required to write in a variety of forms, adopting a voice suitable to the intended audience; use the writing process independently to produce a final written version of an essay or a piece of creative writing; organise and link ideas logically and effectively in written texts such as narratives and essays; use the sentence patterns and conventions of standard English in their writing with the degree of accuracy necessary for continued success in subjects in classrooms or at college and/or university. However, many learners grapple with academic writing at this level.

For this reason, this study focused on investigating the views of Grade 11 and 12 teachers of English as a second Language (ESL) on the use of the study of literature on learners' academic writing skills. According to Nyathi (2001), the initial Namibian IGCSE and HIGCSE syllabus did not effectively address academic writing requirements such as high level thinking skills such as analysis, inference, evaluation and synthesis. These skills according to the above author could be enhanced through the use of literature in ESL. Thomas and Thorne (n.d.) define Higher Order Thinking Skills in the following manner:

In a nutshell, Higher Order Thinking is thinking on a higher level than memorizing facts or telling something back to someone exactly the way it was told to you. When a person memorizes and gives back the information without having to think about it, we call it rote memory. That's because it's much like a robot; it does what it's programmed to do, but it

doesn't think for itself. Higher Order Thinking, or HOT for short, takes thinking to higher levels than just restating the facts. HOT requires that we do something with the facts. We must understand them, connect them to each other, categorize them, manipulate them, put them together in new or novel ways, and apply them as we seek new solutions to new problems (Thomas and Thorne, n.d)

Proponents of literature as illustrated in the section “Literature review” in Chapter 2 advocate for the integration of the study of literature in ESL classrooms. They argue that literary texts can be used to promote HOTs thus enhancing the academic writing skills of learners. In the Namibian Senior Secondary School Level, the use of literature is not compulsory to all ESL learners. In other words, although literature is part of the curriculum, not all learners are exposed to it. Those who opt for the Ordinary Level do not study literature as part of their curriculum. However, those who opt for the Higher Level are required to critically analyse literature as a pre-requisite for passing ESL. This situation calls for research with regards to the inclusion of literature in the Grade 11/ 12 ESL syllabus.

Proponents of the use of literature in ESL classrooms (Wu, 2008, Shang 2006, Burke & Brumfit 1999, McKay 1999, Lazar 1993, Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988, Collie & Slater 1987 and <http://sunzi1.lib.hku.hk/hkjo/view/10/1000007.pdf>. accessed May 5, 2010) argue that there are several reasons why literature should be incorporated in language teaching. In support of this argument Burke and Brumfit (1999) assert that there are at least three distinguishable reasons as to why literature should be incorporated in ESL teaching. Firstly, they point out that the study of literature texts could be used to assist students in developing competence in the language, as the prime purpose of teaching literature is to teach language not literature. Secondly, they point out that indulging in literature texts is to teach culture, as literature may also enable students to understand foreign culture more clearly. Thirdly, Burke and Brumfit postulate that the study of

literature may also be the basis of competence in general reading and writing in a foreign language.

The focus of this study however, is the latter aspect; that of literature enhancing competence in writing skills of learners of ESL. If the study of literature can enhance the writing skills of Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia, it therefore should be compulsory for all the ESL learners. There has been no study mainly focusing on the teaching of ESL academic writing through the use of the study of literature in Namibia. It has not been ascertained whether the study of literature could indeed enhance the writing skills of Namibian senior secondary school learners. As a result it is imperative to have an investigation on the views of those that are directly involved with the learners in this subject, the ESL teachers.

Nyathi (2001) has written on this subject; however, the focus of his study has not been entirely on the role that the study of literature can play in enhancing academic writing skills of Namibian learners. This means that there is a lack of literature on this topic with regards to the Namibian situation. The problem of investigation is that though Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia study literature, it is not a compulsory component of the ESL syllabus. The students that opt for the ordinary level are not required to study literature whereas those who opt for the higher level are required to do so. This could mean that the Ordinary Level learners are deprived of the attainment of deeper reading, thinking, speaking and writing skills for many authors claim that the literature component can greatly enhance such skills. It is against this background that this study was carried out.



#### **1.4 Questions of the study**

The following questions were addressed:

- (1) What are the views of ESL teachers towards the use of literature in Grade 11 and 12 classrooms?
- (2) How do ESL teachers teach academic writing through the use of literature?
- (3) What barriers do ESL teachers encounter when teaching literature?

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

Even though research findings claim that the study of literature enhances academic writing skills of ESL learners, the researcher found it necessary to conduct research in this aspect as not all Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia study this component. If the study of literature plays a significant role in learners' academic writing, as some researchers claim (Wu 2008, Shang 2006, Burke & Brumfit 1999, McKay 1999, Lazar 1993, Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988, Collie & Slater 1987 & Raymond n.d.), then all senior secondary school students in Namibia should be exposed to it. If it does not then a different decision could be implemented. In addition to this there had been no study focusing on the teaching of ESL academic writing through the study of literature in Namibia. It had not been ascertained whether the study of literature could enhance the writing skills of the learners. As a result it was imperative to have an investigation on the views of those that were directly involved with the learners in this subject. These are the ESL teachers.

It is hoped that the outcome of this study would contribute to the body of knowledge on the use of literature. The findings and recommendations from this study could benefit ESL teachers,

subject advisors, curriculum developers and teacher educators at the University of Namibia. Below are the aspects in which the findings could be useful to the above stakeholders:

*1.5.1. Contributions to teachers and subject advisors*

It is expected that the findings of this study would add value to the teachers of ESL. The findings indicate that most of the respondents in this study concluded that the study of literature enriches ESL learners' academic writing skills. This acknowledgment could assist the ESL teachers to change or enhance their teaching methods in such a way that they also teach the study of literature to help their learners improve their writing skills.

ESL subject advisors could also greatly benefit from the findings of this study in different ways. Subject advisors can play an important role in upgrading the quality of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teaching in Namibian Senior Secondary Schools. Firstly, they can assist in the development of instructional materials; implementation of curriculum changes, review and refinement of teaching methods.

Furthermore the advisors, based on the findings of the study could facilitate teacher involvement in curriculum development; evaluation of new materials; communication of significant new developments and the status, accomplishments and needs of the ESL programme. As some respondents indicated that they hardly taught the study of literature for the purpose of enhancing their learners' academic writing skills; the ESL subject advisors should then step in and assist these teachers to do so as some of them may lack the knowledge of doing so.

In addition to this, subject advisors could play a pivotal role in teacher development. The findings of this study indicated that some teachers hardly attended workshops that dealt with the teaching of the study of literature, thus the need for workshops that deal with this component.

The advisors should initiate in-service training programmes that would help teachers improve their teaching methods of the ESL component.

Moreover, the advisors could initiate cooperative teaching among ESL teachers. If one teacher lacks skills in teaching the study of literature for writing improvement then such a teacher could solicit the assistance of another teacher who has the expertise in that component. The advisors could also coordinate teachers' ideas on the implementation of the curriculum. This would give the teachers a sense of ownership of the curriculum as a result they might teach the study of literature from all angles.

Likewise the advisors could also play a significant role in the analysis of test and examination results, maintenance of data on learner achievement and examination of teaching objectives based on the test results and assist teachers in self-evaluation.

#### *1.5.2 Contributions to teacher educators*

Teacher trainers in teacher training institutions could also use the research findings and recommendations to integrate the study of literature in their curriculum and to equip teacher trainees with the knowledge and skills needed to teach the study of literature effectively and efficiently in Namibian Senior Secondary Schools.

This research study found out that some teachers struggled with teaching the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 learners. This finding shows that ESL teacher educators have much to contribute to the development of quality teaching amongst the teachers. They could delve on specialised skills that add quality to the grooming of aspiring ESL teachers. Skills of quality teaching and quality assessment are most desired. Quality teaching skills involve the process of making trainees work hard and become independent teachers. The Educators could help the ESL

trainees to attain creative skills that would eventually help them grapple with all the components of the ESL syllabus.

The purpose of teacher education should be development of problem solving skills rather than imparting knowledge alone. This is possible by having a flexible, experience-based, process-oriented teacher education programme wherein the student teachers are trained in analysing problems, developing hypotheses, collecting relevant data and drawing conclusions. This would eventually assist the trainees in tackling the literature component as required when they become teachers.

### *1.5.3. Contributions to policy makers*

The results of the study could be useful when identifying and determining the need for revision of the existing policies and practices. The findings of this study could contribute to the continuous revision of the Senior Secondary School ESL curriculum in Namibia.

This study outlines the views of ESL teachers on the use of the study of literature on academic writing skills of Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibian schools, therefore the policy makers can also make curriculum based decisions based on the views of the policy implementers (the ESL teachers). They may decide to make the study of literature compulsory to all the Grade 11 and 12 learners or leave the syllabi as they are.

## 1.6 Limitations of the study

Ideally, the study should have encompassed all the 13 administrative regions in Namibia. However, due to limited resources and time, the study was confined to the Khomas Educational region. It did not consider the views of the learners. This might have had an effect on the results of this study.

## 1.7 Delimitations of the study

Due to the limitations outlined above, this study was conducted in the Khomas region only. According to Best and Kahn (2006), delimitations are the boundaries of the study. Therefore, this study was only conducted focussing through Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers in the Khomas Education region. It only investigated their views on the use of the study of literature in improving the learners' academic writing skills.

## 1.8 Definition of terms

The following concepts were prominently used in this study:

- Literature:** In this study it refers to fiction (novels) and nonfiction, literary works such as, biographies, poetry, short stories and drama works that Grade 11 and 12 learners are exposed to.
- Stakeholders:** In this study it refers to teachers, policy makers, curriculum developers, subject advisors, the Namibian Ministry of Education, learners and all other groups that might be interested in the topic at hand.
- Academic writing:** This refers to a style of written expression that includes formal register, tone, use of a third person, clear focus on a given topic, precise word choice, clarity, objectivity and tentativeness.

## **CHAPTER 2:LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

According to Best and Kahn (2006, p. 39), effective research is based on past knowledge. Therefore, the literature review provides useful hypotheses and helpful suggestions for significant suggestions for significant investigation. This study was carried out with this in mind, thus the literature provided. Many research studies have addressed some crucial issues regarding the study of literature (Yongan Wu 2008, Shang 2006, Burke & Brumfit 1999, McKay 1999, Lazar 1993, Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988, Collie & Slater 1987 & Raymond n.d., Pflaum 1996 & Nyathi 2001). However, as pointed out in Chapter 1, this study examined the views of ESL teachers on the use of the study of literature in improving learners' academic writing skills. Drawing from this literature, it is apparent that the study of literature plays a significant role in improving these skills. In preparing for this study, several literature texts were consulted. Proponents of literature study in ESL and language teaching in general, discuss several reasons why literature should be part of ESL and the language teaching curriculum. However, for the purpose of this study, only details for its influence on student academic writing are discussed.

### **2.2 Theoretical framework of ESL learning**

The theoretical framework below serves as a basis for conducting this research. It assists in understanding the purpose of the study of literature in improving learners' academic writing skills. At independence, the Government of the Republic of Namibia's educational system was shifted from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered education system. According to MEC (1993), teacher-centered education is unproductive thus the need to shift to learner-centered education.

The social constructivist and the communicative approaches were selected in the context of this study as they seemed to be congruent with the policy of learner-centered education. Advocates of these approaches view learning as an active process in which learners are encouraged to participate in learning. Proponents of the study of literature in ESL classrooms (Yongan Wu 2008, Smit, 2007, Shang 2006, Burke & Brumfit 1999, McKay 1999, Lazar 1993, Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988, Collie & Slater 1987 & Raymond n.d. Yang & Wilson, 2006) argue that learners should be encouraged to discuss literary texts for better understanding and for better academic writing. Scholars who support these approaches also seem to view learning as an active process in which learners should learn to discover principles, concepts and facts for themselves, hence the importance of encouraging discussion and critical thinking.

### **2.2.1 The social constructivist approach**

Yang and Wilson explain the social constructivist approach as follows:

Social constructivism provides a psycholinguistic explanation for how learning can be fostered effectively through interactive pedagogical practices. It emphasizes that learning takes place in a socio-cultural environment and views learners as active constructors of their own learning environment. We learn not as isolated individuals, but as active members of society. Social constructivists see reading, like learning, as social practice (Yang & Wilson, 2006, p. 365).

If used appropriately in Namibian ESL classrooms, this approach would enable the learners to practice skills in communication, knowledge sharing and critical thinking. It seems that there are multiple benefits of encouraging discussion in the classroom. It should be kept in mind that senior secondary school learners are young adults who are generally eager to share information. This assertion is propounded by Reznitskaya, Anderson and Kuo (2007) who explain that participation in group discussion should be encouraged as it allows students to generalise and

transfer their knowledge of classroom learning and builds a strong foundation for orally communicating ideas. The above cited authors also say that many studies show that discussion plays a vital role in increasing the ability of students to test their ideas, synthesise the ideas of others, and build deeper understanding of what they are learning. This approach shows that ESL learners could greatly benefit from its implementation as literary texts demand a deeper understanding of themes embedded in them. According to Smit (2007, p.51):

Reading literature, furthermore, fosters the development of life skills by requiring the reader to make the same effort of comprehension as she/he grapples with quandaries and predicaments in the text as she/he would in real life (Everson). The study of literature thus teaches the ability to interpret discourse which can be applied inside, as well as outside, the learning situation and in a range of language uses both literary and non-literary. Since it is full of real life language in different situations, literature can provide a variety of models of communication.

Teachers in the study of literature in ESL classrooms are thus encouraged to allow their learners to hold large and small group discussions, thus presenting learners with opportunities to exercise self-regulation, self-determination and a desire to persevere with literature tasks. In addition to this, these discussions would eventually increase learners' motivation, collaborative skills, and the ability to solve problems. If learners are accorded opportunities to discuss literary texts with one another and discuss their ideas in the English language, their ability to support their thinking, develop reasoning skills, and to argue their opinions persuasively and respectfully would greatly improve (Reznitskaya, Anderson & Kuo, 2007).

The understanding of this theory can be helpful to ESL teachers who are expected to teach the study of literature to Grade 11 and 12 learners as they need to encourage their learners to become constructors of their own learning environment. If the study of literature is made compulsory to all the learners, then they would all be able to attain skills that would enable them to actively



participate in their own learning. They would share their inferences of the literary texts with their fellow learners and teachers. Generally literature texts are open to various interpretations, as learners strive to grapple with these inferences they are thus encouraged to relate what they read to their socio-cultural environment. Yang and Wilson's (2006) contention is congruent with the view of learner-centered teaching, an approach that is encouraged by the Namibian education sector. Learners in this approach are perceived as active participants in their own learning rather than passive recipients of information. With the necessary support from their teachers and other stakeholders the learners would ultimately become critical thinkers not just passive receivers of information. This statement is reinforced by the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) (2003) which argues that:

Learner-centered education presupposes that teachers have a holistic view of the learner, valuing the learner's life experience as the starting point for their studies. Teachers should be able to select content and methods on the basis of a shared analysis of the learner's needs, use local and natural resources as an alternative or supplement to ready-made study materials, and thus develop their own and the learner's creativity... A learner-centred-approach demands a high degree of learner participation, contribution and production... [It] is based on a democratic pedagogy, a methodology which promotes learning through understanding, and practice directed toward empowerment to shape conditions of one's life (National Institute for Educational Development, (2003, p. 98).

With the understanding of the social constructivist theory, ESL teachers might be able to apply learner-centeredness in their own teaching. They would encourage their learners to make use of their own life experiences in order to understand the given literature texts. For the learners to have a better understanding of the literature texts they read, teachers should select texts that their learners can relate to. These could be material written by Namibian or African authors. However

they should not be limited to local materials only but international contemporary texts should be selected as well as Namibia is part of the global world. In this manner the learners would be able to actively participate in their own learning as they construct meanings of the given literature texts, eventually acquiring a better understanding of the texts and the purpose for reading them. Ruschoff (n.d.) maintains that ESL students are often confronted with complex grammatical structures of the English language. As a result, many experts in the teaching of language have suggested different ways in which the language can be best learnt. Knowledge construction has just been recently added as a means of language learning and that various learning theories and cognition have influenced numerous approaches to language learning as opposed to the process of acquisition that has dominated foreign language learning for a long time.

Ruschoff (n.d.) adds that following a long period in which behaviouristic rote learning, cognition in the context of situational, functional-notional, generally communicative foreign language learning and acquisition has been the main influence on materials development and curriculum design over the past decades. When the colonial government was overthrown in Namibia, the new government found it befitting to do away with teacher-centered education and made room for learner-centered education. This means that Namibian learners were then encouraged to fully participate in their own education. Understanding of the learning material became pivotal to the education system than rote learning which was promoted by the previous education system. Independent thinking and understanding are imperative to the study of literature texts. Not only can the texts be used to understand grammar and language rules, these sources can be a great source of teaching ESL learners to improve their writing skills as they are exposed to different writing styles.

The social constructivism theory, according to Ruschoff (n.d), perceives students as active participants who have prior knowledge of what they are taught. They use this knowledge to make sense of what they learn. Moreover constructivists go further than pure cognitive approaches by recommending that the role of the teacher is to assist the learners to construct meaningful and conceptually functional representations of the external world. This view corresponds with that of the Namibian learner-centered education policy which implies that:

Teacher-centered instruction is inefficient and frustrating to most learners, and certainly is not consistent with education for all. Hence we shall have to help both our teachers and learners become skilled at developing and working in learner- centered settings. What teachers do must be guided both by their knowledge of concepts and skills to be mastered and by experiences, interests, and learning strategies of their students. Our challenge is to harness the curiosity of learners and the excitement of learning rather than stifling them. To achieve that, teachers must be learners (M.E.C., 1993, p. 10).

In concurrence with the above argument, Ruschoff (n.d.) maintains that constructivists view learning as an active, creative and socially interactive process. In addition to this, knowledge is viewed as something students must learn to construct and less like something that can be transferred. This suggests that ESL learners in Namibia should be encouraged to study literature texts. They should be given activities that allow them to construct meaning on their own such as summarising and reacting to these texts. Spack (as cited in Raymond, n.d.) expressed a similar view with respect to the study of literature, by arguing that often students undergo a vigorous process of discovering, writing, rewriting and editing to arrive at a coherent meaning. Such an exercise helps students to develop the ability to formulate and organise ideas, and to discover meaning for themselves through language usage. Raymond (n.d.) explains that this approach to learning gives them insight into the nature of written communication that is intended to be read, reflected on and responded to. Allowing students to become active participants in their own

learning and constantly asking them to write about literature works they read might assist them acquire a firmer mastery of the English language.

As far as foreign language is concerned, Ruschoff (n.d.) postulates that developing strategies of language processing, learning competence as much as language awareness and skills in knowledge perception, production and knowledge construction are needed for successful outcomes of any language curriculum. As these strategies are developed Namibian ESL learners would be able to emulate the writing styles they come across as they read literature texts and apply them in their own writing. Ruschoff (n.d.) claims that, over the past decade, language learning theory has seen a shift from a highly guided to the more open learning environment with constructivism as a new and very much a learner-centered paradigm for learning. Learning is seen as a self-structured and self-motivated process of knowledge construction and the learner is regarded as a self-governed creator of knowledge.

According to Brown (1994), constructivism calls for the elimination of a standardised curriculum. Instead, it promotes using curricula customised to the students' prior knowledge. Also, it emphasizes hands-on problem solving. Under the theory of constructivism, Brown (1994) recommends that educators focus on making connections between facts and fostering new understanding in students. Teachers should tailor-make their teaching strategies to student responses and encourage students to analyse, interpret, and predict information. Teachers also rely heavily on open-ended questions and promote extensive dialogue among students. In a literature class, it is this dialogue that would eventually promote understanding of the given texts as they are holistically critiqued and discussed. Learners will thus learn language skills and know the “real” meanings of words and what can be inferred from them as a result encouraging vocabulary growth. These texts may also help them to effectively organise their own writing.

Class discussions would sharpen their perceptions of the world, stimulate their imagination and improve their capacity for logical thinking thus broadening their writing skills.

### **2.2.2 Communicative approach**

The above assertions about the social constructivist approach also relate to the use of the study of literature through interpretations by the communicative theory. In the context of this study, the social constructivism theory can be complemented by the communicative theory of language teaching and learning. The two theories seem to be interrelated as they both argue that students must be seen as active participants in their own learning. In support of the communicative approach, Brown (1994) states that:

Beyond grammatical and discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for “real-life” communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has so consumed our historical journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance “out there” when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate lifelong language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential (Brown, 1994, p.77).

Similarly, Shang (2006) explains why it is necessary to study literature in language learning. Firstly, Shang (2006) argues that literature teaching emphasises the exploration of themes more than any other school subject and that students are bound to learn more about how to express their thoughts through language. Shang (2006) further states that through literature, students may enhance their vocabulary, grammar, paragraph structure and types and styles of writing. In

addition to this, in so doing, students do not only learn to write effectively in the language classroom, but throughout their lives. Their language abilities and comprehension skills would be enhanced.

Abulhaija (as cited in Shang, 2006) explains that language and literature cannot be separated because they have something important to offer in the development of a student as a whole. Literature teaches idiomatic language, improves comprehension skills and promotion of writing skills, amongst others. Literature teaching does not only help students to comprehend the meanings of given texts, but it also enhances the thinking of learners and language abilities. Furthermore, literature texts assist learners in learning vocabulary, discovering questions, evaluating evidence individually, forming judgements based on synthesis, and developing a coherent argument in support of a position.

In the context of this study it can be argued that the study of literature motivates learners to be active participants in the learning process hence the collaboration of the social constructivist approach and the communicative approach

Nunan (as cited in Brown, p. 78, 1994) points out five features that characterise communicative language teaching:

- An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language;
- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation;
- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself;
- An enhancement of the learners' own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning; and

- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

Nyathi (2001) maintains that the study of literature texts improves academic writing. The author argues that reading improves writing. This was demonstrated by quantitative data of a study that indicated that most respondents consulted during the study in all educational regions of Namibia, concurred that literature usage improved writing. The findings from Nyathi's (2001) study further indicate that the communicative theory in teaching writing is jeopardised by some Namibian teachers through their usage of drilling, and controlled exercises as their methods of teaching ESL writing. In conclusion, it seems that the above approaches are highly recommended in language teaching. Therefore, in the context of this study they are viewed as likely to foster effective language skills required of Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia.

According to Total ESL website (2010), literature is intellectually stimulating because a book allows a reader to imagine worlds they are not familiar with. This is done through the use of descriptive language. In order to understand, the reader will create their vision of what the writer is saying. In this sense, the reader becomes a performer or an actor in a communicative event as they read. Using literature versus a communicative textbook (conversational English) changes the learning approach from learning how to say into learning how to mean (grammar vs. creative thinking). Conversation-based English programmes tend to provide lessons that focus on 'formulas' used in contextual situations so there is little allowance for independent thought and adaptation of language by naturally speaking. On the other hand, literature-based programmes focus on personal interpretation of the language so students begin to experiment with the language and incorporate this into their everyday speech and vocabulary.

### 2.3 Perceived views on ESL curriculum in Namibia

Grade 11 and 12 ESL textbooks in Namibia seemed not to properly address learners' academic needs as stipulated in the ESL syllabus. These needs are higher level thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, inference and synthesis. Nyathi (2001) argues that the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia offer English academic writing courses in order to close the gap created in high school. Literature texts consulted for this study (Yongan Wu 2008, Shang 2006, Burke & Brumfit 1999, McKay 1999, Lazar 1993, Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988, Collie & Slater 1987 and Raymond n.d., Pflaum 1996 and Nyathi 2001) indicate that the study of literature may also assist in teaching learners effective academic writing skills.

According to Pflaum (as cited in Otaala, Mostert, Magnus, Keyter, & Shaimemanya, 1998, p. 32) literature can develop language skills and should be incorporated in the Namibian ESL curriculum. Otaala, et al, (1999) further assert that as learners read extended prose, for example, they acquire more and more vocabulary. Moreover, familiarity provides additional context for learning new concepts and expanding comprehension.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a revised ESL syllabus was introduced in 2006. According to Ministry of Education (2006, p. 2) "Through the curriculum and the efforts of the teachers, the Namibian education system must meet its constitutional obligation, that is to ensure proficiency in the official language". In response to the constitutional obligation, the aims of the syllabus are to:

- Enable learners to communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and in writing;
- Enable learners to understand and respond appropriately to what they hear, read and experience;
- Encourage learners to enjoy the reading of literature and explore areas of universal human concern;
- Encourage learners to enjoy and appreciate the variety of language;



- Complement the learners' other areas of study by developing skills of a more general application (e.g. analysis, synthesis, evaluation, drawing of inferences, ordering of facts, the presentation of opinion, detection of bias; and
- Promote the learners' personal development and understanding of themselves and others.

*Source:* Adapted from English Second Language syllabus higher Level Grade 11-12, (2006).

As a result of the revision done one may thus infer that the new syllabus was introduced to address the shortcomings of the previous syllabus. This also shows that that Ministry of education is committed to making sure that Namibian learners are taught well in order to meet the language goals of vision 20130.

#### **2.4 Global perspectives on the use of literature**

Many scholars (Yongan Wu 2008, Van 2009, Shang 2006, Burke & Brumfit 1999, McKay 1999, Lazar 1993, Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988, Collie & Slater 1987 and Raymond n.d., Pflaum 1996 and Nyathi 2001).argue that literature plays a significant role in learning a second language. Shang (2006) argues that literature teaching emphasises the exploration of themes more than any other school subject and that students are bound to learn more about how to express their thoughts through language.

It is on this basis that Shang (2006) argues that literature teaching does not only help learners to comprehend the meanings of given texts, but it also enhances the thinking of learners and language abilities. Furthermore, he claims that literature texts assist learners in learning vocabulary, discovering questions, evaluating evidence individually, forming judgements based on synthesis and developing a coherent argument in support of a position. If these claims are anything to go by, indeed literature can cultivate learners' critical thinking. In other words, literary texts offer a rich source of linguistic input and can help learners to practise the four skills

of speaking, listening, reading and writing in addition to exemplifying grammatical structures and presenting new vocabulary

In support of the observation above, Gajdusek (1988) asserts that literature may be the basis for ESL learning as activities in literature texts may help students to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context in which they are used. As a result, these activities should be well structured, in so doing students will be taught more efficient word attack strategies of using the whole content to decode the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Lazar (1993) also expresses a similar view by saying that literature is able to provide ESL students with meaningful and memorable contexts for processing and interpreting language. In addition, literature is one of the sources that can assist students to develop abilities to infer meaning and to make interpretations. This is attributed to the fact that literary texts are rich in multiple meanings of words and phrases and it is recommended that learners should be actively involved in 'teasing out' the unmentioned implications and assumptions of the text, as elucidated in the following example:

In a poem, for example, a word may take on a powerful figurative meaning beyond its fixed dictionary definition. Trying to ascertain this significance provides an excellent opportunity for students to discuss their own interpretations, based on the evidence in the text. Thus by encouraging our students to grapple with the multiple ambiguities of the literary text, we are helping to develop their overall capacity to infer meaning. This very useful skill can then be transferred to other situations where students need to make an interpretation based on implicit or unstated evidence (Lazar, 1993, p.19).

This implies that the study of literature can sensitise ESL learners to the fact that some English words are not limited to one meaning and so their meanings can be inferred from the contexts in

which they are used. The more learners are made aware of this fact, the more they would use different words to suit the contexts they write in.

Moreover, Spack (1985 as cited in Gajdusek, 1988) concurs with Lazar (1993) by pointing out that literature and the teaching of language skills can be mutually profitable. The study explains that students should be encouraged to derive meanings of words from the context in which they are used instead of merely glossing over those words whose meanings can be derived from the context. There may also be vocabulary items not easily definable from context that even proficient readers will not know, but which they can safely categorise and dismiss so that they can move on. Discussing literature in a language classroom may thus assist students in knowing the 'real' meanings of these words.

