

STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING IN ACADEMIC WRITING: PERSPECTIVES OF
RUKWANGALI LANGUAGE EDUCATION LECTURERS AT RUNDU CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

Nor Shidrah (2012) notes that tertiary writing is very different from secondary school writing by compelling tertiary students to produce writing of a more critical academic nature. Objectivity and conciseness are the goals of such writing that needs to be followed. The purpose of the study was to discover Rukwangali language lecturers' perspectives on students' inability of critical thinking in their academic writing at Rundu campus in the Kavango East Region. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design which was conducted through purposive sampling and analysed using the content analysis approach. Data was collected using the semi structured interview protocol, document analysis guide and an observation check list with four Rukwangali language lecturers and test scripts and assignment of eight students. The study further revealed that lecturers may use strategies such as the infusion/ explicit approach, teacher questioning, assessment rubrics, writing and peer evaluation that may contribute to their inability to do that if not used correctly during such writings. This study recommends that Lecturers should provide a concrete definition of what constitutes critical thinking as a skill to their students before they drive them to the direction of becoming critical thinkers, they should explain the importance of critical thinking in academic writing to students, the university's curriculum should explicitly incorporate critical thinking in academic writing as an exit learning outcome for each module offered, Rukwangali lecturers should write more books in their language to equip the library with these books so that their students can use them during research and lecturers should do away with questions that require students to recite content and move to questions that require their students to analyse, synthesise and apply knowledge in different situations.

Key words: Critical thinking, academic writing, Rukwangali language education, Rundu Campus

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
DEDICATION	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE.....	14
INTRODUCTION.....	14
1.1 Introduction	14
1.2 Background of the Study	14
1.3 Statement of the Problem	17
1.4 Research Questions	18
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	19
1.6 Limitation of the Study.....	19
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	19
1.7 Definition of Terms.....	19
1.8 Summary	20
CHAPTER TWO.....	21
LITERATURE REVIEW	21
2.1 Introduction	21
2.2 A brief Conceptual Framework Guiding the Study	21
2.2.1 Social Constructivism Theory	21
2.2.2 Paul Elder’s Critical Thinking Model in Academic Writing	25
2.2.3 Justification of choice (social constructivism and critical thinking model as a conceptual framework).....	27
2.3 Cognitive Apprenticeship Defined	28
2.4 Critical Thinking Defined	29

2.5 Bloom’s Taxonomy in Academic Writing	35
2.6 An ideal Critical Thinker in Academic Writing	37
2.7 Scope of Critical Thinking	40
2.8 Critical Thinking in Rukwangali Academic Writing	42
2.9 Academic Writing Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking in the Rukwangali Language Modules	45
2.9.1 Writing	51
2.9.2 Assessment	52
2.9.3 Explicit Instruction/ Infusion Approach.....	53
2.9.4 Teacher Questioning	55
2.9.5 Assessment Rubrics/Scoring Rubrics	56
2.9.6 Peer Evaluation Approach.....	57
2.10 Summary	58
CHAPTER THREE.....	59
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	59
3.1 Introduction	59
3.2 Research Design.....	59
3.3 Research Population.....	61
3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures	61
3.5 Research Instruments	62
3.5.2 Observation Check List	62
3.6 Procedure.....	64
3.7 Data Analysis.....	64
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	65
3.9 Summary	65
CHAPTER FOUR	67
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	67