As explained by Gajdusek (1988), literature exploration following pre-reading vocabulary work introduces students to new words that are used over and over, thus encouraging vocabulary growth. In addition to this, this exploration (of issues and situations in a literary text) provides the basis for the contextualised practice of complex sentence grammar. Gajdusek adds that analysis of the structure of a literary text may also help students to effectively organise their own writing (paragraph structure), as explained below:

In many academic ESL courses writing is an important component, and thus the culminating activity for work with a literary text often takes the form of a writing task. Indeed, the advantage of such a combined focus on literature and writing is that classroom discussion of literature raises genuine issues that can become topics for involved student writing, thus solving the problem that thwarts so many students in writing courses that have no other content, that of not having anything to say. If the analysis of the text has been successful, they will have attitudes, opinions, and a lot to say (Gajdusek, 1988, p.253).

This implies that the study of literature cultivates critical thinking in learners, ultimately making them critical writers. Instead of just being receivers of information the learners will become active participants in their own learning, as they are encouraged to discuss issues they encounter in literary texts. Gajdusek (1988) points out that most often in academic settings, the goal is to enable the students to write effective purpose-directed prose, and techniques that can improve the students' own writing. Analysis of a literary text may also be used to relate to problems of organisation and paragraph structure in student writing. According to Gajdusek (1988), after a class has analysed the structure of one or two stories in terms of name, or purpose of each section, individual students ought to be able to analyse the development of their own essays in a similar fashion, explaining the function of each paragraph in relation to the whole.

Oster (1989) claims that literature can help foster academic skills as it encourages taking risks, both in reading and writing. In support of this statement, Collie & Slater (1987) argue that through literature learners become more creative and adventurous as they begin to appreciate the richness and variety of the language they are trying to master and begin to use some of that potential themselves.

In addition to this, Oster (1989) points out that literature enlarges the students' vision and fosters critical thinking by dramatising the various ways in which a situation can be seen. Furthermore, students must be encouraged to have their own point of view when they read a text. This would foster more flexible reading, writing and thinking as contact with literature stimulates more imaginative student writing, and with it an increase of significant detail and appropriate figurative language. This indicates that exposure to literature can help ESL students enhance their academic writing skills.

Spack (1985 as cited in Oster, 1989) asserts that through reading and discussing literature, students acquire a richer vocabulary and they also learn ways of using language, particularly figurative language, and are motivated to risk some experimentation with language themselves. Oster cites some class exercises she has indulged her ESL students in. One of the examples is that of a student from the Middle-East who was required to write an essay entitled “You Can’t Go Home Again”. In the essay the student starts by recounting his realisation, upon returning to his home country, that he had become used to unrestricted customs of thinking in the United States, that his countrymen were ‘indoctrinated’. The following is an extract from this essay (Oster, 1989, pp 97-98):

*A heavy Western wind blew the dust that had accumulated over my head throughout the years. By reading different books and meeting new, exciting more educated people, I was exposed to new set of ideas, and I began to see things with less background distortion. ... The student concludes: I began to scilently [sic] suffer. As a flying fish, I saw myself, who jumped up in the air but only this time it came down with lungs not gills. Diving in water where it always lived almost killed it, so it jumped up again to get some fresh air. But what is there to do next? It doesn't have wings to fly...even if it did, it is a fish not a bird...it belongs to the ocean- it can't just fly forever. (Oster, 1989, p.97-98).*

When Oster (1989) asked the student if he had written poetry or creative writing before, the student said that he had not. He said that he had become inspired to write and think more metaphorically by the reading and writing in the course that she offered. The student cited a rich metaphoric passage they had dealt with in class on Baldwin’s “Sonny’s Blues” (1965). In relation to this study the essay indicates that through studying literature, Namibian ESL learners can learn metaphor and be able to apply it in their own writing. When students are exposed to

different writing styles they would be able to emulate this and improve their own academic writing skills.

Raymond (n.d.) echoes this view and says that competent writing can also be derived through literature, as it brings students in contact with many features of written language, the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures and the different ways of connecting ideas which gradually broaden and enrich their own writing skills. McKay & Sage (1982, 1987 as cited in Raymond, n.d.) have drawn attention to the fact that students are frequently required to write what they have read and learned in a literary text. They are usually required to present in a critical essay what they know and understand about the text, selecting from its details and quotations as evidence to support their judgement.

Spack (as cited in Raymond, n.d.) observed that students often undergo a vigorous process of discovering, writing, rewriting and editing to arrive at a coherent meaning. Raymond (n.d.) further claims that such an exercise helps students to develop the ability to formulate and organise ideas, and to discover meaning for themselves through language usage. It further gives them insight into the nature of a written communication that is intended to be read, reflected on and responded to. Asking students to constantly write about literary works they read can assist them acquire a firm mastery of the language. According to Raymond (n.d., p. 31):

An understanding of this interactive relationship between the writer and the reader will induce them to write judiciously to achieve their desired effect. Recognising that writing is primarily a means of communication, they would exercise more care in using and organising language to shape the reader's interpretation of what they have written. Another advantage of asking students to constantly write about literary works they read is that they can acquire a firm mastery of the language. Instead of merely reading and discussing literature texts, Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia should be asked to write and rewrite

their opinions on what they have learned. This would assist them in developing better writing skills. However, the teachers also need to effectively evaluate their students' written work and guide them through the writing process.

McKay (as cited in Raymond, n.d.) concurs and argues that literature may be used to provide the basis for language usage. Some literature texts are said to focus on particular grammatical points that are salient in the text. McKay explains that if attention is geared towards word forms and common expressions, the vocabulary of students can be expanded. Therefore literature would eventually increase writing skills as it extends linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage, and complex and exact syntax.

Collie and Slater (1987) also express a similar view by claiming that by reading literary texts, students become familiar with several features of written language. They become knowledgeable in the formation and function of sentences, the different ways of connecting ideas, which would eventually broaden and enrich their writing skills. They further claim that through the extensive study of literary texts, learners develop the ability to make inferences from linguistic clues, and to deduce meaning from context, both useful tools in reading other material as well.

From the above literature analysis one may conclude that indeed the study of literature seems to improve academic writing skills of ESL students. The above mentioned authors claim that literature fosters critical thinking and writing skills. The study of literature can indeed help learners improve their writing skills as it exposes them to formal and informal writing. This in turn teaches learners about the connotations of words, colloquialism, the intention of the writer and the intended audience when writing. The study of literature can assist them to improve their command of spoken and written English language as it introduces the learners to new

vocabulary, idioms, figurative language and structures and styles of the language which would eventually help them write well.

In the same vein, Van (2009) argues that the study of literature provides meaningful contexts as educators should be encouraged to choose literature texts that are authentic. If learners are exposed to authentic texts they would be involved in the texts that comprise a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues and prose. In addition, chosen literature texts should appeal to the learners' imagination thus enhancing creativity in writing in both academic and non-academic settings. Moreover, as texts are read and discussed in class learners are encouraged to critically think about the themes which they would ultimately be required to write about. Finally, if literature texts are taught accordingly they would be taught in line with the Communicative Language Teaching Principles (CLT).



## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the operational approaches and ways that were used to gather, analyse and interpret data. According to Best and Kahn (2006, p. 79), research can be divided into two broad categories: quantitative research and qualitative research. These two scholars explain that in quantitative research, the researcher collects data which is analysed numerically. On the other hand, qualitative research describes events without the use of numerical data.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to gather data for this research. This was done in order to enable the researcher to provide detailed information on research findings. According to Best and Kahn (2006), some studies require inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to answer all the questions.

A 34-item questionnaire was administered to ESL teachers. The items pertained to the views of Grade 11 and 12 teachers of English as a second Language (ESL) on the use of the study of literature on learners' academic writing skills. The sample consisted of 28 teachers. The implication of the two research designs in this study is presented as follows:

#### **3.1.1 Qualitative Design**

The qualitative design was utilised due to the nature of the proposed study. As explained above, the study focused on investigating the views of ESL teachers on the use of literature on learners' academic writing skills. The subjective views of the teachers were perceived as essential in understanding the significance of the use of literature on learners' academic writing. The questionnaire that was used to collect data for this study consisted of both closed items and open ended items. The open ended items required qualitative methods in order to collect and analyse

data. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005, p. 175) “the advantage of open-ended questions is that the respondent’s answer is not influenced unduly by the interviewer or the questionnaire and the verbatim replies from the respondents can provide a rich source of varied material which might have been untapped by categories on a pre-coded list.” This data did not require numerical analysis. In support of this, Best & Kahn (2006, p. 272) noted that “three of the most common forms of qualitative research are document and content analysis, case studies, and ethnography. This study was a case study because its purpose was to understand the views of teachers in the Windhoek Educational district on the use of the study of literature on learners’ academic writing skills.

### **3.1.2 Quantitative Design**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. As pointed out in 3.1 the proposed study also adopted a quantitative approach because the descriptive data that was collected through structured questions required to be analysed quantitatively. This data was coded and analysed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## **3.2 Population**

According to Best and Kahn (2006, p. 13), “... a population is any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common and that are of interest to the researcher.” The target population for this study consisted of all Grade 11 and grade 12 ESL teachers in the Windhoek Educational Region. The population also included all ESL teachers from all schools that follow the ESL curriculum as set by the Ministry of Education in Namibia.

### **3.3 Sample and sampling procedure**

The Khomas Region is one of the 13 Educational Regions in Namibia. According to Education Management Information System Ministry of Education, (EMIS) (2005), the region is comprised of 22 secondary schools. Ten government schools and one private school that taught ESL on both higher level and ordinary level were selected. Initially the researcher intended to use a stratified sampling procedure. However, due to the fact that some school principals were not willing to allow their teachers to respond to the questionnaire items the researcher opted for a purposeful sampling procedure. Purposeful sampling, using the criterion sampling technique was used to choose the sample for this study. According to Best and Kahn (2006, p. 19), “purposeful sampling allows the researcher to select those participants who will provide the richest information, those who are most interesting, and those who manifest the characteristics of most interest to the researcher”. In most government schools, Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers tend to teach both the higher level and ordinary level; therefore the researcher decided that since they had learners studying literature and those who did not, they would be able to provide informed responses to the questionnaire items.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

Data for this research was collected through the use of a questionnaire. It consisted of both structured and open-ended items. The structured questions were analysed using quantitative data analysis techniques while the open-ended questions were analysed using qualitative data analysis techniques.

### **3.5 Pilot study**

A pilot study was conducted in the Windhoek region to pre-test the questionnaire. This was conducted through six ESL teachers who were not part of the selected sample. According to Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005, p. 148) the purpose of a pilot study is to: detect possible flaws in the measurement procedures, identify unclear or ambiguously formulated items and enable the researcher to notice non-verbal behaviour (on the part of the participants) that may signify discomfort about the content or wording of the questions. The researcher's main supervisor was also requested to evaluate the questionnaire for validation and authenticity.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001, p. 116) "a brief pilot study is an excellent way to determine the feasibility of your study." This allowed the researcher to refine some of the questionnaire items that were ambiguous or not very clear. The pilot study indicated that the questionnaire items were appropriate for this research study; and the greater part of the items were understood by the respondents.

### **3.6 Data collection procedure**

Access to all 10 Secondary Schools was obtained from the Director of Education the Windhoek Education Region. After the permission to conduct the study in the Khomas region was granted, initially, the researcher intended to administer the questionnaire to the sample in person. However this proved difficult because the subjects preferred to be given more time to go through the questionnaire items. Getting in contact with the subjects was done through the offices of the principals of the chosen schools. The researcher was only able to be in contact with a few teachers as in some instances the principals took the responsibility of distributing the

questionnaire to their ESL teachers. This prolonged the time in which the data were collected. The data were collected between the month of March and April 2010.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Subsequent to data collection, open-ended questions were coded to accompany closed items in data entry. Data entry was entered on the statistics package for social sciences (SPSS/PC), after which frequency tables were constructed for all variables. Frequency tables, graphs, charts and percentages were used in the analysis. This was used in comparing the proportions of respondents in different levels, perceptions and characteristics. Descriptive analysis of data was also used in appropriate areas where other elements could not apply.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

Best and Kahn, (2006, p. 47) state that in planning a research project involving human subjects, it is important to consider the ethical guidelines designed to protect your subjects. All research using human subjects involves some element of risk, however minor, and raises questions about the ethics of the process.” In support of the above statement Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) point out the following four ethical considerations which a researcher should consider:

- *Informed consent.* The researcher should obtain the necessary permission from the respondents after they are thoroughly and truthfully informed about the purpose of the investigation.
- The respondents should be assured of their *right to their privacy*. They should be informed that their identity would be withheld.
- *Protection from harm.* The respondents should be given the assurance that they would not be exposed to any physical or emotional harm.

- *Involvement of the researcher.* Researchers should guard against manipulating respondents or treating them as objects or numbers rather than individual human beings. They should not use unethical tactics and techniques.

In view of the above considerations , the researcher first wrote a letter stating the purpose of the study to the Khomas Educational Region Head Office and seeking permission to conduct the proposed research. This letter was addressed to the Director of Education in the region. Secondly, after permission was obtained the researcher requested for permission from the principals of the selected Senior Secondary Schools to administer the questionnaire to ESL teachers. Furthermore, the respondents were assured through the questionnaire's accompanying letter that they would remain anonymous and that information they provided would be confidential in keeping with their right to their privacy. Assurance was also given to them that they would not be subjected to any physical or emotional harm. Finally, since the researcher did not manipulate the respondents in any way, most of the principals were willing to hand out the questionnaire themselves to their teachers. This was also done by not formulating the questionnaire items in such a way that respondents were encouraged to answer in a particular way. The researcher avoided leading questions as suggested by Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2005, p. 178). As they responded to the questionnaire items, the respondents were requested to substantiate the objective responses by providing more information. This provided rich information on the study and the researcher was able to explain the results in depth.

## **CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The study investigated the views of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers' views regarding the use of the study of literature on learners' academic writing skills in the Khomas Education Region. The results of this study are viewed as an important step towards understanding the significance of the study of literature on Namibian learners' academic writing skills. This research was conducted with the view that there was limited literature in the Namibian context that had interrogated the presented topic. The previous chapter outlined the methods which were used by the researcher to collect and analyse data. This chapter outlines and discusses the main research findings. The characteristics of the sample investigated are described. The main findings are summarised through graphs and tables.

### **4.2 Results of the study**

As outlined in the methodology section, this study used a questionnaire to collect data from 28 Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers. Research data in this study are grouped into four categories. The first section deals with the biographical information of the respondents. The second section reports on the findings on the respondents' professional training. The third section presents the findings on the views of ESL teachers on the impact of the study of literature on Grade 11 and 12 learners' academic writing skills. The fourth section deals with the responses to open ended items.

Table 1 and Figures 1-3 present analyses of responses to questions that dealt with the biographical characteristics of the sample studied. Figure 4 and 5 present analyses of responses to the items that dealt with the respondents' professional training. Figures 6-17 present analyses to items that dealt with the views of ESL teachers on the effects or influence of the study of

literature on Grade 11 and 12 learners' academic writing skills. Figures 18, 19 and Table 3 – 12 reflect analyses to open ended items.

#### 4.2.1 Analysis according to biographical data

Responses to questions in this section were obtained from the analysis of all the respondents' responses to various items in the first part of the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Respondents' answers were related to their biographical characteristics which included gender, professional status, the grades in which they taught ESL, teaching experience in ESL in Grade 11 and 12 and whether English was their mother tongue.

**Table 1 Gender composition according to professional status**

Professional Status	Gender				Total	%
	Female	%	Male	%		
Permanent Teacher	15	53.6%	11	39.3%	26	92.9%
Temporal Teacher	2	7.1%	0	0%	2	7.1%
Total	17	60.7%	11	39.3%	28	100%

The data in Table 1 shows the responses of the teachers regarding their gender composition and professional status. The table above shows that 60.7% of the teachers who participated in the study were female teachers whilst 39.3% were male teachers. Furthermore, it shows that most of the teachers (92.9%) were permanently employed teachers whilst 7.1% were employed temporarily. Rice (2003) states that several studies have found a positive correlation between experience and teacher effectiveness, specifically with respect to “learning by doing” during the early years of teaching.



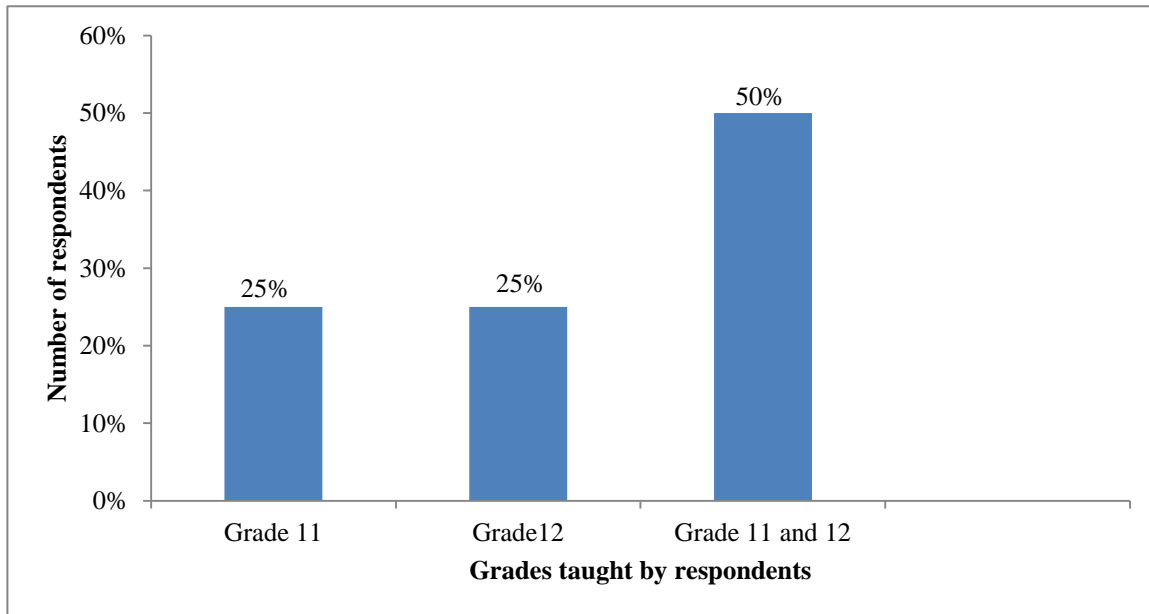
**Figure 1: Grades taught**

Figure 1 above shows that all the teachers engaged in the study were Senior Secondary School teachers. Of these, 14 respondents (50%) taught Grade 11 and grade 12 learners. Seven respondents (25%) specialised in teaching Grade 11 learners only whilst the other seven respondents (25%) taught Grade 12 learners only.

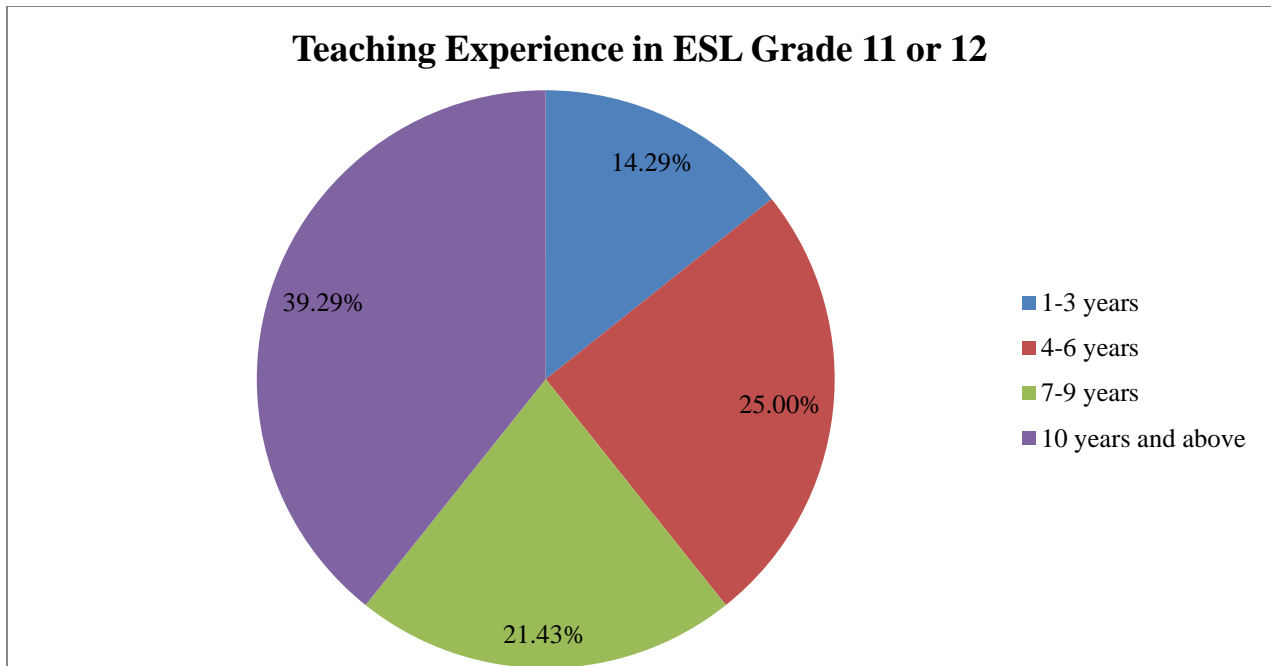
**Figure 2: Teaching experience in ESL**

Figure 2 above shows that 11 (39.3%) of the teachers were quite experienced as they had taught English as a second language (ESL) for more than 10 years. Another six (21.4%) had taught English as a second language for between seven and nine years. Seven (25%) of the respondents had been teaching it for between four and six years whilst four (14.3%) had taught it for between one and three years. This data were viewed as rich since it revealed that the respondents were seasoned teachers and had a reasonable understanding of teaching and the learners which enabled them to provide factual data for this study.

Generally, it is believed that teachers become more effective with experience and that teachers at the beginning of their careers are least effective. A significant number of the respondents indicated that they had been teaching for 10 or more years. This could mean that their experience might have made them better teachers of ESL. In order to develop and maintain effective teachers, there is need to understand what effect experience has on performance, and how to improve performance over time. This could be done through teacher in-service training.

The more the years a teacher spends on the job, the more likely he/she is to improve on the art of teaching as they would have learnt from their own mistakes. The results of their learners in tests and examination could also be a measure of their effectiveness. For example, if their learners do not perform well in a certain area they would probably adjust their teaching methods and approaches to improve the learners' performance.

**Figure 3: Is English your mother tongue?**

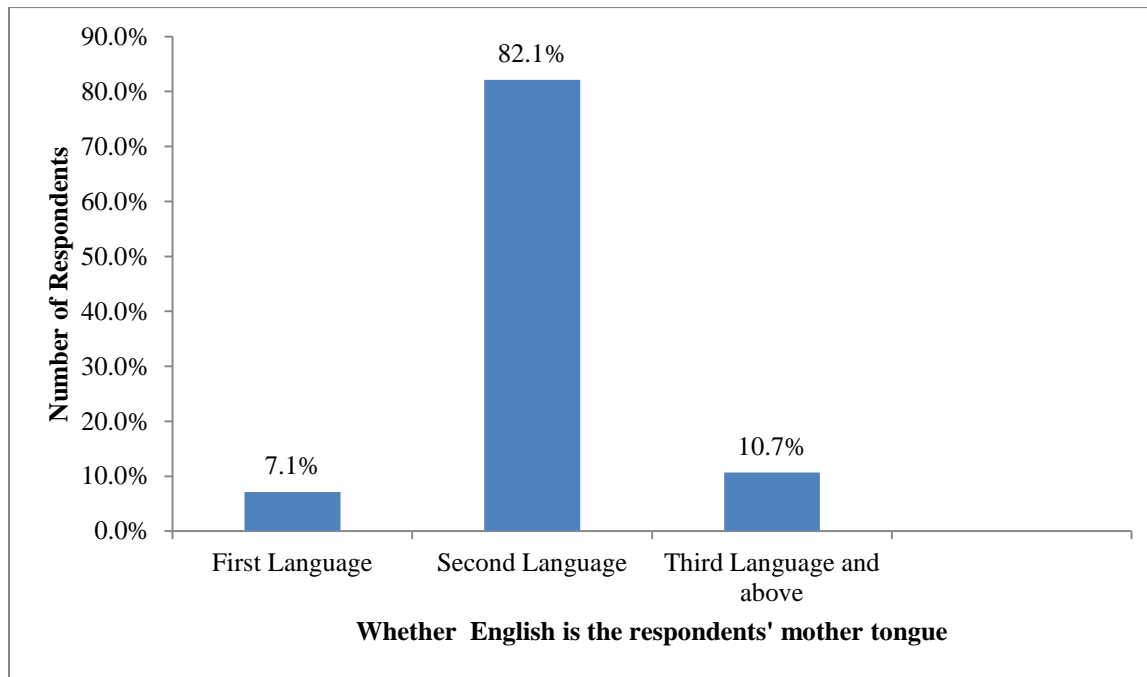


Figure 3 above shows that 23 (82.1%) of the English Second Language teachers engaged in the study regarded English as their second language whilst two (7.1%) said English was their first language. Three (10.7%) of the respondents indicated that English was their third language. As the results above indicate, the majority of the respondents regarded English as their second language. One can infer that their experience with the language could provide rich information for this study. The fact that the study also focused on English as a Second Language is advantageous to the outcome of the research results in that these teachers used their own

experiences as both learners and teachers of this second language to provide responses to the questionnaire items.

**Figure 4: Teaching qualifications**

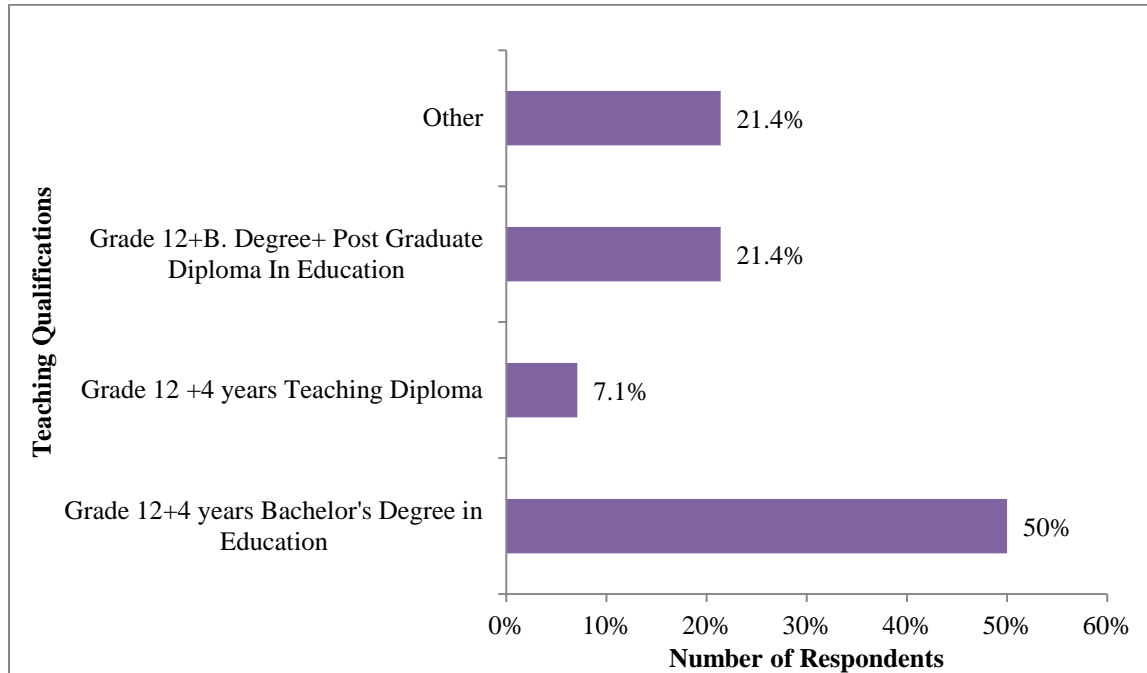


Figure 4 above shows that 14 (50.0%) of the respondents were holders of Grade 12 certificates with 4 years Bachelor's Degrees in Education. Two (7.1%) of the respondents held Grade 12 plus 4 year Teaching Diplomas. Six (21.4%) of the respondents were in possession of Grade 12 plus B Degrees as well as Post Graduate Diplomas in teaching. Another six (21.4%) held other qualifications. The statistics above show that most of these teachers were qualified educationists and could, therefore, provide useful information for the study.

As can be seen from the above figure, a significant number of the respondents (50%) were qualified teachers. According to Heine (2006) important components of the teacher certification process are teacher preparation programmes. In turn the most important measure of the success of teacher preparation programmes is the success of the learners as subject matter knowledge is

vital in educational performance. This means that teachers who have knowledge in pedagogy outperform teachers without such training. This claim is logical because a teacher that has thorough knowledge in a certain subject, would probably teach that subject comfortably with enthusiasm. Since most of these respondents were trained teachers one can assume that they were conversant in the subjects they taught and in this case, ESL.

**Figure 5: Trained to teach ESL?**

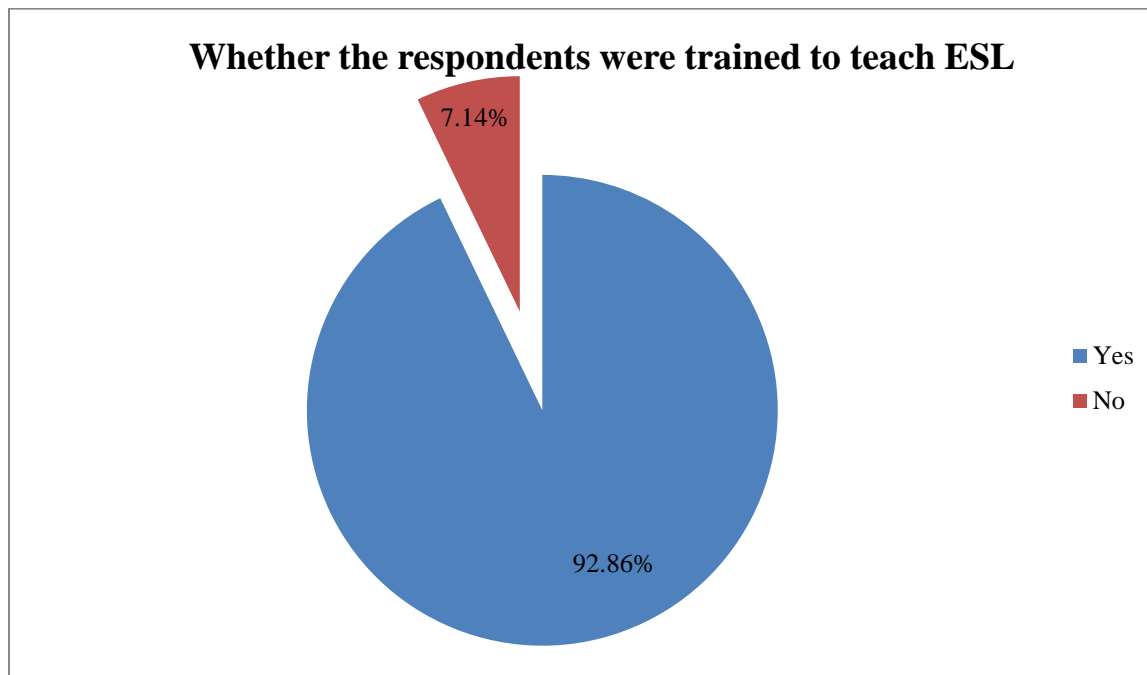


Figure 5 above indicates that 92.86% of the respondents were trained to teach English as a Second Language, whereas 7.14% were not. Since the majority of the respondents indicated that they were trained in this area, they were, therefore, able to contribute significantly to the results of the study.

Rice (2003) indicates that teacher coursework in both the subject area taught and pedagogy contributes to positive education outcomes. Pedagogical coursework seems to contribute to teacher effectiveness at all grade levels, particularly when coupled with content knowledge. The

importance of content coursework is most pronounced at the high school level. While the studies on the field experience component of teacher education are not designed to reveal causal relationships, they suggest positive effects in terms of opportunity to learn the profession and reduced anxiety among new teachers.

#### **4.3 Analysis according to the views of ESL teachers on the influence of the study of literature on Grade 11 and 12 learners' academic writing skills.**

In order to answer the three major questions about the study, it was necessary to determine the views of ESL teachers on the significance of the study of literature on Grade 11 and 12 learners' academic writing skills. Figures 6-17 reflect the findings.

**Figure 6: Effects of literature on writing**

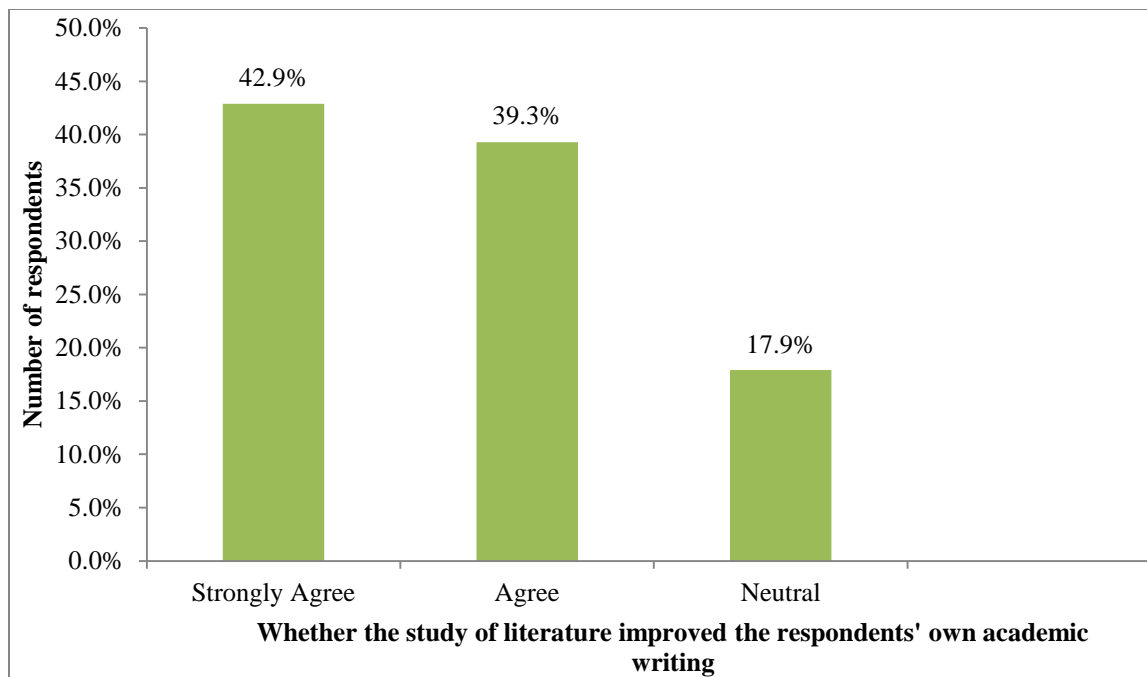


Figure 6 above shows that the respondents generally acknowledged that the study of English literature enhanced their own academic writing skills as evidenced by 42.9% of them “strongly

agreeing” to the statement and 39.3% “agreeing” to it. However, 17.9% opted for the “neutral” response.

**Figure 7: Trained to teach ESL**

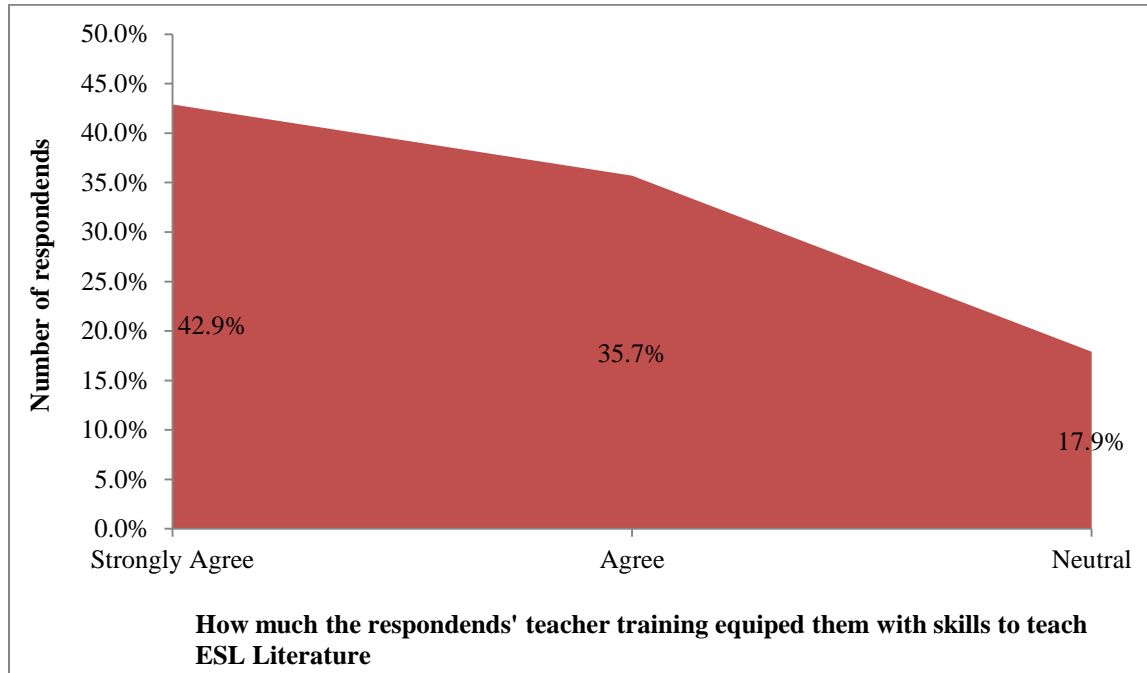


Figure 7 above shows that the respondents perceived their teacher training as good enough and having adequately prepared them to be competent teachers in the study of literature. Of all the respondents, 42.9% “strongly agreed” whilst 35.7% “agreed” that the teacher training course equipped them with enough skills to teach literature. However, 21.4% of the respondents remained “neutral”.

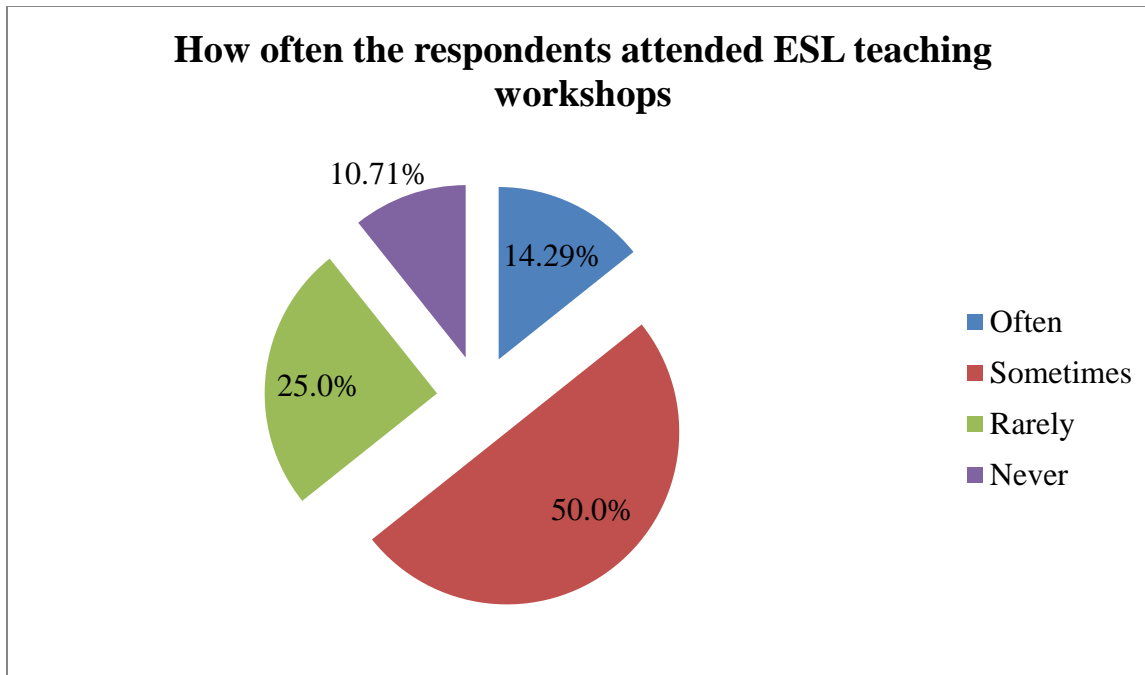
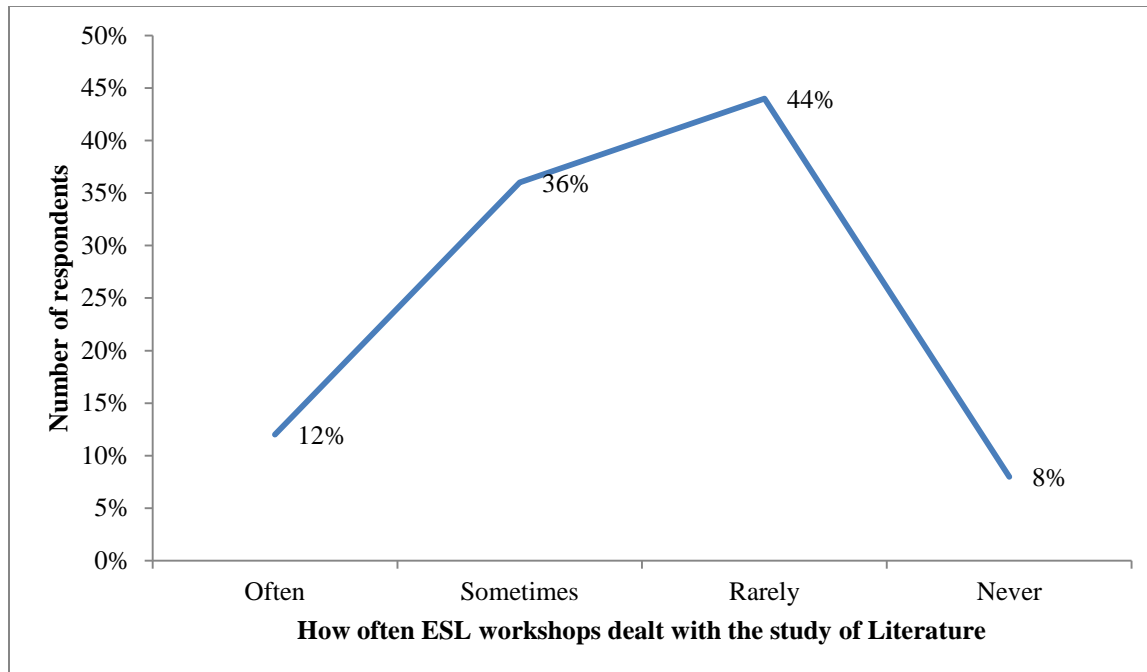
**Figure 8: Workshop attendance**

Figure 8 above shows that 50% of the respondents sometimes attended workshops on ESL teaching whilst 25% indicated that they rarely attended any of the ESL workshops. It is also shown that 10.7% of these teachers had never attended a workshop on ESL teaching whilst the other 14.3% often attended them.



**Figure 9: Relevance of workshops**

As can be seen in Figure 9 above, 12% of the respondents “often” attended workshops that dealt with the teaching of the study of literature, 36% showed that “sometimes” these workshops dealt with the study of literature. 44% of these respondents indicated that the workshops “rarely” dealt with the topic at hand. While 8% of the respondents indicated that the workshops they had attended “never dealt with the study of literature”.

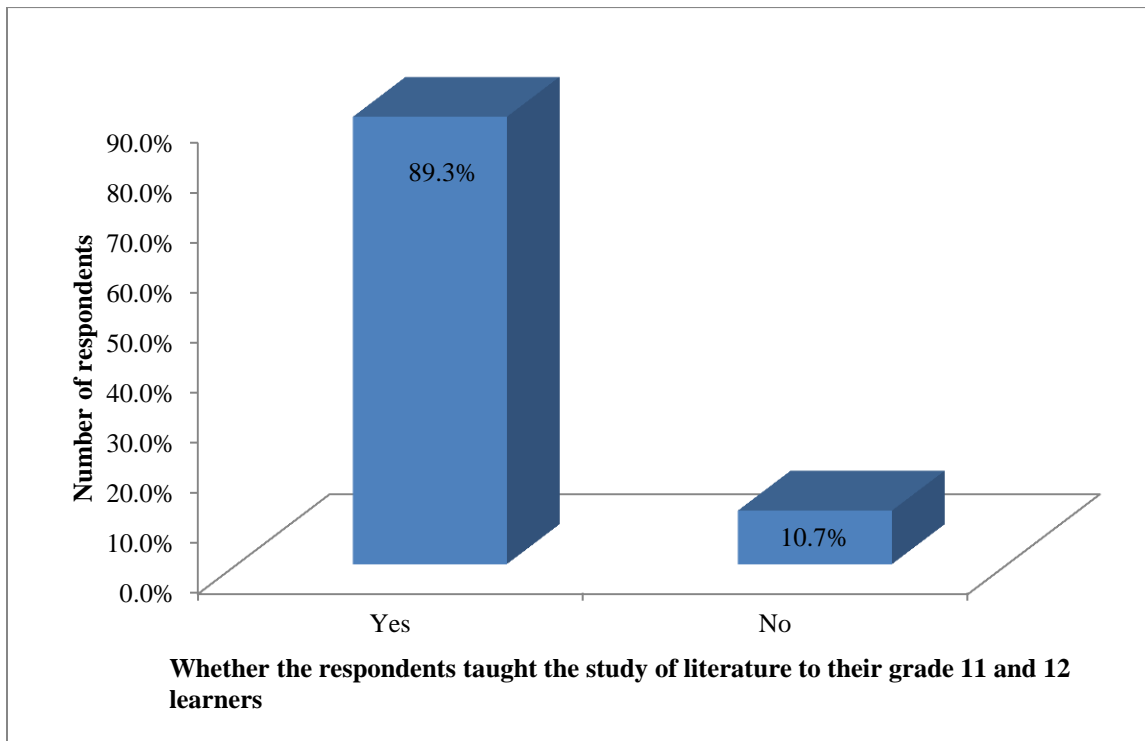
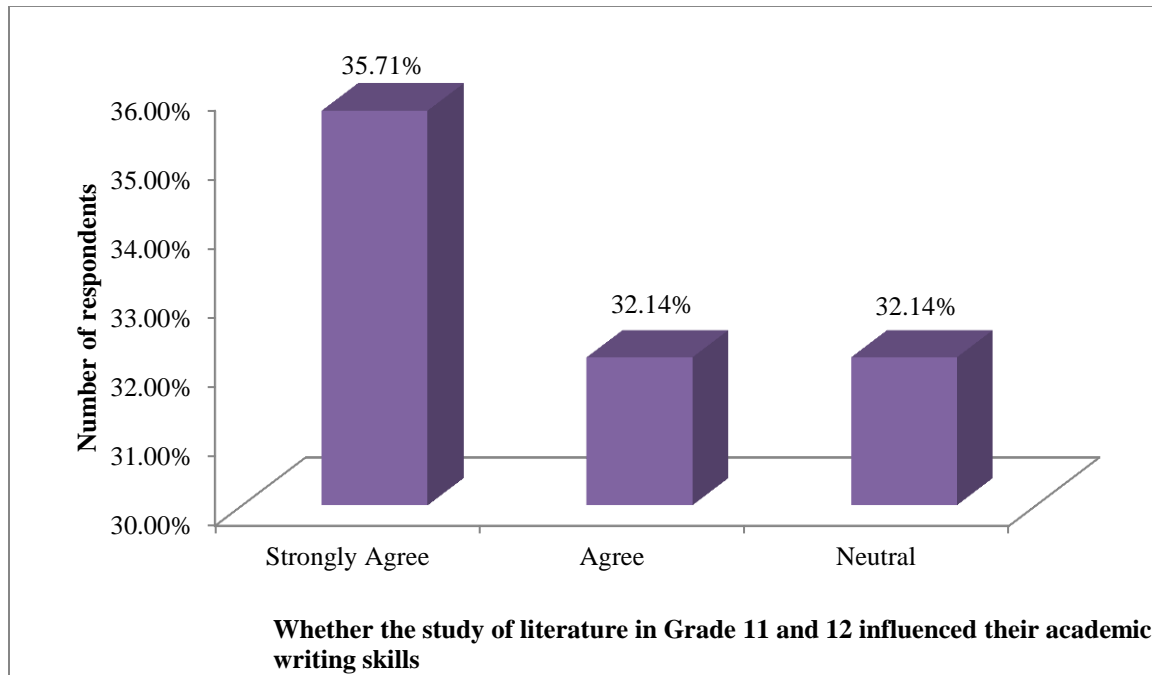
**Figure 10: Teaching Literature to grade 11 and 12**

Figure 10 above illustrates that 89.3% of the respondents taught the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners while 10.7% of them indicated that they did not teach this component to their learners. This evidence could be helpful to the researcher as the majority of the respondents taught the study of literature.

**Figure 11: Influence of literature on writing**

As can be seen from the bar chart above, a significant number (35.71%) of the respondents “strongly agreed” that the study of literature by Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia had an influence on their academic writing skills while 32.14% of these respondents merely “agreed” with the statement. Nevertheless, 32.14% decided to be “neutral” on this item.

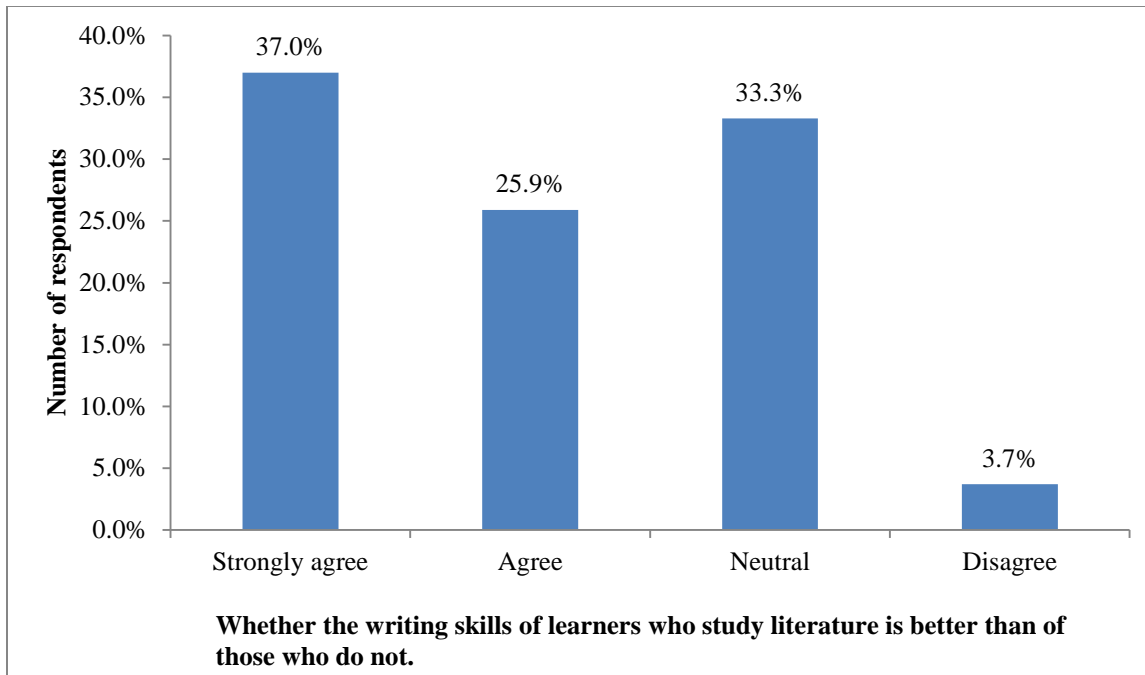
**Figure 12: Performance of literature learners**

Figure 12 shows that 37% of the ESL teachers who participated in this study “strongly agreed” that the academic writing skills of students who studied English Literature were better than of those who did not study literature. Of the respondents, 25.9 “agreed”, 33.3% opted to be “neutral” and 3.7% “disagreed” with the given statement.

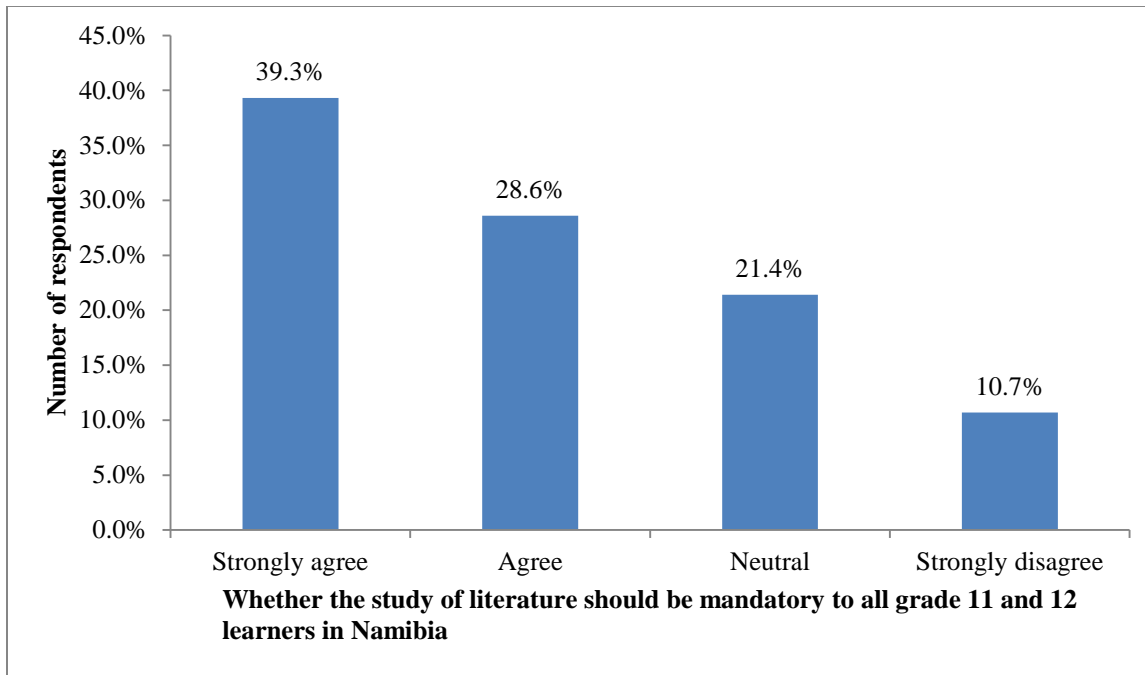
**Figure 13: Who should study literature?**

Figure 13 above indicates that a significant number (39.3%) of the respondents “strongly agreed” that both ordinary and higher level ESL learners should study literature, 28.6% “agreed”, 21.4% remained neutral and 10.7% “strongly disagreed” that all the Grade 11 and 12 learners should study literature.