4.1 Introduction	67
4.2 Qualitative data obtained through semi structured interview protocol responses.....	68
4.2.1 Theme 1: The definition of critical thinking.....	68
4.2.2 Theme 2: The significance of critical thinking to writing as a skill.....	70
4.2.3 Theme 3: Writing as a skill	72
4.2.4 Theme 4: Hindrances Rukwangali students face in using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing	74
4.2.5 Theme 5: Lecturers’ perceptions towards teaching for critical thinking.....	80
4.2.6. Theme 6: Course duration to deliberate on the subject matter of critical thinking within the Rukwangali module.....	82
4.2.7 Theme 7: Strategies used by Rukwangali lecturers to enhance critical thinking in academic writing	83
4.2.8 Theme 8: Prior explanation of assessment instructions to students	85
4.2.9 Theme 9: Measuring students’ critical thinking in academic writing	87
4.2.10 Theme 10: Provision of feedback to students after grading their academic work	88
4.2. 11 Theme 11: Bloom’s Taxonomy’s levels incorporated in students’ assessment questions	89
4.3 Qualitative data obtained through Observation Checklist Protocol	91
4.3.1 Lecture structure	92
4.3.2 Methods.....	94
4.3.3 Lecturer-student interaction.....	95
4.3.4 Content	97
4.4 Qualitative data obtained through Document Analysis Protocol.....	98
4.4.1 Theme 1: Triggering the application of critical thinking in students’ tests questions and assignments	98
4.4.1.1 Lecturer One’s test questions and Assignments	98
4.4.1.2 Lecturer Two’s test questions and Assignments.....	99
4.4.1.3 Lecturer Three’s test questions and Assignments.....	99
4.4.1.4 Lecturer Four’s test questions and Assignments.....	100

4.4.2 Theme 2: Evidence of students responding using critical thinking	100
4.4.2.1 Lecturer One’s test questions and Assignments	100
4.4.2.2 Lecturer Two’s test questions and Assignments	100
4.4.2.3 Lecturer Three’s test questions and Assignments	100
4.4.2.4 Lecturer Four’s test questions and Assignments.....	101
4.4.3 Theme 3: Critical thinking as a learning outcome	101
4.4.3.1 Lecturer One’s test questions and Assignments	101
4.4.3.2 Lecturer Two’s test questions and Assignments.....	101
4.4.3.3 Lecturer Three’s test questions and Assignments	102
4.4.3.4 Lecturer Four’s test questions and Assignments.....	102
4.4.4 Theme 4: Designated time allocation in completion of task	102
4.4.4.1 Lecturer One’s test questions and Assignments	102
4.4.4.2 Lecturer Two’s test questions and Assignments.....	102
4.4.4.3 Lecturer Three’s test questions and Assignments	103
4.4.4.4 Lecturer Four’s test questions and Assignments.....	103
4.4.5 Theme 5: Evidence of logic and coherence in responses	103
4.4.5.1 Lecturer One’s test questions and Assignments	103
4.4.5.2 Lecturer Two’s test questions and Assignments.....	103
4.4.5.3 Lecturer Three’s test questions and Assignments	104
4.4.5.4 Lecturer Four’s test questions and Assignments.....	104
4.5 Summary	104
CHAPTER FIVE.....	106
SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	106
5.1 Introduction	106
5.2 Summary of the key findings	106
5.3 Recommendations.....	110
5.4 Future Research	111

References.....	114
APPENDICES.....	131
Appendix 1: Rukwangali Lecturers’ Semi- Structured Interview protocol.....	131
Semi- Structure Interview Guide Questions.....	132
Appendix 2: Rukwangali Lecturers’ Observation Checklist Protocol.....	133
Appendix 3: Appendix 3: Rukwangali students’ Document Analysis Protocol.....	137
Appendix 4: Rukwangali Language Lecturers’ Consent for participation in an Interview	141
Appendix 5: Consent for analysing written tests and assignments for Rukwangali students	143
Appendix 6: Consent for Campus APVC	145
Appendix 7: Ethical Clearance.....	147

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DECLARATION

I, Natalie S. Reino, declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and this work, or part of it has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution of higher education.

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Natalie S. Reino

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Paul-Elder’s Model in academic writing.....25

Figure 2: Bloom’s Taxonomy in Academic Writing.....37

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AHELO	:	Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes
APVC	:	Assistant Pro Vice Chancellor
CT	:	Critical Thinking
CTAR	:	Critical Thinking Analytic Rubric
EFL	:	English First Language
ETS	:	Educational Testing Theory
MED	:	Master of Education
MKO	:	More Knowledgeable Other
OECD	:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEF	:	Paul-Elder Framework
RQ	:	Research Question
RUA AEC	:	Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analysing, Evaluating, Creating
SCA	:	Social Constructivist Approach
SCaCTM	:	Social Constructivism and the Critical Thinking Model
UNAM	:	University of Namibia
USB	:	Universal Serial Bus
WTL	:	Writing to Learn
ZPD	:	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study and provides a description of the statement of the problem, together with the purpose of the study, research questions, and the significance of the study, its limitations and delimitations as well as the definition of terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