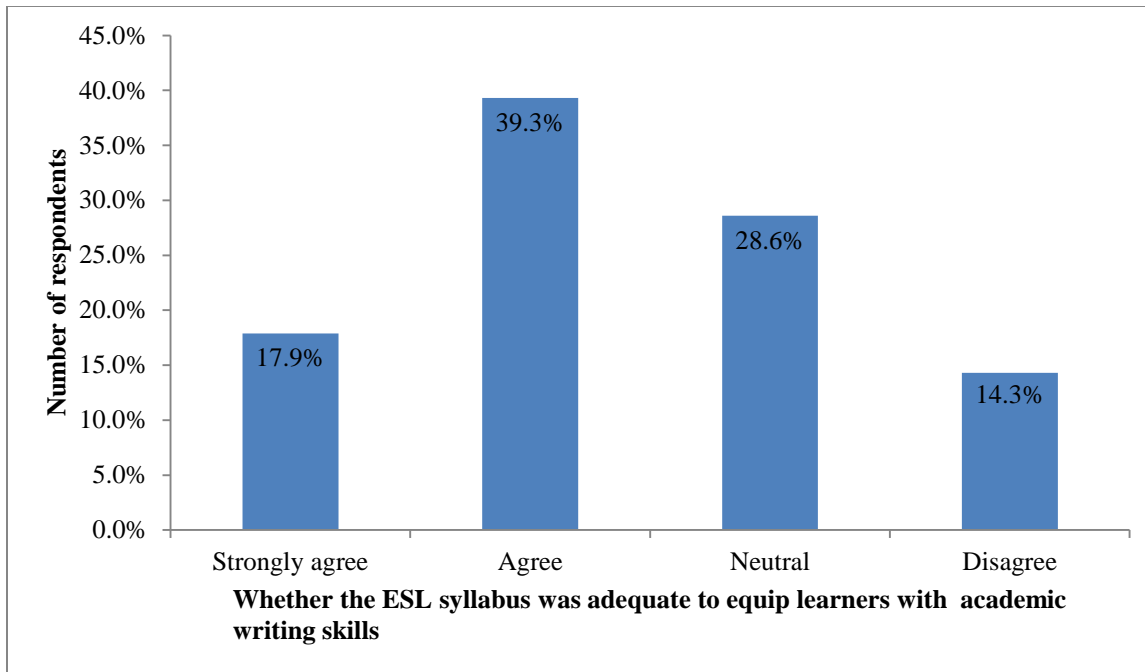
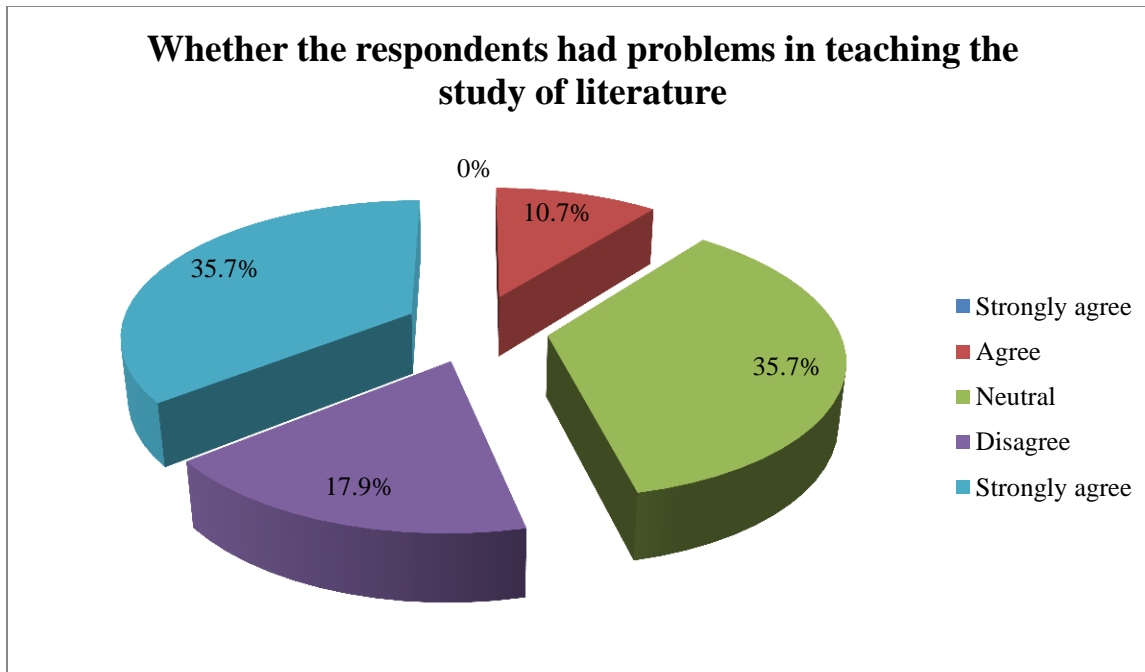
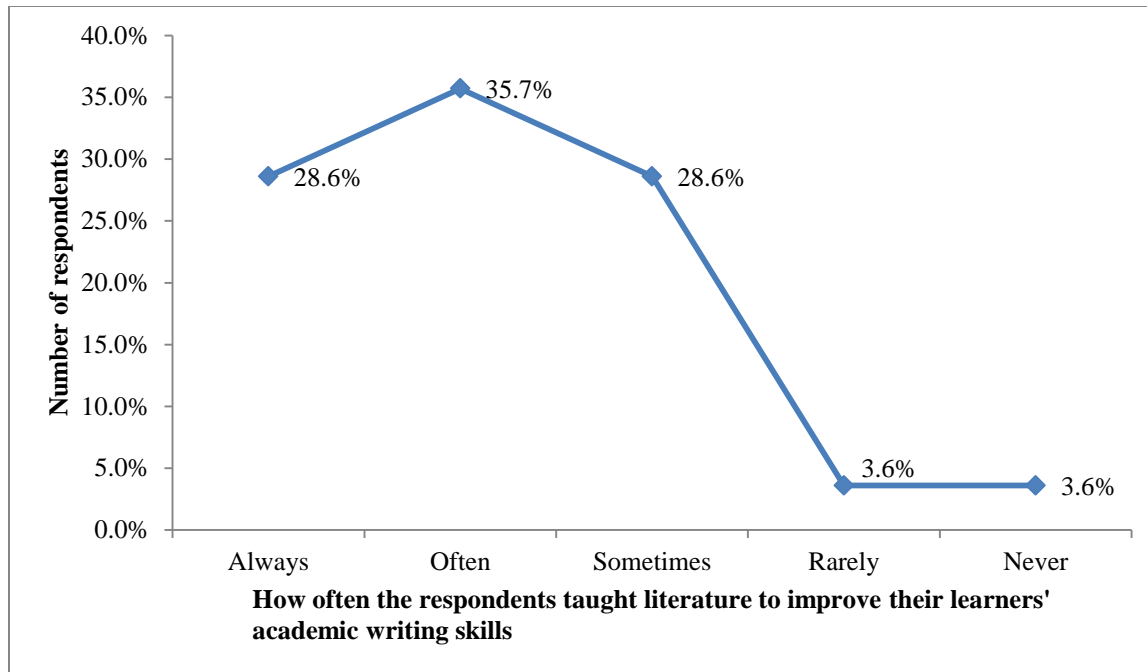
**Figure 14: Syllabus adequacy**

Figure 14 shows that 39.3% of the respondents “agreed” that the ESL syllabus content was adequate to prepare learners to be good academic writers in tertiary institutions, 28.6% of the respondents chose to be “neutral”, whereas 17.9% “strongly agreed” with the above statement. Finally, 14.3% of these ESL teachers “disagreed” that students who studied literature in Grade 11 and 12 would acquire enough skills to be good writers in tertiary institutions.

**Figure 15: Capabilities of ESL teachers**

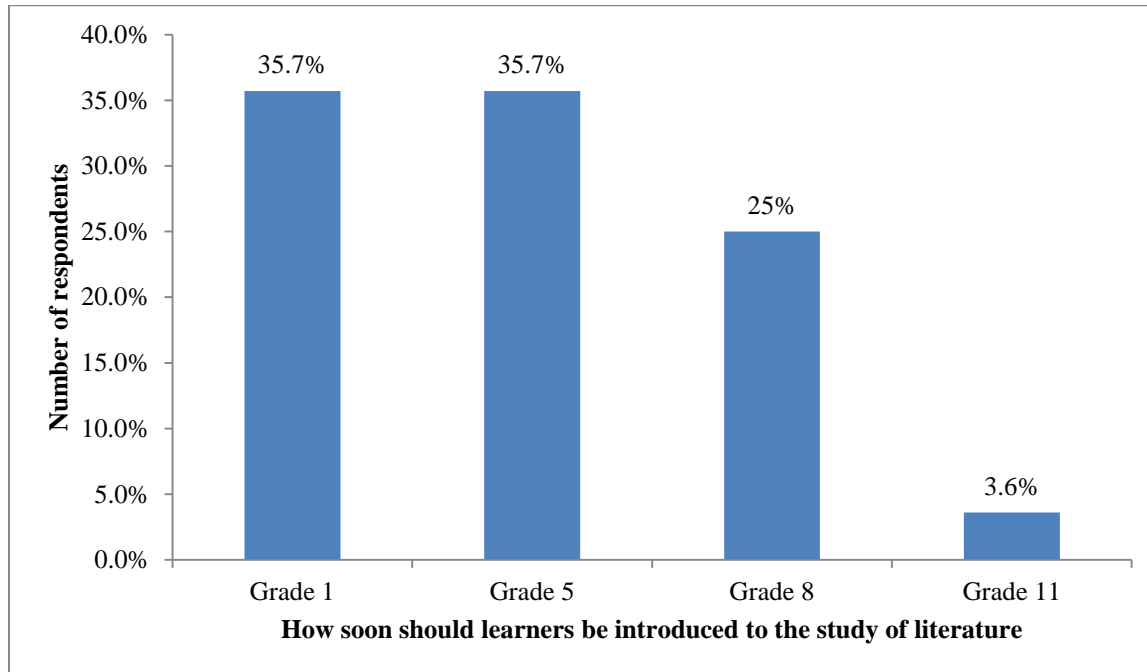


On whether the respondents had problems in teaching the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 learners, Figure 15 above illustrates that 10 (35.7%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed” and another 10 (35.7%) opted to be “neutral” on the question. Five (17.9%) of the respondents “disagreed” and three (10.7%) “agreed” that they had problems in teaching the study of literature to their learners. However none (0%) of the respondents “strongly agreed” that they had problems in teaching the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 learners.

**Figure 16: Frequency of teaching literature**

The study also inquired about how often the respondents taught literature to their learners in order to improve their academic writing skills. Figure 16 above illustrates that 10 (35.7%) of the respondents “often” taught it to improve writing, eight (28.6%) indicated that all the time they taught the study of literature they did so to improve their learners’ academic writing skills. Another eight (28, 6%) indicated that they taught academic writing through the study of literature only sometimes. One (3.6%) of the respondents showed that they rarely taught literature for that purpose and the remaining one (3.6%) revealed that they never made use of the study of literature to improve their learners’ academic writing skills.



**Figure 17: Introduction to the study of literature**

The views of the respondents on how early learners should be introduced to the study of literature were solicited. Figure 17 above shows that 10 (35.7%) of the ESL teachers who responded to this questionnaire felt that learners should start learning English literature as early as in Grade 1 whilst an equal proportion felt that Grade 5 would be the ideal grade to start teaching learners the study of literature. However, seven (25%) of the respondents felt that it may not be effective in earlier grades and suggested it be introduced from Grade 8. Only one (3.6%) of the respondents suggested introducing the study of English literature from Grade 11.

Hamdoun and Hussain (n.d.) are in support of the introduction of the study of literature at all levels of formal education. A significant number of respondents felt that Grade 1 learners in Namibia should be introduced to the study of literature. The above authors state that there is a close relationship between educational goals and literary texts that are selected for study. For that reason ESL educators should choose texts that meet the learners' needs, level, ability and

interests at all stages. Moreover, young learners are usually motivated and willing to learn new languages, therefore literature could help them acquire language as a means of communication. The selected literature material would bring about learners' proficiency in the English language. In the light of the above observation one can confidently propose the introduction of the study of literature from lower primary level to upper secondary level in Namibia.

#### **4.4 Findings of the open ended questions**

This section will explain the data from Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers' responses to 12 open-ended questions. As explained in Chapter 3, the questionnaire consisted of both qualitative and quantitative items. At times the qualitative items required the respondents to explain their responses in detail. The reason why the researcher decided to have some questions explained from the qualitative perspective was to glean more depth and detail. For better understanding of this research topic, the researcher felt that rather than just analysing ranks and counts of the participants, there was need for respondents' openness. The researcher wanted to encourage the respondents to expand on their responses. This was done because it could also open up new research topic areas not initially considered. This was also done to attempt to avoid pre-judgement to their objective responses, as they explained why they opted for particular options.

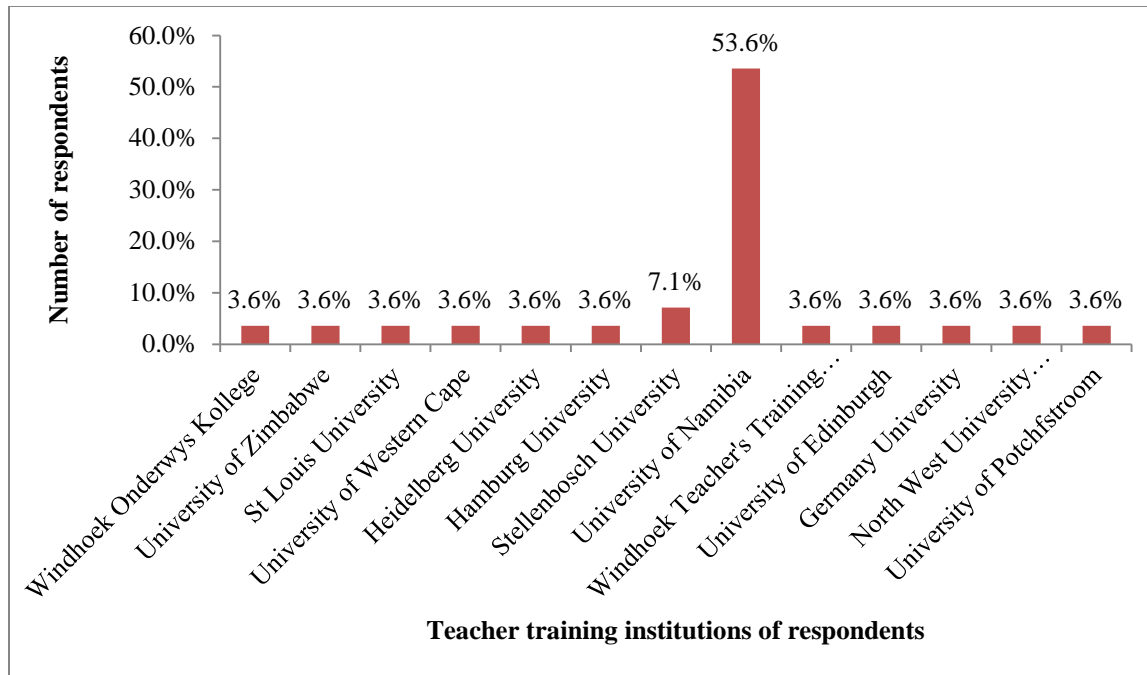
**Figure 18: Institution of training**

Figure 18 above indicates that the majority of the respondents were trained by the University of Namibia (53.6%); 7.2% of the respondents were trained by the University of Stellenbosch; one (3.6%) from Windhoek Onderwys Kollege; one by Windhoek Teachers Training College; one by the University of Edinburgh; one by Germany University; one by North West Potchefstroom; one by University of Potchefstroom; one by University of Zimbabwe; one by Saint Louis University; one by University of Western Cape; one by Hamburg University and one by Heidelberg University.

**Table 2: Responses on the courses the respondents studied in their ESL training**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
1	No response
2	University syllabus 1966-1973 in Germany for teacher training courses grade 5-13.
3	No response
4	Introduction to Linguistics, Aspects of Syntax, Drama and prose, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, acts of style, Practical criticism and Poetry.
5	No response
6	Introduction to Language structure, Introduction to Principles of Literature, African Language: English Practice and Poetry, Language and Literature in Africa, English Selection of Drama and Prose, Constituents of English Language, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics.
7	Teacher's training in Germany, Bell's Course in Cambridge.
8	Practical criticism and Poetry, Complex and Basic English Patterns, Teaching Practice in English.
9	Afrikaans, English, Mathematics, Biology, Drama.
10	Acts and styles of English, Phonetics, Practical Criticism and Poetry, Social Systems of English, Language in Society.
11	Introduction to Linguistics, Language and Literature in Africa, Drama and Prose, Practical Criticism and Poetry, Basic English Patterns, Acts of Style in English, Aspects of Syntax.
12	See academic record B. Ed 2000-2003.
13	No response.
14	Complex English Patterns, Language and Literature in English.
15	Selection of Drama and Prose, English Practical Criticism and Poetry, Introduction to Language structure, Introduction to Principles of Literature, Teaching Methods of English, Sound Systems of English, An Overview of African Literature, Psycholinguistics, Complex English Patterns, Methods and Techniques in English, Project in English Teaching, Teaching Practice in English.
16	No response
17	No response
18	Literature and Grammar.
19	English Grammar, Phonetics and Phonology, Acts of Style, Psycholinguistics, African Literature, Commonwealth Literature, World Literature, Philology and Varieties of English.
20	Language Studies, Teaching Methodology, sociology, Phonetics and Phonology, literature.
21	Foundations of English Language Studies, Foundations of English Literature, Practical Criticism and Poetry, Lexis and Basic Grammar, Sound Systems of English, Language in Society, Aspects of Syntax, Acts of Style in English.

22	English 1-8, Literature 1-8.
23	English 1, 2, 3.
24	English (HED)
25	No response
26	Practical Criticism in English, French/ English/Russian Literature, Zimbabwean Literature, African Literature, Poetry.
27	Creative Writing, American and World Literature, Shakespearean Literature, Critique in Novel and Short Stories.
28	No response

The above table indicates the responses on type of courses that the respondents studied during their ESL teacher training courses. On one hand, eight respondents (1, 3, 5, 13, 16, 17, 25 and 28) decided not to provide responses to this item. Furthermore, four respondents (2, 7, 12 and 24) referred the researcher to the English teacher's training syllabi of their time. In addition to this respondent 9 mentioned Afrikaans, English, Mathematics, Biology and Drama as their English teachers' training courses. The above responses could have detrimental effects on the outcome of this research study as they do not provide detailed information for this item. However on the other hand, respondents 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26 and 27 provided the researcher with clear detailed data for this item. This data could be very helpful in the interpretation and discussion of the research findings.

#### 4.4.1 Responses on why they “strongly agree” or “agree” on whether the study of Literature improved the respondents’ academic writing skills

In order to avoid repetition, the researcher decided to summarise responses to this item as some of the responses were similar. Those respondents who “strongly agreed” (42.9%) and “agreed” (39.3%) (See Figure 6) that the study of literature enhanced their writing skills explained that the critical analysis of texts they studied for their teacher training displayed different styles of writing. As a result they were exposed to formal and informal writing. This in turn taught them about connotations and denotations of words, colloquialism, the intention of the writer, thus teaching them to consider who their audience is when writing, therefore using the right registers for the right audiences. Other respondents further explained that literature improved their ability to express themselves, therefore encouraging them to write as well as they acquired new vocabulary. One respondent wrote: *“My command of the English language improved drastically. I learnt to appreciate good books and got acquainted with new words, idioms, figurative language and structures of the English language which in turn helped me to write well.”* Other respondents explained that studying literature improved their vocabulary and grammar. It broadened their knowledge and helped them to compare different writing techniques. This in turn, they explained, improved their writing skills.

Another respondent explained that the study of literature made them a keen writer of both short stories and poetry, adding that at the time they completed the questionnaire, they were writing their first novel. Other respondents felt that as the study of literature involved much research, it sharpened their perception of the world, stimulated their imagination and improved their capacity for logical thinking thus broadening their writing skills. Said another respondent: *“It enabled me to develop skills to draw support/ quotations/substantial evidence to support my opinion from texts”*. Some said that literature not only broadened their thinking, but also enhanced their

analytical skills required for academic writing. This they said was enhanced by the fact that they were expected to write academic critiques on various literature texts.

#### **4.4.2 Whether teacher training equipped the respondents with enough skills to teach the study of ESL literature.**

As in 4.4.1 above, to avoid repetition the researcher summarised some of the responses of this questionnaire item. Those of the respondents that “strongly agreed” (42.9%) and “agreed” (35.7%) (See Figure 7) with the above statement felt that the study of literature in their teachers’ training enabled them to analyse and discuss literature with their learners as they were introduced to different literary forms, different genres and common elements of literature. One respondent said that learning English grammar rules in Basic English Pattern and Aspects of Syntax enabled them to communicate effectively in both written and spoken English. This enabled them to teach both poetry and prose with ease. Other respondents felt that literature was an essential part of their training. They said they had different lecturers for different literary texts and the wide range of these texts prepared them to teach literature to ESL learners. It enabled them to understand the uniqueness of sociolinguistic attributes that exist in society. It further enhanced their teaching skills and broadened their general understanding of language teaching. Another respondent felt that their knowledge from their teacher training course was complemented by the knowledge they shared with other teachers of ESL.

However other respondents felt differently. One respondent said that their teacher training course did not include the teaching of literature to ESL learners. Respondent 1 said: “The training introduced me to literature, but did not equip me with necessary skills for teaching literature at secondary school level, the literature modules we learned were only two.” Respondent 2 stated: “It taught me how to teach literature, understand and explain it to a certain level, but not how to

capture the interest of learners who seem not to be interested in studying it.” Respondent 3 stated: “Although I was equipped with different aspects of the English language, it is very difficult to transfer this knowledge to my learners. I constantly had to readjust the level of information because my training prepared me to teach at a higher level.” Respondent 4 said: “Yes I know that the training equipped me with skills to teach ESL literature, but I also learned a lot when I started teaching.” Respondent 5 wrote: “*The study of literature didn’t feature too much in our course. We focused on teaching grammar/speaking/ etc.*”

**Figure 19: Responses on the kind of literature that the respondents taught their learners**

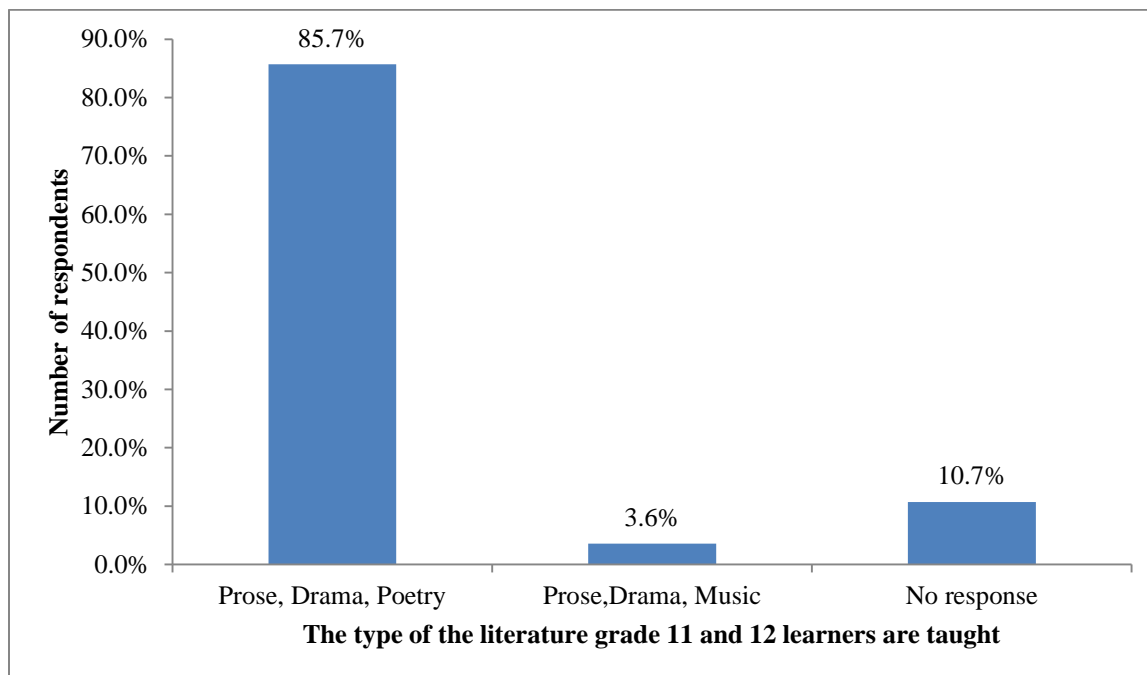


Figure 18 above shows the respondents’ answers on the kind of literature that their learners were taught. In a nutshell, the majority (87.5%) of the respondents revealed that their students were taught drama, prose and poetry while 3.6% of the respondents said that they were taught prose, drama and music. Of the respondents, 10.7% opted not to provide answers to this item.



**Table 3: Views on whether the study of literature that Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia were taught had an influence on their academic writing skills**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Agree:</i> "Learners have obviously learned about sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling and it enhances vocabulary and sometimes general knowledge."
<b>2</b>	<i>Agree:</i> "Enlarges your expressive abilities, enriches your imaginative skills, gives you more word power, you get a different point of view, encourages you to write."
<b>3</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> "You still have to teach grammar, if they do not have simple basics, literature will not help a lot. The only reason literature is good for students is that it challenges them to answer difficult questions and think out of the box"
<b>4</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> "It does because the two novels prescribed are by the best authors in Africa and England; Shakespeare and Chinua Achebe. They improve their communication skills which in turn improves their writing skills."
<b>5</b>	<i>Agree:</i> "When learners are exposed to literature books they will learn different types of words which in turn will improve their spelling when writing. This will also enhance their vocabulary and they will be able to analyse literature from all angles."
<b>6</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> "I would say learners find the study of literature difficult, especially the prose and drama genres but they enjoy poetry; they are creative in formulating their own poetry."
<b>7</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> "The study of literature enables you to evaluate a language from a totally different angle."
<b>8</b>	<i>Agree:</i> "They tend to (or at least some) use figures of speech like metaphors, similes, personification etc. when writing essays."
<b>9</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> "Learners learn to read thoroughly and to analyse. It enhances thinking abilities, reading with understanding."
<b>10</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> "I teach my learners how to write for an academic purpose, literature is only taught to the higher level candidates in depth. So there is no way that the statement in 18 can be correct."
<b>11</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> "Literature involves a lot of unusual structures of English, especially poetry and drama, thus hardly improves academic writing. Literature also uses more archaic English which is hardly used today."