This study explored students' inability to engage with critical thinking (CT) in their academic writing in the Rukwangali language. The problem was identified by the researcher during the assessment of students' academic work and during lectures at the University of Namibia's (UNAM's) Rundu Campus. It was observed that students do not pay sufficient attention when they submit written assignments and have the perception that producing pieces of writings in quantity rather than of good quality is acceptable. They seem unable to present logical arguments or conclusions in their academic writing. Students expect lecturers to have a routine way of asking assessment questions and if the assessor changes the format of the questions, the students are lost and as a result fail to employ critical thinking (CT) skills to answer the questions correctly. This is a matter of grave concern, leading to a high failure rate among students. Current literature in the field emphasises the inclusion of critical thinking in higher education (Moore, 2013; Flores, Matkin, Burbach, Quinn & Harding, 2012; Jones, 2015; Howell & Kingsbury, 2015; Mulnix, 2012). There is little consensus as to what constitutes CT and to what extent the perception of the concept differs in different cultures (Shaheen, 2012). A growing enthusiasm for CT led the American Philosophical Association to invite a panel of experts, under the leadership of Facione,

to conduct a systematic investigation intended to achieve a more refined understanding of the nature and assessment of CT. The results – known as the “Delphi Report” – were later to become a cornerstone of this understanding. CT is defined by the panel of experts as: “purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, and contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based” (Facione, 1990, p. 2) as cited in Shaheen (2012).

Similarly, in the case of teachers, having knowledge of what constitutes CT and how it should be valued is a key factor in successfully contributing to students’ academic performance (Cosgrove, 2011). Knowing that the criteria of critical thinking enhances students’ ability to write thoughtful academic papers, lecturers should pay special need to its presence in academic writing. Shaheen (2012) attests that faculties and departments that teach international students face major challenges in their efforts to develop the effective use of CT, especially in terms of the academic writing of a wide variety of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The importance of critical thinking is seen as a key study skill at university level, it helps one to create strong arguments, it results in the ability to draw the right conclusions and it gives students a head-start at university. Despite the importance of lecturing the notion of critical thinking to Rukwangali students, some major factors still exist that prevents students from applying critical thinking skills in their Rukwangali writing. This is a fact that is commented on regularly by the lecturers.

Students at the UNAM (Rundu campus) doing Rukwangali language education modules were observed to be unable to use critical thinking in their academic writing. Writing at the tertiary level is very different from secondary school writing, it is more academic and students are expected to create essays that adhere to the tenets of

tentativeness, objectivity, formal register and accuracy. Whereas, in secondary writing, learners are expected to answer questions without really paying much attention to the register as they are being trained in gaining language competence not producing papers that reflect academic writing. These requirements of critical thought entail tertiary students being engaged with the ideas and issues of the discipline within which they write in a considerably more complex and detailed way, using an appropriate academic voice (Vardi, 1999, as cited in Nor Shidrah, 2012). This is a challenge for the majority of undergraduate students whose writing lessons at school have not focused on such skills. Instead their earlier writing skills were developed based on learning experiences that emphasise language accuracy and mechanics. At the undergraduate level, however, irrespective of the language medium of instruction, the ability to write well does not only depend on the quality of language used but also how clear and well-thought out the ideas are. This scholarly writing requires considerable critical thinking by the writer and is integral to the production of insightful and thought-provoking writing.

Whilst a plethora of available literature has been written on critical thinking from an international and national perspective (Frans, 2014; Heffernan, 2015; Hughes, 2014; Nandu, 2013; Nor Shidrah, 2012; Shaheen, 2012; Snyder & Snyder, n.d; & Vyncke, 2013) little information is available about students' academic writing at Rundu Campus. This problem was identified by the researcher during the assessment of students' Rukwangali academic work and while attending Rukwangali lectures at the University of Namibia's (UNAM's) Rundu Campus.. As observed, students do not pay sufficient attention when they write to figure out what the action verb in the question expects them to do and have the perception that the quantity is more important than the quality. They are unable to produce logical arguments or conclusions in their