<b>12</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “The more you learn or study literature the more you study different ways of how to express yourself artistically.”
<b>13</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “Yes definitely. It challenges the learners to critically read and think out of the box. The time spent on reading then equips them to better their writing because they were exposed to a higher level of writing skills during these reading sessions. Therefore the more we study different genres of literature, the better the writing skills of learners become.”
<b>14</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “writing a literature essay at grade 11 and 12 level requires the learner to have complete understanding of the literature piece. So the focus here is to encourage understanding rather than writing skills. Although some improve, many only manage to improve slightly.”
<b>15</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “I agree because learners learn how to analyse prose and poetry and the use of language and imagination broadens their horizons and refine their responsiveness to current issues affecting society.”
<b>16</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> – “Learners in general don’t display great writing skills. They are willing to just learn the bare necessities. I, in fact, believe that they have great difficulty in answering the literature questions as their writing skills are so limited. I think learners at grade 11 and grade 12 levels do not really understand literature and exposure to it in these grades is too late.”
<b>17</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “It helps them on their creative writing skills and spellings, but without some general English, they still struggle with grammar.”
<b>18</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Learners are exposed to experiment with language writing skills, they try different patterns and create their own image but still do not understand literature. They have difficulties in adapting to new terms.”
<b>19</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “It has an influence on learners because its content embodies analytical and critical analysis.”
<b>20</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> – “Learners become articulate critical thinkers and are able to make a fair judgement and develop a sense of coherence in their writing.”
<b>21</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “There is no clear indication of the relationship between learners’ results and reading skills. The current status quo can be generalised that there is a lack of reading interest from some learners. But some learners have good academic writing skills.”
<b>22</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> No response
<b>23</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “They learn to express themselves better and think critically.”
<b>24</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “There will not be enough time to teach literature properly to both higher and ordinary levels in the same class. It’s already very difficult to complete the literature component with the higher level learners. But it will definitely have a

	positive influence.”
<b>25</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “expansion of vocabulary, appreciation of figurative language”
<b>26</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “Literature in English enhances writing, reading skills.”
<b>27</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “Studying literature entails much analysis and reflection, this is where learners are challenged and stimulated to express their personal views thus influencing them positively on their academic writing skills.”
<b>28</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “It does have an influence on their writing skills though minor. I have seen that these learners tend to be more colourful in their writing. They are able to respond on a more mature level to discursive and argumentative essays.”

Table 4 above indicates the conflicting views that the respondents had on whether the study of literature that Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia were exposed to had an influence on their academic writing skills. As can be seen in Figure 11 35.71% of the respondents strongly agreed that the study of literature that the Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia were exposed to had an influence on their academic writing skills. In all, 32.14% confirmed that they agreed with the statement. Nevertheless, 32.14% decided to be neutral on this statement. Below is a brief summary of their explanations of this item.

Those that “strongly agreed” and “agreed” with the statement gave several reasons as to how and why the study of literature is beneficial to the learners. Some believed that the study of literature taught the learners good sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, spellings, enhanced their vocabulary and sometimes broadened their general knowledge. Another respondent felt that the novels that the learners studied improved their communication skills thus improving their academic writing skills as well.

The respondents who opted for the “neutral” response also gave several reasons. One respondent felt that the study of literature did not enhance the academic writing skills of the learners but

encouraged learners to become critical thinkers. Respondent 6 felt that the study of literature that the Namibian learners were exposed to was too difficult but the poetry motivated them to write their own poetry. Respondent 10 disagreed and opined that academic writing skills could only be inculcated through lessons based on academic writing. Compatible with this argument is the explanation provided by respondent 11 who felt that since literature was written in different styles, it could not be used to improve learners' academic writing skills. In agreement with the above respondents, respondent 14 also felt that the aim of teaching the study of literature to learners was not to improve their academic writing skills but rather to test their comprehension of a literary text. The above is just a brief summary of the respondents' explanations as to whether the study of literature in Grade 11 and 12 improved learners' academic writing skills.

**Table 4: Responses on how the study of literature influenced learners' academic writing**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	“Critical analysis of texts displays different styles of writing. One is exposed to formal and informal writing, learns about connotations, colloquialism, intention and purpose of the writer which in turn teaches the learners to have a closer look at their audience as well as register when writing. Apart from that, learners obviously learn about sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and spelling and literature enhance vocabulary and sometimes general knowledge.”
<b>2</b>	“Enlarges vocabulary, insight in social, political and economic matters.”
<b>3</b>	“It helps them a lot with spellings.”
<b>4</b>	No response
<b>5</b>	“It's not all learners who have been influenced by the study of literature as only higher level learners are the learners who have been influenced by it as there is much more emphasis on literature in their curriculum.”
<b>6</b>	“I think learners are not keen on reading, they do it because they have to be assessed, otherwise if they had their way they would not be doing it.”
<b>7</b>	“Richer vocabulary, cultural enlightenment, moral teaching, cognitive improvement.”

<b>8</b>	“They tend to be more creative and use their imagination more. Sometimes they also use what they have learned in class and picture themselves in the same situation.”
<b>9</b>	No response
<b>10</b>	“Reading helps with writing, so the more they read literature books, the better their writing becomes.”
<b>11</b>	“I actually think that academic writing is hardly influenced by literature.”
<b>12</b>	“The more you learn or study literature the more you study different ways of how to express yourself artistically.”
<b>13</b>	“It challenges the learners to critically read and think out of the box. The time spent on reading then equips them to better their writing because they were exposed to a higher level of writing skills during these reading sessions. Therefore the more we study different genres of literature, the better the writing skills of learners become.”
<b>14</b>	“It improves understanding; it improves spelling, grammar and vocabulary.”
<b>15</b>	“It makes them more imaginative, it gives them the skills needed to use more figurative language and generally to become better writers themselves.”
<b>16</b>	“I don’t think it has any influence. The driven learners will go out of their way to make most of this opportunity to improve on their writing skills, but most of them only focus on the little exposure they get from their teachers.”
<b>17</b>	“Improves academic writing, improves creative thinking, and improves spelling and grammar.”
<b>18</b>	“Learners draft and redraft their work until they are satisfied. When they write, they experiment with ideas and redraft their work. This is a good way of becoming a better writer, yet most of them still have difficulties in writing.”
<b>19</b>	“Learners learn to use citations from the text to support their ideas.”
<b>20</b>	“Learners develop reasoning abilities, a fair organisation of ideas, and ability to present an argument in writing.”
<b>21</b>	“Exposure to different writing skills, genres and purposes.”
<b>22</b>	“Enriches vocabulary.”
<b>23</b>	“They learn to express themselves better and to think critically.”
<b>24</b>	“Expands vocabulary, improves spelling, and improves sentence construction. Helps them to argue logically. Builds critical thinking and better expression.”

25	“Enhancement of expression.”
26	No response
27	“Literature study is related to the study of aspirations and personalities of the writers themselves; like in the case of poetry, students can always reflect on the life lessons a certain poem underlines, depicting the poet’s beliefs/views in the end. Literature is the study of life through the use of writers’ imaginations.”
28	“It does have an influence on their writing skills though minor. I have seen that these learners tend to be more colourful in their writing. They are able to respond on a more mature level to discursive and argumentative essays.”

Table 5 above elaborates on the respondents’ explanations on how the study of literature has an influence on learners’ academic writing skills. This item was meant for those who had strongly agreed and agreed that the study of literature had an influence on learners’ academic writing skills. However most of the respondents (even those that had disagreed with the statement) decided to provide explanations as to how the study of literature could influence learners’ academic writing skills. Respondents 4, 9 and 26 did not to provide explanations on this item. In general the respondents felt that the study of literature could be beneficial in terms of improving learners’ academic writing skills.

**Table 5: Responses to how the study of literature enhanced the development of language skills**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	No response
<b>2</b>	“Enhances vocabulary, insight in social, political and economic issues, enhances knowledge.”
<b>3</b>	“It helps with spelling and reading, but you still have to be taught in grammar.”
<b>4</b>	It enhances it through the reading. The more reading they do, the more they are exposed to a wider vocabulary which they will use when writing thus getting better each day in the English language.”
<b>5</b>	“When learners are exposed to different types of literature writing they are also exposed to different types of words and by reading they also improve or practice their reading skills. At the end of the day their reading speed and writing skills will improve.”
<b>6</b>	“It helps them to use their imagination. They learn to look at both sides of a situation since they are encouraged to process what they read and interpret it in their understanding. The evaluation done is based on how they express themselves and not what they say.”
<b>7</b>	No response
<b>8</b>	“Learners get a broader vocabulary which helps a lot with language, as well as grammar.”
<b>9</b>	“It enhances language skills, good sentence construction, spellings.”
<b>10</b>	“The language skill that will be enhanced is speaking.”
<b>11</b>	“Reading novels and short stories can help improve spelling and partially improve grammar which in turn translates into better writing.
<b>12</b>	“Learn new words and spellings”
<b>13</b>	“I believe in not only reading without saying the words out loud, but that we should make time in the classroom to give a chance to all learners to read out loud in class. Through this the learners learn how to pronounce difficult words and also use better words instead of only making use of simpler forms.”
<b>14</b>	“With reading everything else falls into place, spelling improves, vocabulary improves and learners become good writer by comparing themselves to other writers.”

<b>15</b>	“It helps in language acquisition and improving the language of learners, through various registers; colloquialism, figures of speech, proverbs and other language expressions.”
<b>16</b>	“Personally I think it does little for the development of language skills. Literature focuses on terminology and interpretation, and although language is important, it’s not the core of the lesson. Learners make numerous language errors in answering literature questions but they are not penalised for it. Personally I think literature is not very effective in the wider spectrum of the English language development.”
<b>17</b>	“It helps to broaden the vocabulary, to speak the language more fluently and write better.”
<b>18</b>	“Actively involves learners in meaningful learning activities if learners are involved in challenging content and variety of instructional approaches.”
<b>19</b>	“It helps learners to handle complex grammatical structures.”
<b>20</b>	“Learners are exposed to figurative language, irony, art of persuasion and coherence.”
<b>21</b>	“It enhances vocabulary and reading skills.”
<b>22</b>	No response
<b>23</b>	“They learn to use new vocabulary, using the right tense.”
<b>24</b>	“Develop concord and good sentence construction, tenses, vocabulary, improves spelling. Encourages them to use vivid language, similes, metaphor, and sound descriptive language.”
<b>25</b>	Expansion of vocabulary, appreciation of figurative language.”
<b>26</b>	“Improves language skills through close analysis of a text. Literature is interesting and can be easily used to teach language; comprehension, sentence structure, idiomatic expression, grammar.”
<b>27</b>	“Knowing figurative language is a challenge for students. In the process their vocabulary or language in general improves.”
<b>28</b>	“Learners are exposed to different types of writing thus encouraging them to write their own pieces of writing.”



Table 5 above illustrates responses on how the study of literature enhances the development of language skills. Three respondents opted not to write answers for this item. Besides these respondents, one respondent felt that the study of literature did not contribute much in developing the language skills of the learners. The respondent argued that literature lessons were simply meant to interpret the literary work and analyse the terminology used by the author. Furthermore the respondent claimed that when learners made errors in their literary work they were not penalised for it which meant that language development was not the prime objective in literature. The rest of the respondents felt that the study of literature contributed to language development in that it enhanced spelling, vocabulary, grammar and the general writing, speaking and reading skills. They further maintained that the learners that study literature became more imaginative in their writing as they tended to use more figurative language.

**Table 5: Responses to whether the writing skills of learners who study literature are better than of those who do not**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Agree:</i> No response
<b>2</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “Enlarges vocabulary, insight in social, political matters.”
<b>3</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “They still need the basics in English, if they study literature, but cannot write what does it help them?”
<b>4</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “Of course all learners who take English literature do it on a higher level in school and they are trained that every word you write should fit in. They can even get tested on it externally. They have to be fluent.”
<b>5</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “The more these learners read, the more they are exposed to different words, practice their writing skills and spellings.”
<b>6</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> This just depends on the learners’ thinking abilities. Some learners just simply answer the question with a straight answer others use imaginative processes.”
<b>7</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “The more you read, the better your verbal or written skills in a language. The writing gets more varied and the ideas could be expressed in a

	much more elaborate style.”
<b>8</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Not always, some learners are just good whether in literature or not. I mentioned this because in the junior grades we do not focus so much in literature in detail, yet you get excellent written pieces.”
<b>9</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “Learners learn to read thoroughly and to analyse. It enhances thinking abilities and reading with understanding. It also enhances language skills. The learner has to express himself correctly. Thus using correct sentence structures.”
<b>10</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Not all grade 12s do literature only the higher level candidates, but you will find ordinary level learners that can write better than higher level candidates.”
<b>11</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Writing is influenced by knowledge in language structures in detail. Prose can have a little influence in this regard. Literature involves a lot of unusual structure of English especially poetry and drama, thus hardly improves academic writing skills of learners. Literature also uses more archaic English which is hardly used today.”
<b>12</b>	No response
<b>13</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “I strongly agree, but we should remember that it is the learners with the better writing skills in the first place, who choose to take higher level English which entails studying literature. The weaker learners will opt for ordinary level which doesn’t include literature.”
<b>14</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “In some instances literature does make a difference. For those who don’t do literature the focus is on writing different types of pieces, so a learner not doing literature can also improve his or her writing skills.”
<b>15</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> This is because when studying literature one is exposed to language in use as opposed to the rigid teaching of grammar rules.”
<b>16</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Many learners who do not do literature have great writing skills and sometimes even better skills than the ones doing literature. The learners who do literature should have better writing skills as it is such an essential part of their studies, but it’s just not the case. I think the reason is because not much emphasis is put on proper writing skills nowadays as learners are not penalised when they do not know how to write effectively.”
<b>17</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “Because it helps with spelling and creative thinking.”
<b>18</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “Draw students into the subject area but stimulating ideas and arousing interest in the topic. Demand a more direct response to the poems and introduce new vocabulary and explain used terminology and expressions.”
<b>19</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “Normally, literature students tend to demonstrate a wide use of

	vocabulary and sustain clear sentence structures than the non-literature students.”
<b>20</b>	<i>Strongly agree</i> : “They are exposed to an academic writing that is often associated with literature.”
<b>21</b>	<i>Disagree</i> : “It is still not clear whether literature learners perform better than those that don’t study literature. There are cases in which learners that don’t study literature perform better than those that do.”
<b>22</b>	<i>Neutral</i> : “All my students have to do literature so I can’t really compare.”
<b>23</b>	<i>Agree</i> : “They read more and their vocabulary is better.”
<b>24</b>	<i>Strongly agree</i> : “It improves their usage of English especially writing skills. They are also informed about general issues.”
<b>25</b>	<i>Strongly agree</i> : “Expansion of vocabulary, appreciation of figurative language.”
<b>26</b>	<i>Agree</i> : “very difficult to tell because I only teach those who do literature. Those who do not do literature are mostly struggling with the basics in the English language.”
<b>27</b>	<i>Strongly agree</i> : “Students who do not have an interest in learning literature will have difficulties in expressing their opinions, since they are not challenged to improve their vocabulary and not confident enough to try analysing life per se.”
<b>28</b>	<i>Neutral</i> : “when a learner reaches grade 11 the foundation is laid the learner has/ not developed a flair for writing at this stage. Grade 11 and 12 are the years when a teacher does the polishing to the already acquired skills.”

Table 6 above reflects the responses on whether the writing skills of students who studied literature were better than of those who did not. One respondent opted not to answer this item. One respondent who “strongly agreed” with the statement felt that the students who opted to study literature expressed themselves much better than those who did not. Other respondents who “strongly agreed” (37%) and “agreed” (25.9%) (See Figure 12) with the statement, explained that they had noted that the students who studied literature were much more creative in their writing. Furthermore, they were able to express themselves much better in their written

work. In addition to this they were creative writers who used figurative language and their writing was more coherent than that of their counterparts.

The respondents (33.3%) who opted for the “neutral” response explained that the study of literature did not do much on the improvement of the learners’ academic writing skills. They argued that this depended on individual learners; some of them were naturally good writers while others were not. In supporting the above claim they said that some learners who did not study literature were better writers than those who did not. Some also claimed that the literature books that the learners in Namibia were exposed to were written in archaic English and therefore did not do much in improving the writing of contemporary learners. One of the respondents said that they could not compare the writing of learners who studied literature with that of those who had not studied it.

One respondent “disagreed” with the statement and explained that there was no evidence to show that the writing of learners who studied literature was better than of those who had not since some learners who had not studied literature were better writers than those who studied it.

**Table 6: Whether the study of literature in Grade 11 and 12 ESL should be made mandatory**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
1	“Higher level students do it anyway’ it would be wise to introduce literature to ordinary level students as well, maybe not on such an intense level.”
2	Strongly agree: “Literature is an important part of our cultural life, individual approach is possible.”
3	Agree: “Literature challenges intellect.”
4	Neutral: “Not really because learners competencies are not the same especially the ones on the ordinary level. They find it difficult to comprehend and analyse literature because of a poor English background.”
5	Strongly agree: “This will not only benefit one group but both ordinary and higher level learners will be able to enhance their writing skills through

	literature.”
6	Agree: “This is the only way they can improve their command of the English language. The more they get to know the language, the better they will be able to use it.”
7	Strongly agree: “No matter what the level of knowledge, literature broadens your mind and everybody should at least take with them a tiny piece of enhancement.”
8	Neutral: “They are of different levels and should be taught accordingly.”
9	Neutral: “The work for ordinary level learners would be too much. They still struggle with the basics.”
10	Agree: “So that the learners can also be aware of how to answer literature questions.”
11	Neutral: “Literature is a special skill that not many people are blessed with. That is like forcing learners to study what a smaller percentage has interest and talent in.”
12	Strongly agree: “To improve vocabulary and improve spelling.”
13	Strongly agree: “There should be a difference in the detail that learners need to go into when studying literature.”
14	Neutral: “Although literature can improve language skills, some learners are unable to handle the pressure that comes with it, nor are they able to analyse literature”
15	Strongly agree: “because this will help the ordinary level learners to also have their writing skills improved.”
16	Strongly disagree: “learners are only exposed to literature in grade 11 and 12 to the full extend. In other grades (8-10) teachers should teach it but it’s not properly assessed and learners don’t write a proper examination on literature. It’s an unfair disadvantage already on the ones doing literature in grade 11 and 12. The other reason is that learners just don’t understand literature and all the elements around.”
17	Neutral: “Some learners have no interest in literature. These learners will not perform well.”
18	Strongly disagree: “Learners are only exposed to literature only in grade 11 and 12, therefore they struggle when they do it.”
19	Strongly agree: “This will instil a mature and convincing writing in our learners.”
20	Strongly agree: “It does not serve any purpose for us as a nation to encourage knowledge stratification. Learners’ potentials should be explored to the fullest.”
21	Agree: “it will expose all learners to international cultural beliefs and practices which will be advantageous to them if they decide to further their studies in other countries. It will also broaden their thinking.”
22	Agree: “There is no reason why ordinary level learners should not study literature.”
23	Strongly disagree: “There are learners who can barely read and write English who would not be able to cope with the study of literature.”
24	Agree: “If we had more teachers, yes. It would not be possible to teach literature in depth on two different levels in one class.”

<b>25</b>	Strongly agree: “Expansion of vocabulary and appreciation of figurative language.”
<b>26</b>	Strongly agree: “There is a need for all students to study literature, because the same people become teachers and are forced to teach literature.”
<b>27</b>	Strongly agree: “I believe that both ordinary and higher level learners should have the capabilities to understand and appreciate the significance of literature.”
<b>28</b>	Agree: “But the type of literature chosen and the level of assessment should be different. All language learners should learn to appreciate literature and not just be bogged down by grammatical aspects.”

Table 7 above shows the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed on whether the study of literature in Grade 11 and 12 ESL should be made mandatory to all the learners of both ordinary and higher level. As illustrated in Figure 13, a significant number (39.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that both ordinary and higher level ESL learners should study literature, 28.6% agreed, 21.4% remained neutral and 10.7% strongly disagreed with the above statement.

The respondents who “strongly agreed” and “agreed” with the statement explained that since the study of literature exposed learners to different cultures, all the learners in Namibian schools should study it. They further explained that it would also enhance the writing skills, vocabulary, spelling and figurative language of all the learners. Furthermore they argued that stratification in the Namibian education system should not be encouraged as all the learners should be given the same educational opportunities. Another respondent argued that some of these students were bound to become teachers of the English language therefore they should be exposed to literature so that they could teach it when they became teachers. They added that literature also encouraged language proficiency and critical thinking, thus all learners should be taught to understand and appreciate literature. Another respondent contended that due to the limited number of teachers in schools, it was almost impossible to teach all learners.

The respondents who opted for the “neutral” option maintained that learners had varied capabilities and opined that ordinary level learners would find it difficult to analyse literary texts. Moreover some learners were simply not interested in the study of literature.

The respondents who “strongly disagreed with the statement explained that it should not be made mandatory since the learners only studied it in depth in Grade 12; and those that opted for the higher level struggled to understand it. Another respondent argued that some learners could hardly read the text in the English language and so the study of literature would further complicate their studies.

**Table 7: Whether the ESL syllabus is adequate enough to prepare learners to be good academic writers in tertiary institutions**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “All components are covered; literature, reading and directed writing, i.e. for higher level students. If you have qualified teachers who are willing to go an extra mile students will be well prepared.”
<b>2</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Do not know much about the Namibian background.”
<b>3</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “You have to do a lot of projects at a tertiary institution, if you cannot read or write properly you would be in trouble.”
<b>4</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “It is. The competencies and objectives are very suited to the level and they are well prepared for tertiary institutions, unless the teachers don’t do their work.”
<b>5</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “Learners are taught enough writing skills which if put into practice will enable them to become competent academic writers.”
<b>6</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “If all learners from grade 8-12 would be introduced to literature it would be better.”
<b>7</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Not too familiar with the syllabus.”
<b>8</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “they will have to start from scratch at tertiary level, so the bit they have learned can help them.”
<b>9</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> no response
<b>10</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “I believe that good writers are born not just taught in grade 11-12.”

<b>11</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “Academic writing is partially addressed. Learners should be taught referencing and all other aspects of academic writing from grade 11.”
<b>12</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> No response
<b>13</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “It is fairly challenging, especially with the new set of literature we had to start off with last year. E.g. King Lear. It takes a lot of effort to master a book like this; therefore this will prepare such learners for tertiary education.”
<b>14</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “There is big gap between the abilities of grade 12 and the requirements for tertiary institutions.”
<b>15</b>	<i>Disagree:</i> “it is barely enough to prepare them for tertiary institutions because they do not do enough content two novels for two years are not enough at all.”
<b>16</b>	<i>Disagree:</i> “Learners are exposed to basic writing skills, their writing is not structured.”
<b>17</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “It gives you the basic building blocks on which you could improve in a tertiary institution. These basics are there to help learners to go out in the world. They are good enough then to hold a proper job and use the language skills taught at school.”
<b>18</b>	<i>Disagree:</i> “Learners are exposed to basic writing skills and their writing is not structured.”
<b>19</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> “the ordinary level syllabus overlooks academic writing skills; it is more focused on general communication skills than academic writing skills.”
<b>20</b>	<i>Strongly agree:</i> “It covers almost every aspect with regard to English.”
<b>21</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “The syllabus contains a lot of academic writing skills that can (if taught properly) prepare learners for tertiary education.”
<b>22</b>	<i>Neutral:</i> no response
<b>23</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “they know the basic ways of writing a paper.”
<b>24</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “they are exposed to all areas and skills.”
<b>25</b>	<i>Agree:</i> No response
<b>26</b>	<i>Agree:</i> “The syllabus deals with all the basic skills necessary to become a good academic writer.”
<b>27</b>	<i>Strongly Agree:</i> “Students are challenged to write well using figurative language in literature. It is through this experience they are exposed to do well at their writing in tertiary institutions.”
<b>28</b>	<i>Disagree:</i> “learners are taught to write shorter pieces that are informal not academically structured.”



Table 8 above indicates the explanations of the respondents on whether the ESL syllabus was adequate to prepare learners for writing in tertiary institutions. The respondents who “strongly agreed” explained that the literature that the students were exposed to was challenging and, therefore, fostered critical thinking. They further claimed that the syllabus covered all aspects of language learning.

The respondents that “agreed” with the statement echoed the same sentiments that as long as the ESL teachers could teach literature as it should be taught, then their learners would be well prepared to write well at university. They furthermore claimed that literature covered all aspects of language learning and so the study of literature could serve as a foundation for writing at universities.

One respondent who opted for the “neutral” option explained that they were not familiar with the ESL syllabus. Another respondent claimed that good writers were born with the talent of writing and so the syllabus did not make much of a difference. Another said that it would be better if all the learners studied literature as that would prepare them for writing at university. Another argued that the ordinary level syllabus focused more on general language skills than on academic writing.

The respondents that opted for the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” options explained that the syllabus was not adequate as the learners only studied two novels for two years. Another said that the learners were only taught basic writing skills thus overlooking academic writing skills. Furthermore they maintained that the learners were only required to write shorter pieces that were not academically structured.

**Table 8: Responses on whether ESL teachers had problems in teaching literature**

Respondents	Responses
1	<i>Strongly disagree</i> : “I am qualified, have over 20 years teaching experience and enjoy reading myself”
2	<i>Neutral</i> : No response
3	<i>Neutral</i> : “It is a lot of work and preparation, you need to know the book by heart and have to make sure you challenge the learners intellectually.”
4	<i>Strongly disagree</i> : “It’s not a challenge if you were trained to understand the work of literature.”
5	<i>Agree</i> : “A shortage of books usually hampers the teaching of literature and the overloaded classrooms also create problems for teachers.”
6	<i>Neutral</i> : “I find it hard to make learners appreciate what they read, I try my best but the learners hate their prescribed books. They don’t enjoy them especially King Lear and Things fall apart. They find the language used too foreign.”
7	<i>Neutral</i> : “It is often difficult to find a novel/ play/ poetry that appeal to my students.”
8	<i>Neutral</i> : “If you had not taught at a higher level before then it would be a bit difficult, yet you just acquaint yourself with the syllabus and the books. But some of us just don’t like literature.”
9	<i>Neutral</i> : “To read, then to analyse poems is sometimes difficult for them to grasp.”
10	<i>Disagree</i> : “I have enough experience to teach literature.”
11	<i>Neutral</i> : “The interest from learners is very low, thus making it difficult to teach the content they have no interest in.”
12	<i>Strongly disagree</i> : “Literature is part of the higher level.”
13	<i>Strongly disagree</i> : “I spend the majority of my class time teaching literature and solving uncertainties. Any other problems, I might experience I make use of the internet for clear explanations.”
14	<i>Strongly disagree</i> : No response
15	<i>Strongly disagree</i> : “I am very confident and comfortable with the literature studies I got during training and because of that I do not have problems at all teaching literature.”

16	<i>Neutral:</i> “I know what to teach and have my strategy around it, but I think the problems come in with the learners’ level of understanding. It becomes difficult when I don’t know how to explain something that the learners can understand the work better. I also think that the problem is that teachers and learners don’t always know how to interpret questions and sometimes have difficulty explaining the process as we teachers also do not have clear guidelines from anywhere.”
17	<i>Neutral:</i> “It depends on the different learners’ gender, background and interest. Most of the time girls tend to like literature than boys. Background also plays a role; if a child was given books to read at home then the child just find it interesting and others don’t. The diverse groups sometimes make it easier or harder.”
18	<i>Neutral:</i> “it becomes difficult when I don’t know how to reach some learners who do not understand the literature.”
19	<i>Agree:</i> “I have problems due to a lack of literature books or material.”
20	<i>Strongly disagree:</i> “I simply don’t have problems in teaching the study of literature.”
21	<i>Strongly disagree:</i> “I am comfortable with teaching literature, I enjoy it.”
22	<i>Disagree:</i> “Some students do not understand why the study of literature could be helpful.”
23	<i>Disagree:</i> “I cope well.”
24	<i>Disagree:</i> “Not really, maybe obstacles such as lack of books.”
25	<i>Strongly disagree:</i> “No problem, literature is fun.”
26	<i>Strongly disagree:</i> “The attitude is negative because they feel, they will not make use of it in their lives. Lack of a reading culture.”
27	<i>Disagree:</i> “To teach literature is the most effective way of teaching language. Teaching literature is very challenging that the teacher should be well versed, creative and inquisitive.”
28	<i>Agree:</i> “Resources are lacking. Learners do not have access to reviews of criticism on literary discussions on the works studied. Many of our learners find it difficult to formulate an opinion on their own. The basic story line is all they are prepared to know.

Table 9 above illustrates explanations on whether the respondents had any problems in teaching the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 learners. In brief, those that “strongly disagreed” and “disagreed” with the statement explained that they were well qualified and had enough experience in teaching the study of literature to Grade 11 and 12 learners. Some of them claimed that they had no problems and enjoyed teaching literature to their students since for them teaching the study of literature was the most effective way of teaching language.

On the other hand nine respondents chose the “Neutral” option and explained that in most cases the students lacked interest in studying literature because the books prescribed contained very difficult language, therefore it was difficult for those teachers to motivate their students to be interested in such literary texts. As a result they usually found it difficult to analyse the texts as were required. Some respondents felt that they lacked experience in teaching the study of literature and were thus unable to help the students as they were expected to do so. Another respondent felt that lack of guidelines for teachers on how to teach the study of literature was a stumbling block in the effective teaching of this component of language learning and development. The two respondents that selected the “Agree” option explained that it was difficult to teach the study of literature when there was a lack of resources and books.

**Table 9: Responses on the kind of activities that the respondents involved their learners in order to teach writing through the study of literature**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>1</b>	“Critical analysis; preparing them for examinations.”
<b>2</b>	“Essays, comprehension questions, commentary, analytical assignments, evaluations and discussions.”
<b>3</b>	Summaries, tests, research projects and group work.”
<b>4</b>	“Summarise literary texts, write notes.”

5	“Spelling exercises and literature techniques.”
6	“Group work, games, learners should take turns to teach the text, critiques of literary works”
7	“Critique literary works, vocabulary exercises.”
8	“Write, read, write, read, write, and read.”
9	“E.g. Find poetic devices. How does this enhance the atmosphere of a poem, rhythm, symbolism, etc.?”
10	“Essay type questions and contextual type questions.”
11	“Writing stories and composing poems.”
12	No response
13	“We have lots of literature essays which are marked, handed back and re-written. They also have to create interesting characters/theme analysis on posters and present it to the class.”
14	“Using information from the literature piece to write about their own experiences and also writing their own literary pieces.”
15	“Analysing paragraphs, verses and passages and writing short stories that I have to mark, paying particular attention to language use, punctuations and imaginative writing skills.”
16	No response
17	“I give them short stories or articles and then ask them to write summaries/ story/ letter/ essay about what they have read.”
18	No response
19	No response
20	“Narrative, argumentative and descriptive writing, comprehension, metaphors/ figurative language.”
21	“Analysing poems, writing essays about the theme/ plot/ setting/ characters.”
22	“Summaries, characterisation, analysis and comments”
23	“Essay writing, paragraphs”
24	“Discussions, notes, worksheets and essays based on their literature work.”
25	“Analysis, summaries, comprehension questions, diary entries, letters and

	literary essays.”
26	“Grammar, comprehension questions, language usage, idiomatic expressions and spellings.”
27	“Structured questions for ever work done, essays on themes, group work.”
28	“Writing of poetry, writing letters to a character in a play or novel, own story writing.”

Table 10 above indicates the answers written for the type of activities that the respondents engaged their learners in order to teach writing through the study of literature. Their responses included essay writing (argumentative, descriptive and narrative) that is based on the literary texts that they read in class. Other respondents said that they based their activities on comprehension questions. These included figurative language, language usage, spelling and vocabulary.

**Table 10: Explanation on when learners should be introduced to the study of literature**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Responses</b>
1	<i>Grade 1:</i> “Reading entails literature and vice versa. It remains essential for gaining an overall understanding of a text, for enhancing general knowledge, getting information, clarifying details, confirming meanings, etc.” “Our youth does not read anymore for various reasons, mainly because of the advent of technology and we encounter serious problems with spelling, sentence structure, purpose, imagination, general knowledge, grammar when they write essays and this all boils down to a lack of reading.”
2	<i>Grade 5:</i> “Early but not too early”
3	<i>Grade 5:</i> “It challenges them and they get used to it. The sooner it happens, the better.”
4	<i>Grade 5:</i> “Because it’s better to start at an early stage when they can speak, read and write English.”
5	<i>Grade 5:</i> “As soon as they are able to think on their own they should be exposed to literature so that as they get older they will be used to it and will master the

	skills taught to them from an early age.”
6	<i>Grade 1:</i> “The foundation is very important, the earlier they get exposed to it the better.”
7	<i>Grade 1:</i> “It’s never too early to start learning literature, every child will benefit from it.”
8	<i>Grade 8:</i> “The study of literature can be complicated, but I remember that when we were in school we had already started rhyming songs and poems. But it should be detailed from grade 8.”
9	<i>Grade 5:</i> “They first need to read, write and understand the text perfectly.”
10	<i>Grade 5:</i> “The earlier the better.”
11	<i>Grade 8:</i> “The selection of subject choices and career paths start in grade 8, therefore literature should be introduced in this grade as it serves as a platform and foundation to those choosing art as a career.”
12	<i>Grade 1:</i> “The earlier the better.”
13	<i>Grade 8:</i> When they start in grade 8 they should be made aware of the basics of literature already. Short stories and poems might be used to enhance their understanding of literature. The more advanced materials and resources can be used in the upper grades
14	<i>Grade 5:</i> “Here you can already start teaching them different literature analysing skills.”
15	<i>Grade 8:</i> “The earlier the better.”
16	<i>Grade 1:</i> “The sooner learners get introduced to literature the sooner they will be at ease with it.”
17	<i>Grade 8:</i> “These learners are now being exposed to new things. They will catch on quickly because they are at a good learning age. They are also at an age where they can understand something easier.”
18	<i>Grade 1:</i> “The sooner the better.”
19	<i>Grade 1:</i> “It should start in grade 1 through story books which teachers should read to the learners
20	<i>Grade 11:</i> “The two years before tertiary education would be an appropriate time to introduce learners to literature.”
21	<i>Grade 5:</i> “At this stage, most learners are able to read with understanding. This will enable learners to develop interest in literature at an early stage.”

22	<i>Grade 5:</i> “The earlier the better.”
23	<i>Grade 1:</i> “Children should be told stories in order for them to have an interest in literature. They should be exposed to poetry as well. In grade 1 they should be able to listen attentively and identify the moral of the story.”
24	<i>Grade 1:</i> “Grade 1: reading short stories for enjoyment. Grade 5: an introduction to some literary aspects.  <i>Grade 8:</i> an introduction to more complex literary aspects. Grade 11: an analysis of literary aspects.”
25	<i>Grade 5:</i> “too young before grade 5.
26	<i>Grade 8:</i> “It is the best level because the learners are ready for high school. In grade 5 they can be taught to enjoy reading novels and poetry in general.”
27	<i>Grade 1:</i> “The earlier a child develops an interest in literature, the better as enthusiasms build up from one grade to the next thus creating a solid foundation.”
28	<i>Grade 8:</i> “The old adage the sooner the better holds true here. Learners should be exposed to literature at an early age in order to develop an appreciation, to acquire the necessary critical skills. For the learners to experience more than grammar.”

In summary, Table 11 above demonstrates the respondents’ explanations on when learners should be introduced to the study of literature. As illustrated in Figure 17, 35.7% of the respondents indicated that they would start teaching it in Grade 1. Another 35.7% indicated that they would start in Grade 5 while 25% of the respondents indicated that they should start in Grade 8 and the remaining 3.6% felt that they should start in Grade 11.

Those (35.7%) that indicated that literature should be taught from Grade 1 explained that there was need to develop a reading culture in Namibia. They felt that studying literature early was advisable. They further explained that this would eliminate problems associated with spelling, sentence structure and reading that students encounter when they reach senior secondary school.



The ones that indicated Grade 5 (35.7%) as a starting point explained that it was a better option because by then the learners would be able to read and understand literary texts. The familiarisation with the study of literature at this stage would acquaint learners with the challenges that it comes with, thus eliminating problems with proficiency in both written and spoken English. They felt that teaching literature at this level would make learners interested in reading.

The respondents that chose Grade 8 (25%) felt that since the study of literature was complicated it was better to start it in this grade. This would enable learners to acquire more language skills.

Finally one respondent that opted for the Grade 11 option, felt that it was the most appropriate Grade as the two years before tertiary education were crucial to preparing students for critical reading.

#### **4.5 Presentation and discussion of the results**

This section presents the discussion and interpretation of the results of this study in accordance to the research questions and the related literature reviewed. It furthermore presents a comprehensive summary of the findings.

As indicated in previous chapters, the objective of this study was to investigate the views of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers on the role of literature in enhancing learners' academic writing skills. A strong relationship between the study of literature and its enhancement of academic writing skills of learners has been reported in the literature review. It also provides possible implications for the development of a syllabus that meets the needs of ESL learners in Namibian Secondary Schools.

Fifteen items of the questionnaire determined the biographical characteristics and professional training information of the sample studied while 18 items determined the views of the respondents on the impact of the study of literature on Grade 11 and 12 learners' academic writing skills. The results of this study are compatible with the reviewed literature which indicates that the study of literature expands the language, depicts new vocabulary, real samples of a wide range of styles, text types and registers as well as sophisticated examples of language forms. Taking these advantages into account the results imply that all Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia should be taught the study of literature as this would benefit them in terms of language proficiency and improve their academic writing skills.

#### **4.5.1 Biographical characteristics and professional training of the respondents**

Women made up 60.7% of the teachers who engaged in this study while 39.3% were male teachers. Furthermore, the data collected shows that most of the teachers (92.9%) were permanently employed trained teachers while 7.1% were employed temporarily (see table 2). When asked about the grades in which they taught ESL, 25% of the respondents indicated that they taught Grade 11 learners only. Another 25% of these respondents indicated that they taught Grade 12 learners only, while 50% of the respondents indicated that they taught both Grade 11 and 12 learners (see Figure 1).

With respect to teaching experience, the results indicated that 39.3% of the respondents were quite experienced as they had taught English as a second language for more than 10 years. Another 21.4% had been teaching English as a second language for between seven and nine years. A quarter of the respondents (25%) had taught it for between four and six years while only

14.3% had between one and three years of teaching experience. This data implies that the respondents were seasoned teachers and had a good understanding of the teaching field and the learners thus providing factual data for this study (see Figure 2).

On whether the English language was the mother tongue of the respondents, the results indicated that 82.1% of the English as a Second Language teachers that participated in the study regarded English as their second language, 7.1% as their first language while 10.7% as their third language. Since the majority of the respondents regarded English as their second language, it can be inferred that their experience with the language could provide rich information for this study. The fact that the study also focused on English as a Second Language is significant to the research results; these teachers could be able to use their own experiences as both learners and teachers of this second language in answering research questions.

With respect to the professional training of the respondents, Figure 4 shows that most (50.0%) of the respondents were holders of Grade 12 certificates with 4 years Bachelor's Degrees in Education while 7.1% held grade 12 plus 4 years teaching Diplomas. Of all the respondents, 21.4% held Grade 12 plus B Degrees and Post Graduate Diplomas in teaching. Another 21.4 % had other qualifications. The statistics above show that most of the respondents were qualified ESL teachers as most of them were trained teachers thus they could provide useful information for the study.

Figure 18 indicates that the majority of the respondents were trained by the University of Namibia (53.6%); 7.2% by the University of Stellenbosch, one each (3.6%) by Windhoek Onderwys Kollege, Windhoek Teachers Training College, University of Edinburgh, Germany University, North West Potchefstroom, University of Potchefstroom, University of Zimbabwe,

Saint Louis University, University of Western Cape, Hamburg University and Heidelberg University. This information was expected to assist in providing varied views of the significance of the study of literature in improving the writing skills of the learners as the respondents were trained by different institutions.

On whether the respondents were trained to teach ESL, Figure 5 indicates that 92.86% of the respondents were trained to teach English as a Second Language, whereas 7.14% were not. Since the majority of the respondents indicated that they were trained in this area, they were, therefore, expected to provide valuable information for the study.

Table 3 indicates the responses on the list of courses that the respondents studied during their ESL teacher training courses. Eight respondents did not provide responses to this item. Four respondents referred the researcher to the English teachers' training syllabi of their time. In addition to this respondent 9 mentioned Afrikaans, English, Mathematics, Biology and Drama as their English teacher training courses. The above responses could in one way or another negatively affect the outcome of this research study as they (the respondents) did not provide detailed and required information for this item. However on the other hand, respondents 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26 and 27 provided the researcher with clear detailed data for this item. This data could be very helpful in the interpretation of the research findings. They indicated that they did an Introduction to linguistics, Aspects of syntax, Literature, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Constituents of English, Complex and Basic English patterns, English grammar, Phonetics and Phonology, and Creative writing.

On whether the study of literature they were taught as teacher trainees improved their academic writing, the respondents generally acknowledged that it enhanced their own academic writing

skills. In supporting this claim they contended that the critical analysis of texts displayed different styles of writing. As a result they were exposed to formal and informal writing. This in turn taught them about connotations and denotations of words, colloquialism and the intention of the writer, thus teaching them to consider who their audience was when writing and to use the right registers for the right audiences.

Other respondents further explained that literature improved their expression, therefore encouraging them to write as well, as they acquired new vocabulary. They also claimed that their command of the English language improved drastically. They learned to appreciate good books and became acquainted with words, idioms, figurative language and structures of the English language which in turn improved their academic writing skills. Moreover, other respondents explained that studying literature improved their vocabulary and use of grammar. It broadened their knowledge and helped them to compare different writing techniques. This in turn improved their own writing skills as well. This is congruent with Hismanoglu's (2005) argument that literature provides learners with an extensive range of vocabulary and syntactic items. Learners become accustomed to aspects of the written language, through reading a substantial and contextualised body of text. They learn about syntax and discourse functions of sentences, the variety of possible structures and the different ways of connecting ideas which develop and enrich their writing skills.

They added that the study of literature made them keen writers. Moreover, other respondents felt that as the study of literature involved much research, it sharpened their perception of the world, stimulated their imagination and improved their capacity for logical thinking thus broadening their writing skills. In the words of another respondent: "It enabled me to develop skills to draw support/ quotations/substantial evidence to support my opinion from texts." Some said that

literature not only broadened their thinking, but also enhanced their analytical skills required for academic writing. This they said was enhanced by the fact that they were expected to write academic critiques on various literature texts (see 5.5.1).

Another important finding was that the majority of the respondents perceived their teacher training as pertinent and felt that it had amply equipped them with sufficient skills to be proficient teachers in the study of literature. Nearly 43% (42.9%) “strongly agreed” whilst 35.7% “agreed” that they were better teachers in the study of literature because of their teacher training. However 21.4% of the respondents did not take a stance as they preferred to be “neutral” on this item (see Figure 7).

The respondents who “strongly agreed” and “agreed” explained that the study of literature in their teachers’ training enabled them to analyse and discuss literature with their learners as they were introduced to different literary forms, different genres and common elements of literature. They further said that learning English grammar rules in Basic English Patterns and Aspects of Syntax enabled them to be proficient in both written and spoken English. They claimed that this helped them to teach poetry and prose with ease. Other respondents believed that literature was a crucial aspect of their training. They explained that the wide range of texts involved prepared them to teach literature to ESL learners. They added that it enabled them to understand the uniqueness of sociolinguistic attributes that exist in society, improved their teaching skills and broadened their general understanding of language teaching. Another respondent felt that their knowledge from their teacher training course was complemented by the knowledge they shared with other teachers of ESL.

However, other respondents felt differently. They claimed that their teacher training did not equip them with enough skills to teach the study of literature to Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners. They argued that the training introduced them to literature, but it was only studied in two modules. Consequently they lacked comprehensive skills in teaching the study of literature. Although their training taught them how to teach literature, understand and explain it to a certain level, it did not teach them how to captivate the interest of learners who seemed not to be interested in studying it. In addition to this they stated that even though they were taught different aspects of the English language, it was very challenging to transfer this knowledge to their learners. Not everything they knew about teaching literature was taught during their training. They acquired more skills through teaching after training (See 5.5.2).

#### **4.5.2 Views on workshop attendance**

On how often the respondents had attended workshops, Figure 8 shows that 50 % of the respondents “sometimes” attended workshops on ESL teaching while 25% indicated that they “rarely” attended the workshops. It is also indicated that 10.7% of these teachers had “never” attended a workshop on ESL teaching while the other 14.3% “often” attended them. Another 12% of the respondents “often” attended workshops that dealt with the teaching of the study of literature, 36% of the respondents showed that sometimes these workshops dealt with the study of literature. Forty-four percent (44%) of these respondents indicated that the workshops “rarely” dealt with the topic at hand, and 8% of the respondents implied that the workshops they had attended “never” dealt with the study of literature (see Figure 9).

The above statistics indicate that there is a great need for more workshops that deal with the teaching of ESL and the study of literature. According to Tas (2009, p. 275) the main objective

of in-service education is to inform teachers about change and improve understanding of education, to help them acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to teach. This means that with in-service-training teachers would improve in the way they teach their students. The ESL teachers should then use this platform to discuss their challenges and problems in teaching the study of literature among others and ultimately find solutions to these problems.

#### **4.5.3 Views regarding the type of literature that the grade11 and 12 learners are taught**

When the respondents were asked if they taught the study of literature to their learners, the majority (89.3%) of them said that they did while only 10.7% of the respondents indicated that they did not teach the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 learners. This probably meant that these respondents did not teach ESL at a higher level (See Figure 10). Those that taught the study of literature indicated that the kind of literature they taught their students was in three categories; prose, poetry and drama (see Table 4).

On whether the study of literature that the Grade 11 and 12 learners were exposed to had an impact on their academic writing skills, 35.71% of the respondents “strongly agreed” while 32.14% confirmed that they “agreed” with the statement. Nevertheless 32.14% decided to be “neutral” on this item.

Table 5 indicates the conflicting views that the respondents had on whether the study of literature that the Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia were exposed to had an influence on their academic writing skills.



Those that “strongly agreed” and “agreed” with the statement noted several reasons as to how and why the study of literature was beneficial to the learners. Some believed that the study of literature taught the learners good sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, spellings, enhanced their vocabulary and sometimes broadened their general knowledge. Another respondent felt that the novels that the learners studied improved their communication skills thus improving their academic writing skills as well. This is supported by Clandfield (2006) who argues that the study of literature encourages learners to interact with the literary texts they read. As they interact, they are taught how to infer meanings of vocabulary from the context in which they are used. Clandfield further argues that literature expands language awareness. This means that when learners are asked to examine sophisticated or non-standard examples of language, which occur in literary texts, they become more aware of the norms of language use.

The respondents who opted for the “neutral” response gave several explanations. One respondent felt that the study of literature did not enhance the academic writing skills of the learners but encouraged learners to become critical thinkers. There is an element of contradiction in this statement as it is generally believed that critical thinking fosters critical writing. Another respondent claimed that the study of literature that the Namibian learners were exposed to was too difficult but the poetry motivated them to be creators of their own poetry. The latter is underpinned by Hismanoglu (2005, 60-61) who contends that poetry can pave the way for the learning and teaching of rudimentary language skills. This author further maintains that it is metaphor that is the most outstanding link between learning and poetry. Since most poetry consciously and unconsciously makes use of metaphor as one of its prime methods, poetry offers a significant learning process. Moreover Hismanoglu points out two learning benefits that can be derived from studying poetry as follows:

- *The appreciation of the writer's composition process, which students gain by studying poems by components.*
- *Developing sensitivity for words and discoveries that may later grow into deeper interest and greater analytical ability.*

Respondent 10 opted to disagree with the statement given. They argued that academic writing could only be inculcated through lessons based on academic writing. Compatible with this argument is the explanation provided by respondent 11 who felt that since the study of literature involved dealing with text written in different styles, literature could not be used to improve learners' academic writing skills. In agreement with the above respondents, respondent 14 also felt that the aim of teaching the study of literature to learners was not to improve their academic writing skills but rather to test their comprehension of a literary text. The above is just a brief summary of the respondents' explanations as to whether the Grade 11 and 12 study of literature improved learners' academic writing skills.

The contention in this item is the type of literature that the students are taught. According to NIED (2009) the Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners should study two novels: Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" and William Shakespeare's "King Lear". As alluded to by the other respondents the language used in these texts is quite challenging and archaic. This is particularly true in the case of King Lear. In agreement with the above assertion, Sullivan (1991) explains that success in teaching literature depends mainly on the works selected. Sullivan further argues that there is a vast corpus of simple texts available within the body of literature in English. According to Sullivan,

This body comes mainly from former British colonies such as countries in the Indian subcontinent, in East and West Africa and in the Caribbean. The works of these non-native writers (Achebe, Ngugi, Soyinka, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala, Das) reveal the intermediary degrees between the indigenous and metropolitan cultures - both from black and white sectors, and the variety of ways in which the author translates social conflicts into literary expression. What makes them unique is the way in which the English language has been extended, modified and elaborated to serve the purposes of revealing local, national individual sensibilities. These literatures also manifest a cultural context that an ESL/EFL learner can identify with (Sullivan, 1991).

One can argue further that Namibia has also seen the emergence of local writers whose books can be used in Namibian schools. There are also other contemporary writers that have surfaced internationally. “King Lear” for example, was written in 1606. Most learners are not familiar with the language of that time, thus hampering the understanding and enjoyment of this literary work. However, one could still argue that classic literary works like this could have a part in higher grades only, as learners in the lower grades may find it almost impossible to understand them. Higher grade learners under proper guidance should be able to understand this classic work. Therefore, the need to reiterate the effective teaching of literature which in turn would foster effective learning. “Things Fall Apart” was written in 1958. Although the language used is challenging Namibian learners should be able to understand and analyse it as the culture in this novel emanates from the African continent.

One of the respondents also stated that the literature that Namibian learners were exposed to did not have an impact on their academic writing skills since the learners were not penalised for incorrect grammar or spellings during assessment. However, contrary to this explanation NIED (2005, p. 15) stipulates among its assessment objectives (7, 8, and 9) of the literature paper that learners should be able to:

- *Communicate effectively, appropriately and clearly in both spoken and written language, using a range of vocabulary;*
- *Show a sense of audience and an awareness of style suited to the language level; and*
- *Demonstrate an awareness of the conventions of grammatical structures, paragraphing, spelling and punctuation.*

The above three objectives illustrate that when the teachers of ESL assess the literature paper, they must assess grammar as well. Therefore it is important that all the Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers familiarise themselves with the syllabus and the curriculum at large. Another alternative is that the Heads of Departments should induct the teachers and ascertain that they act as mentors to the new teachers so that they know the broad ESL curriculum.

#### **4.5.4 Views on how the study of literature influenced academic writing skills of learners**

The question on how the study of literature influenced learners' academic writing skills was meant for those who had agreed that the study of literature had an influence on learners' academic writing skills. However most of the respondents (even those that had disagreed with the statement) provided explanations as to how the study of literature could influence learners' academic writing skills. Respondents 4, 9 and 26 did not provide explanations to this item. In general the respondents felt that the study of literature could be beneficial in terms of improving learners' academic writing skills (see table 6).

Table 7 illustrates responses on how the study of literature enhanced the development of writing skills of the learners. Three respondents did not write answers for this item. Besides these

respondents, one respondent felt that the study of literature did not contribute much in developing the academic writing skills of the learners. The respondent argued that literature lessons were simply meant to interpret the literary work and analyse the terminology used by the author. Furthermore the respondent claimed that when learners made mistakes in their literary work they were not penalised for it which meant that language development was not the prime consideration in teaching literature. However this claim is in conflict with the assessment objectives of the ESL literature component as stipulated in NIED and Ministry of Education (2009, p. 15) which are to:

- 1) Understand and convey information;
- 2) Understand, order and present facts, ideas;
- 3) Evaluate information and select what is relevant to specific purposes;
- 4) Follow an argument or point of view, draw inferences and form conclusions;
- 5) Recognise implicit meanings and attitude;
- 6) Articulate experience and express what is felt, thought and imagined;
- 7) Communicate effectively, appropriately and clearly in spoken and written language, using a range of vocabulary;
- 8) Show a sense of audience and awareness of style suited to the language level;
- 9) Demonstrate an awareness of the conventions of grammatical structures, paragraphing, spelling and punctuation;
- 10) Respond appropriately to information, ideas and attitudes expressed; and
- 11) Recognise and appreciate the ways in which writers use language to achieve their effects.

The above objectives illustrate that there is more to the literature component than the interpretation of the literary text. It is true that the learners are required to understand and

interpret the prescribed literary texts but they should also be encouraged to venture further. These objectives show that the learners should be taught to become critical thinkers and ultimately critical writers through the study of literature. Objectives 7, 8 and 9 indicate that the learners should reflect a good command of both written and spoken English; that they should use a variety of vocabulary, be conscious of their audience, exhibit a cognisance of the principles of grammatical structures, paragraphing, spelling and punctuation.

The rest of the respondents felt that the study of literature contributed towards language development in that it improved spelling, vocabulary, grammar and the general writing, speaking and reading skills. They further maintained that the students that study literature became more imaginative in their writing as they tended to use more figurative language.

Figure 12 denotes that 37% of the ESL teachers who participated in this study “strongly agreed” that the academic writing skills of students who studied English Literature were better than of those who did not study it. Although 25.95% “agreed”, 33.3% opted to be “neutral” while 3.7% “disagreed” with the given statement.

Table 8 demonstrates how the writing skills of students who studied literature were better than of those who did not. One respondent opted not to answer this item. One respondent who “strongly disagreed” with the statement felt that the fact that the students who opted to study literature were initially more proficient in the English language than those who did not should not be ignored. Therefore these learners would naturally write much better than the ones who did not study the literature. Other respondents who “strongly agreed” and “agreed” with the statement, explained that they had noticed that the learners who studied literature were much

more creative in their writing. Furthermore they were able to express themselves much better in their written work. In addition to this they were creative writers who used figurative language and their writing was more coherent than that of their counterparts. This sentiment is echoed by Sell (2005) who advocates for the inclusion of the study of literature in the ESL syllabus by explaining that among other benefits of the study of literature, it provides examples of different styles of writing; linguistic diversity, expressive ranges thus extending linguistic competencies of learners who have mastered the fundamentals of linguistics.

The respondents who opted for the “neutral” option explained that the study of literature did not do much to improve the learners’ academic writing skills. They argued that this depended on individual learners; some of them were naturally good writers while others were not. In supporting the above claim they said that some learners that did not study literature were better writers than those who did. According to Clandfield (2006) some teachers might argue that the prescribed texts are very difficult and that they are beyond their learners’ understanding, ultimately frustrating everyone involved. However the immediate difficulty with vocabulary in a text might not be an obstacle to its comprehension. Learners, according to this author, can be trained to infer meaning of difficult words from context. However the selection of literary texts must be chosen carefully. Though this should be done, the treatment of the text must be done thoroughly by the teacher. One of the respondents said that they could not compare the writing of learners who studied literature and of those who did not study it as all their learners studied literature.

One respondent “disagreed” with the statement and explained that there is no evidence that shows that the writing of learners who study literature is better than of those who do not since some learners who do not study literature are better writers than those who study literature.

#### **4.5.5 Views on whether the study of literature should be mandatory to Grade 11 and 12 learners**

Figure 13 indicates that the majority (39.3%) of the respondents “strongly agreed” that both ordinary and higher level ESL learners should study literature, 28.6% “agreed”, 21.4% remained “neutral” and 10.7% of these respondents “strongly disagreed” with the statement.

The respondents who “strongly agreed” and “agreed” with the statement explained that since the study of literature exposes learners to different cultures all the learners in Namibian schools should study it. They further explained that it would also enhance the writing skills, vocabulary, spelling and figurative language of all the learners. Congruent with the above assertions Bagherkazemi and Alemi (2010, p. 3) affirm that the study of literature provides meaningful contexts, involves a profound range of vocabulary, appeals to the imagination, enhances creativity and encourages critical thinking. Furthermore, they argued that stratification in the Namibian education system should not be encouraged as all the learners should be given the same educational opportunities. Another respondent argued that some of these learners were bound to become teachers of the English language and should, therefore, be exposed to literature as they would have to teach it when they became teachers. They continued to argue that literature also encouraged language proficiency, encouraging critical thinking, thus all learners should be taught to understand and appreciate literature.

The respondents who opted for the “neutral” option maintained that learners have varied capabilities and felt that the ordinary level learners would find it difficult to analyse literary texts.

The respondents who “strongly disagreed” with the statement explained that literature should not be made mandatory because it was only studied in depth in Grade 12 and those that opted to



study it at a higher level struggled to understand it. Another respondent argued that some learners could hardly read text in the English language therefore the study of literature would only complicate their studies. However as explained in chapter 1 under the subheading “orientation of the study”, the fact that English is not the mother tongue of many Namibians warrants teaching and learning strategies that would enable Namibian learners to efficiently and effectively acquire a good command of spoken and written English. Therefore, a good foundation of learning English should be laid from primary school. In the same vein, Cummins (2003) draws attention to the distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). According to Cummins, BICS are acquired to a functional level within two years of initial exposure to a second language, whereas at least five years is usually required for learners to acquire CALP (See Chapter 1, Orientation of the study). This therefore implies that by the time Namibian learners are in Grade 11 they should be proficient enough in academic aspects of the second language (reading, writing, speaking and listening).

#### 4.5.6 Views on whether the grade 11 and 12 ESL syllabus was adequate to prepare learners for writing at university

On whether the Grade 11 and 12 ESL syllabus adequately prepared learners for academic writing in institutions of higher learning, the responses reveal that the majority of the respondents agreed that the ESL syllabus content did so. However 28.6% of the respondents chose to be “neutral”, whereas 17.9% “strongly agreed” with the above statement. Finally, the minority (14.3%) of the sampled ESL teachers “disagreed (see Figure 14).

Table 9 indicates the explanations of the respondents on whether the ESL syllabus was adequate to prepare learners for writing in tertiary institutions. The respondents who “strongly agreed” explained that the literature that the students were exposed to was challenging and therefore fostered critical thinking. They further claimed that the syllabus covered all aspects of language learning. According to Ministry of Education and NIED (2009) the Ordinary level syllabus is divided into four skills that the learners must acquire: listening, speaking and reading, writing and language usage. However, they also highlight that these skills must not be taught in isolation but be integrated to foster proficiency in the English language. Below are the skills, objectives and competencies of the Ordinary level syllabus:

**Table 13 Writing in the ordinary level syllabus**

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Objectives</b> <b>Learners will:</b>	<b>Competencies</b> <b>Learners should be able to:</b>
1. Developing and organising ideas into coherent sentences, paragraphs and whole texts	Produce well organised coherent pieces of writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a paragraph to describe a particular idea</li> <li>• Use complete sentences</li> <li>• Use introductory, developmental and concluding paragraphs</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link and develop ideas</li> <li>• Plan, structure, draft and edit work</li> </ul>
2. Writing a wide range of texts	Write appropriately for specific purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write in a style appropriate to the audience and register</li> <li>• Write informal letters, formal letters, articles to local newspapers, reports, essays, summaries, speeches, diary entries, form filling</li> </ul>
3. Style	Differentiate between written and spoken forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use contracted forms where appropriate</li> <li>• Use figurative language</li> </ul>
4. Clarity and conciseness	Demonstrates flexibility in writing about facts, feelings and opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on interpretation of the topic to give direction to writing</li> <li>• Give factual information</li> <li>• Express thoughts and feelings, using different types of register</li> </ul> <p>Defend ideas and opinions logically and convincingly</p>
5. Spelling and punctuation	Show competence in the use of spelling and punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use basic punctuation marks correctly</li> <li>• Show understanding of and apply the basic spelling rules such as; correct syllabification of words, writing hyphenated words, contractions, fractions, possessive case, words commonly confused</li> </ul>
6. Language usage	Use appropriate vocabulary in different contexts and situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use direct and unambiguous vocabulary, Use appropriate vocabulary, use technical terms and specialise vocabulary suited to the task</li> </ul>

*Note:* taken and adapted from NIED (2009, page 10-11)

Table 13 above indicates the competencies that learners should have acquired upon completion of senior secondary education in Namibia. In the researcher's view these competencies lay a foundation for writing in academic institutions. When they complete Grade 12 the learners should build on these skills in order to become better writers. However the above table still leaves a lot to be desired if compared with that one of the Higher Level learners.

**Table 14 Writing in Higher level syllabus**

<b>SKILLS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES Learners will:</b>	<b>COMPETENCIES Learners should be able to:</b>
1. Producing well organised coherent pieces of writing	Develop and organise ideas into coherent sentences, paragraphs and whole texts write with enthusiasm, maturity and conviction to produce a reader friendly style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use complete sentences in a paragraph to describe or explain a particular idea or theme</li> <li>• Use introductory, developmental and concluding paragraphs</li> <li>• Link and develop ideas</li> <li>• Plan, structure, draft and edit written work before attempting a piece of writing</li> <li>• Write in a style appropriate to the audience and register</li> </ul>
2. Writing successfully a wide range of texts for specific purposes	Write a wide range of tasks appropriately	<b>Write:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal/friendly letters</li> <li>• Formal letters</li> <li>• Articles to newspapers, school magazines</li> <li>• Reports: accidents, crime, sport, social activities</li> <li>• Essays: Narrative, descriptive, argumentative, discursive, imaginary</li> <li>• Summaries paragraph form, note form</li> <li>• Speeches</li> <li>• Reviews</li> </ul>
3. Style	Differentiate between written and spoken forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use contracted forms of writing where appropriate (such as in friendly letters)</li> <li>• Use figurative language and imagery in writing, also referring to the senses</li> <li>• Apply stylistic devices in writing (quotations/citations) interviews, articles, reports</li> <li>• Use appropriate format/layout to enhance understanding</li> </ul>
4. Clarity and conciseness	Demonstrate flexibility in writing about facts, feelings and opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on interpretation of the topic to give direction to writing</li> <li>• Give factual information</li> <li>• Express thoughts and feelings, using different types of register</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defend ideas and opinions logically and convincingly e.g. writing speeches/class debates</li> <li>• use skills of analysis and interpretation in responding to texts</li> </ul>
5. Show competence in the use of spelling and punctuation	Show comprehension of given texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select specific information from: literary sources, book reports/reviews, brochures, film reviews, articles (<i>informative or argumentative</i>)</li> </ul>
6. Spelling and punctuation	Show competence in the use of spelling and punctuation show competence in the use of spelling and punctuation (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use basic punctuation marks correctly</li> <li>• Show an understanding of and apply the basic spelling</li> </ul>
7. Grammar usage	Use appropriate grammatical structures in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use articles correctly (<i>a, an, the</i>)</li> <li>• Distinguish between common and proper nouns</li> <li>• Use pronouns appropriately</li> <li>• Use the correct form of the verb with singular and plural nouns and pronouns</li> <li>• Apply the correct verb tense as appropriate (for example saying <i>We have a house</i> instead of saying <i>We are having a house</i>)</li> <li>• Use the active and passive voice as appropriate</li> <li>• Use different prepositions correctly</li> <li>• Use and place adjectives and adverbs correctly</li> <li>• Structure simple sentences in writing</li> <li>• Use phrases correctly</li> <li>• Use conjunctions and connectives correctly to write compound and complex sentences</li> <li>• Use complex sentences and grammatical structures</li> <li>• Use concord</li> <li>• Use modal verbs</li> <li>• Use direct and indirect speech</li> <li>• Know all the tenses and uses of the verb</li> <li>• Use degrees of comparison</li> <li>• Use relative clauses</li> <li>• Use idioms and idiomatic expressions</li> </ul>
8. Using vocabulary	Use appropriate and effective vocabulary in different contexts and situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use direct, unambiguous vocabulary</li> <li>• Use appropriate vocabulary for personal, social and academic purposes</li> <li>• Use rich and varied vocabulary to describe, explain and argue</li> <li>• use technical terms and specialised vocabulary suited to the task</li> <li>• acquire and apply specific vocabulary in certain general fields such as education, technology, sport, social matters, etc.</li> <li>• use synonyms and antonyms</li> <li>• use hyponyms e.g. vehicle: train, chariot; animals: donkey,</li> </ul>

		tiger; fruit: apple, guava • collocation (fixed expressions) e.g. cosmetic surgery, crystal clear, middle management
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*Note:* Taken and adapted from NIED (2009)

Table 14 above shows that the writing component of the Higher level learners is more comprehensive than the one of the Ordinary level learners. Much more is expected from the higher level learners. This brings back the argument of one of the respondents, who explained that the stratification in the education system should be stopped as it deprives other learners of some skills they should attain in preparation for university. This could mean that the higher level learners are prepared for writing in institutions of higher learning more than their counterparts.

The respondents that “agreed” with the statement said that as long as the ESL teachers could teach the syllabus as it should be taught, then their learners would be well prepared to write well at university. They furthermore claimed that the study of literature covered all aspects of language learning therefore the study of literature could serve as a foundation for writing at universities.

One respondent who opted for the “neutral” option explained that they were not familiar with the ESL syllabus and that when the teachers were employed they should make sure that they acquaint themselves with the prescribed syllabus and all the literature thereof. However another respondent claimed that good writers were born and not made. Therefore the syllabus did not make much of a difference. Another said that it would be better if all the learners studied literature because it would prepare them for writing at university. Another argued that the ordinary level syllabus focused more on general language skills than on academic writing.

The respondents that opted for the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” options explained that the syllabus was not adequate as the learners only studied two novels for two years. However one

can still counter argue by explaining that the ESL syllabus is not only confined to literature. There are still other components that the learners are taught such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and language usage. Another said that the learners were only taught basic academic writing skills thus overlooking academic writing skills. Furthermore they maintained that the learners were only required to write shorter pieces that were not academically structured.

#### **4.5.7 Views on whether the respondents had problems in teaching the study of literature**

On whether the respondents had problems in teaching the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 learners; Figure 15 above, illustrates that the majority (35.71%) strongly disagreed and another 35.71% opted for neutral. In all, 17.86% disagreed and 10.71% agreed that they had problems in teaching the study of literature to their students.

Those that “strongly disagreed” and “disagreed” with the statement explained that they were well qualified and had enough experience in teaching the study of literature to their learners. Some of them claimed that they did not have problems and enjoyed teaching literature to their students for teaching the study of literature was the most effective way of teaching language. The latter is congruent with the explanation of Padmini (2009, p. 43) who explains that the setback with some teachers is that they fail to discuss prescribed literary text at different levels. They just read and interpret the texts. Padmini furthermore argues that “this is a wrong method. Instead of reading what is said, or what happens to whom, for what reasons, where and when, literature should be used as a resource for teaching language.” Literature should be used to engage learners in activities that will lead in the first place, to the development of language.

On the other hand the respondents that chose the “Neutral” option said that in most cases the learners lacked interest in studying literature because the books prescribed used very difficult vocabulary making those teachers unable to motivate their learners to be interested in these literary texts. As a result they usually found it difficult to analyse the texts as they were required to. Obviously a teacher would not want to use a text that is completely beyond their and their learners’ intellectual capacity. This would ultimately be frustrating for everyone involved. However, the immediate difficulty with vocabulary in a text might not be an obstacle to its comprehension. Learners can be trained to infer meaning of difficult words from context. The selection of a text must be given careful thought. Some respondents felt that they lacked experience in teaching the study of literature, thus making it difficult for them to help the students as they were expected to do. Another respondent felt that lack of guidelines for teachers on how to teach the study of literature was a stumbling block to the effective teaching of this component of language learning and development. In response to the above claims there is a need for teachers to have a mentor (in the form of a senior teacher) who should guide and provide them with advice on how to go about teaching literary texts. Subject advisors are experts on different subjects in schools. They can also visit different schools and classes and provide the much needed advice to the inexperienced teachers. This could alleviate some teaching problems that some teachers encounter. The two respondents that selected the “Agree” option explained that it was difficult to teach the study of literature when there was a lack of resources and books (see Table 10).



#### **4.5.8 Views on whether the respondents taught the study of literature to improve their learners' academic writing**

The study also inquired about how often the respondents taught literature to their learners in order to improve their academic writing skills. Figure 16 illustrates that 35.7% of the respondents “often” taught it for writing purposes. A total 28.6% implied “all the time” they taught the study of literature, they taught it for the purpose of improving their learners' academic writing skills. Another 28, 6% indicated that they taught academic writing through the study of literature only sometimes. In all, 3.6% of the respondents showed that they rarely taught literature for that purpose and the remaining 3.6% never made use of the study of literature to improve their learners' academic writing skills.

Table 11 indicates the answers written for the type of activities that the respondents engaged their students in order to teach writing through the study of literature. Their responses included essay writing (argumentative, descriptive and narrative) that is based on the literary texts that they read in class. Other respondents said that they based their activities on comprehension questions. These included figurative language, language usage, spelling and vocabulary. According to Riley (2010) using literature to teach reading and writing is the most obvious way to teach English. Students read a text and study the new grammar and vocabulary they encounter. They can also practice reading comprehension skills by answering questions about the text. Reading and comprehension are skills that are tested in examinations. Using literature as Riley explains is an interesting way to practice reading and develop strategies like skimming and scanning.

Literature can also be used to approach writing tasks. The author further postulates that students may read a text then write about it. Possible writing assignments include opinion essays, descriptive essays or book reports. Creative writing assignments are another option. Students can read part of a text and write about their predictions of what comes next, or they can write dialogues in which they imagine themselves interacting with a character in the story.

The respondents were further requested to indicate their views on how early learners should be introduced to the study of literature. Their responses to this item indicated that 35.7% of them felt that learners should start learning English literature as early as Grade 1 while an equal proportion felt that Grade 5 would be the ideal grade to start teaching learners the study of literature. However, 25% felt that it may not work well at earlier grades and suggested introducing it from Grade 8. Only 3.6% suggested introducing the study of English literature from Grade 11.

#### **4.5.9 Opinions regarding the stage in which learners should start studying literature**

Those that indicated Grade 1 explained that there was need to develop the reading culture in Namibia and suggested teaching literature in lower primary school. They further explained that this would eliminate problems associated with spelling, sentence structure and reading when the learners got to secondary school.

The ones that indicated Grade 5 explained that it was a better option because by then the learners would be able to read and understand texts. The familiarisation to the study of literature at this stage would acquaint learners with the challenges that it comes with, thus eliminating the problems that the Grade 11 and 12 learners encountered. They further argued that the study of

literature facilitated proficiency in both written and spoken English. This, they said, would enable the learners to be interested in reading.

The respondents that chose Grade 8 felt that since the study of literature was complicated it is better to start it in this grade. This would enable learners to acquire more language skills by the time they were in senior secondary level. Finally the respondent who opted for the Grade 11 option, felt that this was the most appropriate grade as the two years before tertiary education are crucial in preparing for tertiary education.

#### **4.6 Summary**

Following the discussion and interpretation of the results of the study, several key findings emerged.

Despite the fact that the respondents were trained to teach the study of literature, some of them felt that the training did not prepare them enough to be able to teach the study of literature to their Grade 11 and 12 learners. They claimed that they lacked skills in capturing (Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners') interest in the literary works that were prescribed. Therefore there is a need for teacher training that would effectively prepare ESL teacher trainees for teaching literature.

Another shortcoming was with regard to in-service-training. Figure 9 depicts that there is a need for more in-service-training as none of the respondents indicated that they always attended workshops that dealt with the teaching of ESL. The respondents that attended the workshops felt that the study of literature was rarely dealt with. This could be the reason why other respondents felt that they were not skilled enough to teach the study of literature.

Another challenge was the lack of teaching resources as alluded to by other respondents. They claimed that they could not teach the study of literature effectively because their schools did not have adequate resources. This needs the intervention of school managers to make sure that their schools have enough resources to ensure effective learning. Other respondents also felt that the fact that they had to teach Ordinary level and Higher level learners at the same time they were overloaded. That hampered effective and efficient teaching and learning. These limitations need to be addressed by stakeholders as they prevent the teachers from performing their duties to the best of their abilities.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The literature reviewed for this study indicates that the study of literature can play a significant role in promoting ESL learners' academic writing skills. This was also supported by the findings of this study in which a significant number of the respondents agreed that the study of literature had a role to play in language acquisition. Of the respondents, 35.71% strongly agreed that the study of literature that the Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia were exposed to had an influence on their academic writing skills. This was followed by 32.14% of the respondents who indicated that they agreed with the statement. Nevertheless, 32.14% decided to be neutral on this statement, although their explanations to this item indicate that in one way or another they agreed that the study of literature has some impact on learners' academic writing (see Figure 11).

While the Ministry of Education is constantly revising school curricular and policies to equip learners with skills that would enable them to effectively and efficiently participate in a knowledge based economy; several setbacks seem to hamper the achievement of this goal. Recently there has been a national outcry on the competency of Namibian teachers in teaching English. This therefore calls for the interrogation of several aspects that pertain to the delivery of subject matter in Namibian schools, in this case the teaching of English as a Second Language. Teachers need to be trained to be proficient in both written and spoken English lest Namibian learners graduate from high school with language deficiencies. Since independence in 1990 the English language has been the medium of instruction in Namibia's government classrooms, but the majority of teachers whose call is to teach the English language seem to be failing in English competency tests, suggesting an urgent need for change especially in the training of those

teachers whose responsibility is to teach ESL. The Namibian government's commitment to the English language as the main language of education has been undermined by revelations that 98% of the southern African country's teachers are not sufficiently proficient in the language. This was illustrated by disclosed results of government English proficiency tests carried out in 2011 that revealed that all but 2% of teachers needed to undertake supplementary in-service-training in the English language. Hence the purpose of this study was to examine the views of ESL teachers regarding the significance of the study of literature on learners' academic writing.

According to Hamdoun and Hussain (n.d) learners in schools need to be taught English in such a way that they will understand scientific and technical vocabulary for specific purposes. The two authors claim that the standard of English has declined due to the teaching methods employed in different schools. Therefore, teachers should develop learners' abilities to use the language for a variety of communicative purposes. They moreover claim that the study of literature plays a significant role in developing language learning abilities by training learners to infer meaning through different language clues. This in turn, they contend, enforces stimulating and enjoyable linguistic communication. "Literary discourse offers perspectives, which inspires learners to this and use language in a sensible and effective way. Language is power and power cannot be asserted and impressed if it is not effectual" Hussain and Hamdoun (n.d).

As already indicated the study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies so as to gather data that would address the research questions as outlined in Chapter 1 of this study. The literature review in Chapter 2 of this study provided an overview of other scholarly investigations on the role of the study of literature on ESL learners' academic writing. While the empirical investigation examined the views of ESL teachers in Namibia on the use of the study of literature to enhance Grade 11 and 12 learners' academic writing skills, it

specifically explored issues related to curriculum content, training and skills and barriers to teaching the study of literature.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Effective and focused reading of literature texts stimulates and underpins proficiency in aspects that include grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and writing. Reading literature texts can put into practice grammatical structures, new lexical items and elements of pronunciation. Reading can also offer good writing models.

As a national official language of Namibia, English occupies an important position in the citizen's life. This is reflected in the position of English as one of the compulsory subjects in the curriculum. Through the curriculum and the efforts of the teachers, the Namibian education system must meet its constitutional obligation to "ensure proficiency in the official language". Language stimulates personal growth and assists in the development of general knowledge, attitudes, critical abilities, moral values, and the aesthetic sense. This potential is enhanced by the rich and varied heritage of literary and scholarly work that has accumulated in English. Among Namibians English will operate as one of the most important languages of national unity and identity by virtue of it being the one language all Namibian learners will study. In the wider sphere, it is a language of access to the international community and the worldwide information network (NIED 2009, p.2).

It is upon the above premise that this study was conducted. This rationale of the Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) ESL syllabus Ordinary level provides evidence as to how the Government of the Republic of Namibia placed paramount importance on the English language, thus the need to interrogate issues that relate to its effective use and usage. Use is how the language is used in communication, or the function of language. This can be contrasted with usage, which is the grammatical explanation of some language aspects. The research results of

this research provided a consensus for the mandatory use of the study of literature in Grade 11 and 12 Namibian ESL classrooms. However appropriate methods and approaches should be employed in order to get the most out of the literature texts used in senior secondary schools. It is therefore the role and responsibility of all stakeholders that include material developers, syllabus designers, trainers of teachers and the teachers themselves to determine the study materials to be used and how to use them in order for the learners to effectively benefit from these materials. Learners' activities and assignments should be tailor made in such a way that they (learners) ultimately become proficient in both written and spoken English. This would in due course enhance learning and teaching experiences by analysing the distinctive characteristics of the classrooms and education system in which they would be used.

According to Smit (2007, p.51), when students study academic texts they should be analytical and critical. When they write they should be aware that a text can be malleable as long as the author wishes; that there is never only one way it could have been written and that it should be convincing to readers. Discussing literature, particularly point of view, can help foster academic skills in a way that minimises cognitive threats and encourages taking risks. Oster further states that literature engages the emotions and encourages personal identification. It does so, however, in the self-contained world it has created – and it remains a safe environment for self-examination as it remains fiction.

The literature review of this study and the ESL teachers who completed the questionnaire agree that the study of literature has a number of advantages when used appropriately in the ESL classroom. The rationale for introducing all Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners to the study of literature is that studying literature contributes to the learners' intellectual development. It also increases the level of interest in linguistic acquisition thus in turn enhancing their degree of



linguistic competence. In a nutshell, the constant exposure to reading texts would provide Namibian Grade 11 and 12 learners with the necessary awareness skills about language in use as a result of the attainment of efficient academic writing skills. This study, therefore proposes that there is a strong case for exposing all Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners to the study of literature. The benefits of the study of literature in an ESL classroom are multidimensional. Below is a list of some of the advantages considered to be imperative for this study:

### **1. Vocabulary expansion**

Reading and writing are interdependent. It is generally believed that good readers tend to be good writers as well. When learners read different texts that are written in the English language they in turn acquire the meanings of different words they come across as they read. This acquisition can be done either individually or through class discussions. The ESL teachers should encourage their learners to tease out the meanings of different words in the context they are used. Consequently, this would create awareness that words in the English language contain more than one meaning. Therefore, as the learners are constantly exposed to different words they would be able to use these words effectively in their own writing.

According to Cowie (2005) vocabulary is “all the words that a person knows or uses. For that reason, for the purpose of this study vocabulary may be defined as the knowledge of words and word meanings in a specific context. Studies point out that knowledge of vocabulary is highly linked with reading comprehension. This is because in order to grasp the meaning of any text, learners need to know already a wide range of words.

They also need to develop techniques to understand the meaning of words from their context, and later add them to their vocabulary. These techniques could be obtained through the study of

different literature texts. In agreement with the above assertions, Shoebottom (2012) explains that educational researchers have found a strong correlation between reading and vocabulary knowledge. In other words, students who have a large vocabulary are usually good readers. This is not very surprising, since the best way to acquire a large vocabulary is to read extensively, and if one reads extensively one is likely to be or become a good reader, hence an effective academic writer. According to Katib, Rezaei and Derakhshan (2011, p. 203), vocabulary knowledge can be expanded through considerable exposure to literary texts which treat both formal and informal language. Reading these literary texts is a good exercise for enlarging the learners' vocabulary since many of these texts are replete with so many new words which can be beneficial to learners of ESL. In so doing Namibian Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners would acquire vocabulary that may enhance their academic writing experience.

## **2. To develop writing skills**

Critical thinkers tend to be critical readers and eventually critical writers. Studying literature texts could serve as a foundation for critical thinking and writing among ESL learners. Teachers of ESL should approach the reading materials in such a way that they encourage their learners to reflect on their own lives, learning and language experiences. This would allow learners to question, interpret, connect and explore ideas as many literature texts are prolific with ideas to look at. Namibian teachers in the study of literature should be made aware that they have a great responsibility of ensuring that their learners develop Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). According to Katib *et al* (2011, p203) in today's global world, critical thinking is the cornerstone of education especially at advanced levels of education because it (critical thinking) prepares learners not to take things for granted and attempt to unravel the hidden meanings of texts. Critical thinking informs critical discourse analysis in ESL learning. Assessment in most subjects

is done through writing literature studies and could enhance the writing of the learners as they are exposed to different words and forms of writing.

According to Alliance for Excellent Education (2006) “to be literate is to read and write in many different ways.” Subsequently, effective writing skills are imperative in most if not all academic subjects in Namibian schools and tertiary institutions. It is through writing that learners are graded at the end of each class. Good academic writing skills are the realisation of all the grammar and vocabulary concepts previously learned into a piece of text. ESL learners should be motivated to develop outstanding writing skills because writing is one of the most important parts of examinations in Namibian schools. These writing skills can be developed through different language activities and the study of different literature books can be used for this purpose.

Furthermore, Shoebottom (2012) states that Educational researchers have found that there is a strong correlation between reading and academic success. In other words, a learner who is a good reader is more likely to do well in school and pass examinations than a learner who is a weak reader. This implies that good readers can understand the individual sentences and the organizational structure of a piece of writing. They can comprehend ideas, follow arguments and detect implications. As they go through the study of literature, they should be encouraged to determine the meaning of many of the unfamiliar words from the context in which they are used. In brief, good readers can extract from the writing what is important for their writing tasks. Katib et al. (2011, p. 203) further agrees with the above assertions by stating that the study of literature can be set as good ground for writing practice. This can be done by assigning learners tasks that require them to write about a theme they have learned from their readings or they can be asked to complete a poem or short story. They can also write the end of a story in their own

words or narrate a story from the point of view of another character in a short story, novella or novel. This will not only encourage them to be creative writers, but will also help them to use language effectively.

### **3. To gain fluency**

According to the Cowie (2005), fluency is the quality of being able to speak or write a language, especially a foreign language, easily and well. This ability to speak, read and write smoothly and easily can be acquired through the study of literature. ESL teachers should recognise that cultivating English fluency in their learners is one of their principal responsibilities as their learners grapple to be fluent in this language that is accorded the status of the official language in Namibia.

This study set out to explore the views of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers on the use of the study of literature on learners' academic writing in the Khomas region. It was concluded that their views are important as they are the implementers of the curriculum. Their views were also highly regarded so as to determine the problems they encounter when teaching the study of literature. From the literature review, analysis of the results and discussion of the findings several conclusions were made and presented.

Proponents of the study of literature in ESL classrooms (Yongan Wu 2008, Shang 2006, Burke & Brumfit 1999, McKay 1999, Lazar 1993, Oster 1989, Gajdusek 1988, Collie & Slater 1987 & Raymond n.d.) emphasise the significance of the study of literature in an ESL classroom. In addition to language acquisition, they also claim that the study of literature can be employed as a source to teach ESL learners effective academic writing skills.

There are several motivations in support of the study of literature in an ESL classroom. Hamdoun and Hussain (n.d.) argue that literature provides subject matter that has the power to motivate learners and help them in exploring the possibilities of usages and meaning that enhances their language competence in a significant manner. Since material that is authentic should be selected for the learners, these literary texts should be used to explore the resources of language to its maximum capacity. The wide range of language structure that is offered by the study of literature should be used in such a way that it enhances the learners' understanding of the range of language usage. This understanding could be seen to have a direct impact on the learners' ability to learn and use language not for mechanical responses but for the expression and responses of those thoughts and ideas which would be stifled in the brain in the absence of rich language resources. Therefore, regarded in this context, the study of literature could become a means towards language learning and proficiency.

According to Clandfield (2000-2011) there are different models that can be employed to teach literature in a language classroom. These are cultural model, language model and personal growth model. For the purpose of this research only the language model will be explained. According to Clandfield the language model aims to be more learner-centred. As learners proceed through a text, they pay attention to the way language is used. In other words, they come to grips with the meaning of different words and phrases and increase their general awareness of the English language. Within this model of studying literature, the teacher can choose to focus on general grammar and vocabulary or use stylistic analysis. This involves the close study of the linguistic features of the text to enable learners to make meaningful interpretations of the text. It aims to help learners read and study literature more efficiently and effectively.

Khatib et al. (2006) further echo that for speaking purposes themes and incidents in literary texts can be dealt with in such manner that they are associated with learners' own life experiences. Such practices would encourage the ESL learners' to debate and discuss these experiences thus gaining confidence in the spoken form of the language. They might also gain new vocabulary from their peers as they learn the English language. Having the learners freely reflects on the events and encouraging them to critically comment facilitates advanced speaking proficiency.

### **5.2.1 Views of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers regarding the use of literature to improve learners' academic writing skills in the Khomas region**

This study set out to investigate the views of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers on the use of the study of literature on learners' academic writing skills in the Khomas region. The findings from this study have indicated that the majority of the respondents concur that the study of literature has an impact on the writing skills of Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners in Namibia.

One of the most significant findings from this study is that a significant number of the respondents were qualified teachers of ESL (see Figure 4). Therefore it is safe to conclude that the data supplied by the respondents was of great value to the findings of this study. Teachers with strong subject-matter knowledge, solid training in teaching methodologies and theories as well as high qualifications should be capable of providing better education to their learners. ESL knowledgeable classroom teachers have a pivotal responsibility in all aspects of ESL teaching and learning. The Government of the Republic of Namibia advocates for every Namibian learner to be taught by highly qualified teachers who know the subject matter well and who can guide learners' understanding and learning. A highly qualified teacher should understand how learners learn, expects all learners to learn, employs a wide range of teaching strategies and

methodologies, and is committed to lifelong professional learning. Instructive knowledge, much of which is acquired and shaped through practice, helps teachers understand how learners learn specific subjects. They understand a wide range of different teaching strategies and instructional materials, and organise and manage the classroom. Teachers need to understand the theories driving the teaching of ESL and the study of literature in particular and be able to present or teach the study of literature in a comprehensive manner. Their decisions and their actions in the classroom; all of which affect how well their learners learn ESL should be based on the knowledge they acquire through their professional training.

Teaching the study of literature or ESL in general, is a multifaceted endeavor, not an effortless task of helping all learners learn or to helping all teachers become effective. Nevertheless, much is known about effective ESL teaching, and this knowledge should guide professional judgment and activity. To be effective, teachers should know and understand deeply the ESL syllabus components they are expected to teach and be able to draw on that knowledge with ease in their teaching tasks. They need to understand and be committed to the attainment of knowledge of their learners of ESL to be skillful in choosing from and using a variety of teaching and assessment strategies. In addition, effective teaching requires reflection and continuing efforts to seek improvement.

Teachers should have frequent and ample opportunities and resources to enhance and refresh their knowledge. Effective teachers should actively engage learners of diverse backgrounds and strengths in significant and challenging tasks that should help them understand concepts, learn skills and solve problems. Overall, the ESL knowledge, informed actions, positive attitudes and high expectations of highly qualified ESL teachers lead to ESL learning, confidence, and the development of a positive attitude toward ESL on the part of all learners.

All teachers regardless of the subjects they teach should understand how learners learn their specific subjects. They should know how to plan, conduct, assess the effectiveness of their lessons and know how and when to make teaching decisions. This means that the teacher's knowledge of content makes a difference when in teaching.

Not only were the respondents qualified teachers, the data they supplied also indicated that they were capable of teaching ESL as the majority indicated that they had been teachers of ESL for four years and above (see Figure 2). In this researcher's view, teacher experience in years can play a significant role in how effective a teacher is. The more time a teacher spends in class the more that teacher becomes effective in his/her teaching. Experienced teachers should be able to evaluate their own teaching and adjust to more effective ways of teaching. The more experienced the ESL teachers are, the more likely they are to become more effective in their teaching activities. This involves a clear understanding of all the components of the ESL syllabus and eventually the development of efficient teaching skills of all the components. Experienced teachers should over a period of their working life have developed and grasped skills and techniques that would enable them to achieve successful teaching methodologies and techniques. Skills acquired while working include communication, time management, professionalism, innovation and teamwork. No matter how long a teacher has been teaching, they should also demonstrate a willingness to learn, as this would keep them abreast with the latest teaching trends. It is the teachers who show the most enthusiasm that tend to be effective in their careers.

Another outstanding finding is that 82.1% of the respondents regarded English language as their second language (see Figure 3). This finding is valuable due to the fact that the data they supplied was drawn from their experiences as ESL learners and teachers. Figure 5 further



indicated that the majority (92.86%) of the respondents were trained to teach ESL to Grade 11 and 12 learners.

However data from table 3 is inadequate as it illustrates that 10 of the respondents did not provide the much needed information for proper discussion of the item based on the type of courses or subjects the respondents studied when they trained as teachers of ESL. However 14 of the respondents indicated that in their English studies they went through several content and components which made them qualified ESL teachers. Therefore the information provided by these 14 respondents was generalised to all the respondents. They indicated that they did an Introduction to linguistics, Aspects of syntax, Literature, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, Constituents of English, Complex and Basic English patterns, English grammar, Phonetics and Phonology, and Creative writing. In general, therefore, it seems that the respondents studied literature as part of their teacher training and were therefore able to provide responses to the questionnaire items as both learners and teachers of the study of literature. This is substantiated by Figure 6 which shows that the respondents generally acknowledged that the study of English literature enhanced their own academic writing skills as evidenced by 42.9% of them “strongly agreeing” to the statement and 39.3% “agreeing” to it. However, 17.9% opted for the “neutral” response.

The relevance of the study of literature is clearly supported by the current findings. As illustrated in Chapter 2 under “Literature review” many scholars of the study of literature and language in general contend that the study of literature plays a significant role in the enhancement of the academic writing skills of learners of language in general and ESL in particular. Congruent to this belief, the majority of the participants (respondents to the questionnaire) concur that their writing skills were improved by the study of literature they were taught as teacher trainees. They

explained that during their teacher training they were exposed to different genres of the study of literature and they were required to do an in-depth analysis of these literary texts. As a result they became aware of the different written forms and styles of the English language, i.e. formal and informal writing. In agreement with this claim Clandfield (2000-2011) contents that “literature expands language awareness. Asking learners to examine sophisticated and non-standard examples of language, which can occur in literary texts, makes them more aware of the norms of language use.”

The respondents believed, as stated by Shang (2006) that the study of literature enhanced their vocabulary, grammar, paragraph structure and types and styles of writing. According to Shang the study of literature also enhances the thinking of learners and their language abilities. Furthermore, he claims that literature texts assist learners in learning vocabulary, discovering questions, evaluating evidence individually, forming judgements based on synthesis and developing a coherent argument in support of a position. Therefore one can conclude that indeed literature can enhance learners’ critical thinking.

This in turn, the respondent maintained, taught them about connotations and denotations of words, colloquialism, the intention of the writer, thus teaching them to consider who their audience is when writing and use the right registers for the right audiences.

Other respondents further explained that literature improved their expressive abilities therefore encouraging them to write as well, as they acquired new vocabulary. They also claimed that their command of the English language improved drastically. They learned to appreciate good books and became acquainted with words, idioms, figurative language and structures of the English language which in turn helped improve their academic writing skills. Moreover, other

respondents explained that studying literature improved their vocabulary and grammar. It broadened their knowledge and helped them to compare different writing techniques. This improved their own writing skills as well. Corresponding with the above assertions, Lazar (1993) explains that literature and the teaching of language skills can be mutually profitable. According to Lazar students should be encouraged to derive meanings of words from the context in which they are used instead of merely glossing over those words whose meanings can be derived from the context. There may also be vocabulary items not easily definable from context and whose meanings even proficient readers will not know but that they safely categorise and dismiss so that they can move on. Discussing literature in a language classroom may thus assist students to know the 'real' meanings of these words.

Gajdusek (1988) further explains that literature exploration following pre-reading vocabulary work, introduces students to new words that are used over and over, thus encouraging vocabulary growth. In addition to this, this exploration (of issues and situations in a literary text) provides the basis for the contextualised practice of complex sentence grammar. Gajdusek continues to explain that analysis of the structure of a literary text may also help students to effectively organise their own writing (paragraph structure).

Furthermore the results of this study show that most respondents showed that their teacher training equipped them with enough skills to teach the study of literature to ESL learners. However other respondents felt that they were not trained sufficiently to teach the study of literature (see Figure 7). Therefore, as the study of literature is part of the ESL syllabus, it is imperative that ESL teacher trainees are sufficiently and effectively prepared to become efficient teachers thus curbing the problem of lack of skills. This can be done through in-service training or the initial teacher training courses.

This research study has also revealed that the workshops that the trainees attended hardly dealt with the study of literature. According to Tas (2009, p.275) “the benefits of in-service training can be summarised as; the promotion of professional development by increasing teachers’ scientific, educational and individual qualification, leading to teachers’ professional satisfaction, improving teachers’ performances, achieving teachers’ general and personal objectives, developing educational sources, developing teaching material and teaching atmosphere and conditions.” Therefore these Namibia teachers of ESL need to be trained in order to acquire the necessary teaching skills.

This study has also found that the majority of the respondents believed that the literary texts that the Grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia studied had a significant impact on their writing skills. These respondents claimed that these literary texts exposed the learners to different linguistic features of the English language and developed critical thinking through the activities that learners participated in during their literature classes.

However contrary to this belief other respondents felt that these literary texts were not sufficient to equip the Grade 11 and 12 ESL learners with skills that would enable them to be good writers at tertiary institutions. They felt that the learners only studied two forms of prose thus they would not acquire enough skills to prepare them for university. Some even felt that the assessment procedures that were employed did not incorporate language aspects all they were concerned with comprehension and not the way language was used.

According to Sullivan (1991), in some instances, literature assessment is still based on critical essays, which impel teachers to focus on understanding the text and inevitably leads to testing for

recollection and literal comprehension. However, incorporating literature into the language classroom calls for more emphasis on the development of language skills.

Sullivan (1991), further explains that if students are encouraged to use language imaginatively, their interest and motivation to study literature in English would increase, and eventually lead to improved use and performance in the language. Furthermore, to assess or to examine literature in a communicative or interactive way demands teaching strategies that also integrate language and literature, allowing activities which require language, which involve students in experiencing language, playing with language, analysing language, responding to language and enjoying language. These elements can only be achieved if the student is allowed to engage in a process of discovery. Therefore, it is essential that when the learners are required to study literature, there is a need for a clearly-defined aim. Only then can literature be successfully integrated into the teaching of language.

The results of this study also show that the majority of the respondents supported the mandatory study of literature to all Grade 11 and 12 students. They maintained that stratification in senior secondary school education should be abolished as all learners should be assessed equally. This means that the secondary school learners should not be categorised as Higher level and Ordinary level candidates. They explained that if all the learners were to study literature, they would become proficient in both written and spoken English.

However other respondents believed that learners had different abilities and interests and so they should not be forced to study literature as this would only make them fail. Thus the learners should be given a chance to choose the level at which they want to study literature in English language, i.e. Higher level or Ordinary level.

Another finding of this research study is that, generally the respondents felt that the Grade 11 and 12 ESL syllabus was adequate enough to prepare learners for writing at university. However, they said that it depended on how the ESL teachers taught it to their learners. They needed to teach it enthusiastically to produce the required results. They furthermore claimed that the syllabus covered all aspects of language learning therefore the syllabus could serve as a foundation for writing at universities.

Another significant finding was that some respondents explained that they had problems in teaching the study of literature to their learners. They argued that they lacked skills in motivating their learners to study literature. They also said that they lacked guidance on how to go about the teaching the study of literature as their teacher training did not prepare them enough.

This study also revealed the activities that the respondents involved their learners in order to teach writing through the study of literature. Their activities included essay writing (argumentative, descriptive and narrative) based on the literary texts that they read in class. Other respondents said that they based their activities on comprehension questions. These included figurative language, language usage, spelling and vocabulary.

Another significant finding was that most of the respondents felt that Namibian learners should be introduced to literature in earlier grades. Figure 17 shows that 35.7% of the ESL teachers who responded to this questionnaire felt that learners should start learning English literature as early as Grade 1 while an equal proportion felt that Grade 5 would be the ideal grade to start teaching learners the study of literature. However, 25% felt that it may not work well in earlier grades and suggested it be introduced from Grade 8. Only 3.6% of the respondents suggested introducing the study of English literature from Grade 11.

The respondents argued that the earlier the learners were introduced to literature, the more likely they were to understand the study of literature in senior secondary school level. The respondents further argued that the introduction of the study of literature in early grades would probably eliminate some language problems that the learners would experience in Grade 11 and 12. Some also felt that Namibian learners lacked a reading culture therefore the study of literature might encourage them to read extensively.

### **5.2.2 Limitations of the findings**

Even though the majority of the outcomes of this study were harmonious and compatible with the findings of the reviewed literature, it should be noted that due to the small sample used, the findings of this study cannot be generalised. It could therefore be suggested that this study be taken as a departure point for further research

One of the limitations of this study is that the findings were based only on the ESL teachers' views which could be regarded as subjective.

### **5.2.3 Contribution of the study**

The aim of this research study was to examine the views of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers on the use of the study of literature on learners' academic writing skills.

Proponents of the study of literature have argued that literature in a language classroom can be used to improve the writing skills of second language learners. The outcome of this study is also congruent with this argument. Most respondents generally acknowledged that the study of literature in Grade 11 and 12 classrooms could improve the learners' academic writing. The findings of this study pointed out that there is a need to equip the ESL teachers with enough

skills to teach the study of literature in order to use it to improve learners' academic writing skills.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Although the respondents generally agreed that the study of literature could be used to enhance the Grade 11 and 12 learners' academic writing, the findings of this research study raised some significant recommendations for the improvement of the teaching of the study of literature in Namibian government senior secondary schools.

These recommendations emanating from the findings and discussion of this research are divided into two sections. The first section makes recommendations for various stakeholders on how to improve the planning and delivery of the study of literature. The second section makes recommendations for further research possibilities to improve on the findings of this study.

#### **5.3.1 Recommendations for stakeholders**

##### **5.3.1.1 Recommendations for the Ministry of Education**

Emerging from the findings, discussions and implications of this study, the following recommendations are made to the Ministry of Education:

- 1) The Ministry of Education through its subject advisors and training officers should offer in-service training to the ESL teachers on how to teach the study of literature to their learners. This is because some of the respondents involved in this study alluded to the fact that they lacked skills in teaching literature in their ESL classrooms.
- 2) The Ministry should address the challenges that ESL teachers encounter in teaching the study of literature.



- 3) The Ministry through inspectors and school principals should consider monitoring and supervising teachers closely to enforce the correct methods of teaching the study of literature.
- 4) The Ministry should encourage teachers to familiarise themselves with contemporary research publications on teaching the study of literature by making these documents accessible in school libraries, offices of the Heads of Departments (HODs) and teachers' resource centers nationwide.
- 5) The Ministry should consider employing teachers who are well trained and have sound knowledge and skills in teaching the ESL syllabus as a whole.
- 6) The Ministry should introduce the study of literature from primary school so as to curb language problems that are experienced by learners when they go through the study of literature in Grade 11 and 12.
- 7) The Ministry should make the study of literature mandatory to all learners as it is beneficial in terms of language acquisition.
- 8) The Ministry should make sure that the literature texts that are selected are selected with due care so as to teach language not just the text itself.
- 9) The Ministry, through principals, should make sure that all schools have enough books for the study of literature as some respondents complained about a lack of resources.

### **5.3.1.2 Recommendations for teacher Educators**

In Namibia, like everywhere else in the world, there is an urgent need for a high quality and a representative teaching force. Teacher training programmes should be tailor made to suit the needs of a diversifying learner population. They require continual innovation to develop a new

generation of teachers who have the ability to promote complex and creative learning in Namibian learners.

Central to the idea of quality education is the quality of the teaching provided by teachers to their learners. As education systems have to cope with the impact of the global economy, so does the profession. According to The International Alliance of Leading Institutes (2008), high quality teaching will be characterised by among others:

- Greater emphasis on teachers' values, skills and knowledge that are fundamental to good teaching.
- Expanded teachers' roles and responsibilities of teachers that are shared collaboratively with other professions.
- Personalising learning for individual learners to accommodate greater diversity in learning contexts.

Emerging from the findings, discussions and implications of the results of this study, the following recommendations for teacher educators are provided:

- 1) Teacher training institutions i.e. the University of Namibia should develop and implement programmes that thoroughly prepare student teachers to become skilled and knowledgeable ESL teachers.
- 2) Teacher training programmes should be developed in such a way that student teachers are taught to capture their learners' attention when teaching any component of the ESL syllabus.
- 3) Teacher trainers should work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education so that they are aware of new policies and circulars pertaining to the teaching of ESL. This would

enable them to teach their students valid and practical skills that would be useful when they graduate and become teachers.

### **5.3.1.3 Recommendations for teachers**

As already indicated in this study, literature is valuable authentic material. According to Da Silva (2001) the teacher is the grand initiator of its use and thus responsible for making it meaningful to the learners. The teacher must apply it in the best way to suit his/her clientele. Literature presents different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of written texts that include narration, dialogue, irony and exposition which underpin the importance of the teacher as the conductor of this orchestra in accessing and understanding the meaning of literary pieces. Stafford (2006) explains the role of a teacher as follows:

Behind the classroom door the key factor in the success of a lesson, in determining whether the students actually learn something that matters, is the creative ability of the teachers, their ability to combine theory and practical classroom experience. Theory alone will not result in effective teaching. Nor will practice alone result in truly excellent teachers engaged in the learning process. Critical to this process is the teacher's knowledge of the subject content, and his/her ability to implement new strategies, to develop effective performance tasks, to design appropriate assessment tools, and to address the different student learning styles. Little of this can be accomplished if teachers are not knowledgeable of new research, and determined to implement it. Effective teaching therefore involves the practical application of new research/theory in a classroom environment (Stafford, 2006).

In agreement with the above assertions Smit (2007) argues that language-based approaches seek to promote closer integration between language and literature. Teachers could support such integration through classroom procedures which foster an activity-oriented, student-centered and language-sensitive approach. It is a fact that one text that lends itself excellently to literature study of this kind remains *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. Wole Soyinka's plays could

also be read and performed to alert the learners of the integration of language, culture and life. This would afford excellent opportunities for enhancing problem-solving and critical thinking skills. The main aim should be to assist students to develop independent interpretations and critical literacy skills by reading through the language in the wider meanings literary texts convey.

As already stated this paper proposes a compulsory Grade 11 and 12 study of a literature component in the Namibian ESL syllabus. However the teachers of ESL themselves should be responsible for their own professional growth. They should make sure that what they teach and how they teach it is beneficial to their learners. As can be seen from the literature review and results of this research, it is generally believed that the study of literature, if taught tactfully, can be a source of excellent written and spoken English.

The following recommendations for the teachers are made:

- 1) Teachers should acquaint themselves with the knowledge and philosophies of teaching and learning a second language, by taking the initiative of reading relevant literature.
- 2) Teachers should take initiative in familiarising themselves with contemporary issues pertaining to the teaching of the study of literature.
- 3) Teachers should go for further studies, in-service training and attend workshops regularly to acquaint themselves with ESL teaching skills and strategies.
- 4) Teachers should be innovative to come up with strategies that could help them to cope with the challenges of teaching the study of literature.
- 5) Teachers can come up with a teacher forum, create blogs through social networking technology where they would discuss issues pertaining to their teaching.

- 6) The teachers should come up with initiatives to make sure that they (teachers) and the learners have enough resources for the study of literature.

### **5.3.2 Recommendations for further research**

The following recommendations for further research are provided:

- 1) One of the limitations of this study was that the findings were based on participants' views which could be regarded as subjective. Further study should be done to investigate the impact of the study of literature on learners' academic writing. An experimental research could be carried out to determine this impact.
- 2) Another study could be carried out to find out the best ways or strategies to teach the study of literature as some teachers found this component challenging.
- 3) A follow up study could be conducted to focus on the constraints encountered by teachers when teaching the study of literature to their ESL learners.
- 4) Another study could be conducted in teacher training institutions to find out the ways in which teacher trainers are taught the study of literature.
- 5) A study of the same nature could be conducted in all 13 educational regions before the findings of this study are generalised.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

### Teacher Questionnaire

#### Biographical information

1. Professional status  
 (a) Permanent teacher\_\_\_\_,(b) volunteer teacher\_\_\_\_,(c) temporary teacher\_\_\_\_
2. Your sex  
 (a) Female\_\_\_\_, (b) male\_\_\_\_
3. What grades are you teaching  
 (a) Grade 11\_\_\_\_, (b) grade 12\_\_\_\_, (c) grade 11 and 12\_\_\_\_
4. What is your teaching experience in ESL in grade 11 or 12?  
 (a) 1-3 years\_\_\_\_, (b) 4-6 years\_\_\_\_, (c) 7-9 years\_\_\_\_, (d) 10 years and above\_\_\_\_
5. English is your  
 (a) First language\_\_\_\_, (b) second language, \_\_\_\_ (c) third language and above\_\_\_\_

#### Professional training information

6. What are your highest teaching qualifications?  
 (a) Grade 12+3 years Teaching Diploma \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) Grade 12+4 years Bachelor's Degree in Education \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) Grade 12+4 years Teaching Diploma \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) Grade 12+B. Degree + Postgraduate Diploma \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) Other\_\_\_\_ (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. At which institution were you trained? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Were you trained in teaching ESL? (a) Yes\_\_\_\_ (b) No \_\_\_\_
9. Please list the courses you studied in your ESL training.  
 (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) \_\_\_\_\_

- (d) \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) \_\_\_\_\_
- (g) \_\_\_\_\_
- (h) \_\_\_\_\_

10. The study of literature enhanced my academic writing skills.

Strongly agree	a	
Agree	b	
Neutral	c	
Disagree	d	
Strongly disagree	e	

11. If your response in 10 is “strongly agree” or “agree” please elaborate on how the study of literature improved your academic writing skills.

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12. Your teacher training equipped you with enough skills to teach ESL literature.

Strongly agree	a	
Agree	b	
Neutral	c	
Disagree	d	
Strongly disagree	e	

13. Please explain your answer in question 12.

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14. How often do you attend workshops on ESL teaching?

always	a	
often	b	
sometimes	c	
rarely	d	
Never	e	

15. How often have these workshops dealt with the study of ESL literature?

Always	a	
often	b	
sometimes	c	
rarely	d	
Never	e	

**To determine perceptions of ESL teachers on the impact of the study of literature on grade 11 and 12 learners’ academic writing skills.**

16. Do you teach the study of literature to your grade 11 and 12 students?

(a) Yes\_\_\_ (b)No\_\_\_

17. If your response in 19 is yes, please indicate the kind of literature that the students are exposed to.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

18. To what extent would you agree with the following statement? : The study of literature that grade 11 and 12 learners in Namibia are exposed to has an influence on their academic writing skills.

Strongly agree	a	
Agree	b	
Neutral	c	
Disagree	d	
Strongly disagree	e	

19. Please elaborate on your response to question 18.

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20. How do you think the study of literature have an influence on learners' academic writing skills?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

21. How does the study of literature enhance the development of language skills?

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\_\_\_\_\_ I believe that the writing skills of students who study English literature are better than of those who do not.

Strongly agree	a	
Agree	b	
Neutral	c	
Disagree	d	
Strongly disagree	e	

22. Give reasons for your response in 22

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23. Both ordinary and higher level ESL Learners should study literature

Strongly agree	a	
Agree	b	
Neutral	c	

Disagree	d	
Strongly disagree	e	

24. Give reasons for the answer you have chosen in 25 above.

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25. The ESL syllabus content is adequate to prepare learners to be good academic writers in tertiary institutions.

Strongly agree	a	
Agree	b	
Neutral	c	
Disagree	d	
Strongly disagree	e	

26. Please explain your response in 27 above.

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27. I have problems in teaching the study of literature to my students.

Strongly agree	a	
Agree	b	

Neutral	c	
Disagree	d	
Strongly disagree	e	

28. Please explain your answer in 29 above.

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29. How often do you teach English literature to improve your learners' academic writing skills?

always	a	
often	b	
sometimes	c	
rarely	d	
never	e	

30. What kind of learning activities do you involve your learners in order to teach writing through the study of literature?

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31. How soon should learners be introduced to the study of literature?

Grade 1	a	
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Grade 5	b	
Grade 8	c	
Grade 11	d	
Tertiary level	e	

32. Please explain your answer in 33 above.

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## **Appendix B Letter to the Director of Education in the Khomas region**

Box 23446

**Windhoek**

02 February 2009

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Tel: 2063935 (W)

223608 (H)

Fax: 061-2063943

The Director

Khomas Education Region

Windhoek

### **Re: Permission to conduct a Study in your region**

Dear Sir

I am a Master of Education Degree (M.Ed.) student at the University of Namibia. I hereby seek your permission to carry out a study in your Education Region. This study is to be conducted for a dissertation, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the above mentioned degree, which must be completed this year (2009). The study is an investigation into perceptions of ESL teachers on the impact of the study of literature on learners' academic writing: a case study of grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers in the Khomas region.

Your region was selected for its smaller and convenient sample and because I have worked in it before hence its feasibility in accessibility

The study is significant in the sense that the findings could be helpful to ESL teachers, advisors and inspectors to develop their knowledge and skills on the study of literature and its significance on learners' academic writing. The findings could further assist curriculum developers in deciding whether it is necessary to incorporate the study of literature in the Grade 11 and 12 ESL curriculum.

Teacher trainers in teacher training institutions could also use the research findings and recommendations to integrate the study of literature in their curriculum and to equip teacher trainees with the knowledge and skills that they would need to teach the study of literature effectively and efficiently.

All data collected from the teachers will be treated as confidential and the outcome of the study will be made available to the public.

Yours Faithfully

---

Agnes Simataa

## Appendix C letter from Ministry of Education Khomas Region



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

### MINISTRY OF EDUCATION KHOMAS REGION

Tel: (09 264 61)294 9411  
Fax: (09 264 61) 231367  
Enquiries: Ms T.L. Shivute

Private Bag 13236  
Windhoek

Ms Agnes Simataa  
P.O. Box 23446  
Windhoek

Madam

#### REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY TOWARDS HER M. Ed. IN SCHOOLS IN KHOMAS REGION

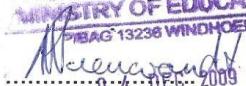
Your letter on the above subject has reference.

Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct a study on investigation into perceptions of ESL teachers on the impact of the study of literature on learners' academic writing: a case study of Grade 11 and 12 ESL teachers in the Khomas Region at the schools of your choice. You may start your study before the school close and continue/complete it when the school re-open in January 2010 on condition that:

- The Principal of the school to be visited must be contacted before time and agreement reached between you and the principal.
- The school programme will not be disrupted.
- Teachers who will take part in this exercise will do so voluntarily.
- A copy of your final report/thesis will be provided to the Regional Office.

We wish you all the success in your endeavour.

Yours sincerely

  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
 Private Bag 13236 WINDHOEK  
 14 DEC 2009  
**MR J.S. UDJOMBALA**  
**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**  
**REGIONAL EDUCATION**  
**KHOMAS REGION**