academic writing and are easily thrown by questions that do not conform to their expectations. It is against this background that an in-depth case study was conducted regarding students' inability to apply critical thinking in their academic writing.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Students at UNAM - Rundu campus doing Rukwangali language education modules were observed to have an inability to use critical thinking in their academic writings such as paragraph writing and essay writing. Tertiary writing is very different from secondary school writing. Tertiary writing is more academic and students are expected to create pieces of writings that adhere to tentativeness, objectivity, formal register and accuracy. Whereas, secondary writing learners are expected to answer questions without really looking at the register, tentativeness, because they are still being trained in gaining language competence not producing papers that reflect academic writing. All these entail tertiary students needing to critically examine and be engaged with the ideas and issues of the discipline within which they write considerably more complex and detailed texts using an appropriate academic voice (Vardi, 1999) as cited in (Nor Shidrah, 2012). This is a challenge for the majority of undergraduate students whose writing lessons at school have not focused on such skills. Instead, their earlier writing skills were developed based on learning experiences that emphasise language accuracy and mechanics. At the undergraduate level, however, irrespective of the language medium of instruction, the ability to write well does not only depend on the quality of language used but also how clear and well-thought-out the ideas are. This scholarly writing requires considerable critical thinking by the writer and is integral to the production of insightful and thought-provoking writing.

Whilst a plethora of available literature has been written on critical thinking from an international and national perspective (Frans, 2014; Heffernan, 2015; Hughes, 2014,

McKinley, 2013; Nandu, 2013, Nor Shidrah, 2012; Shaheen, 2012, Synder, n.d & Vyncke, 2013) not much is known about students' inability of critical thinking in academic writing at Rundu Campus. This problem (Student's inability to use critical thinking in academic writing) was identified by the researcher during the assessment of students' Rukwangali academic work and during Rukwangali lectures at the University of Namibia's (UNAM's) Rundu Campus as one of the grave concerns leading to students' high failure rate and poor academic performance. As observed, students do not pay more attention when they write to figure out what the action verb in the question expect them to do and have a perception of producing pieces of writings in quantity rather than quality. They cannot make logical arguments or conclusions in their Rukwangali academic writing and students expect lecturers to have a route universal way of asking assessment questions and if the assessor twists the questions, the students tend to be lost and as a result they fail most of the time to employ critical thinking skills and answer the questions correctly. It is against this background that an in-depth case study was conducted regarding students' inability of critical thinking in academic writing.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1.4.1** What strategies are being used by Rukwangali lecturers in enhancing critical thinking?
- 1.4.2** What barriers do lecturers encounter as they teach for critical thinking in the Rukwangali language education modules?
- 1.4.3** What difficulties do Rukwangali students face in using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is a contribution to the evolution and growth of knowledge regarding critical thinking by tertiary students in their Rukwangali academic writing in Namibia. The results of this study are significant as they may inform the policy makers, curriculum designers, teachers and Rukwangali lecturers about the factors contributing to the students' inability to use critical thinking skills in their academic writing. Teachers may benefit from this study in that they may become aware of the different strategies they could use to enhance their students' ability to think critically and apply the skill in their academic writing. This would subsequently enrich the teaching and learning process of the Rukwangali modules at Rundu campus.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Despite the success of this study, there were some limitations. Chiefly, the sample size was relatively small. It is difficult to make sweeping generalisations about students' academic writing and critical thinking ability with a sample of only four participants. Added to this limitation other factors could have affected the results. This is a case study that may not be generalised, as it only targets Rukwangali language Education students and relevant lecturers at Rundu Campus. Therefore, the findings cannot be applied to other campuses in other regions/countries.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Based on the possible limitations identified above, research participants was restricted to Rukwangali lecturers in the Faculty of Education at Rundu Campus. Other lecturers who do not teach Rukwangali language education modules were not part of the study.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Inability This is the state of being unable to do something.

Critical Thinking is defined as the academically methodical progression of dynamically and skilfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action (Scriven & Paul, 2007).

Academic Writing refers to a form of evaluation that asks you to determinate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting and presenting (Ismagulovaa, Polevayaa, Balgabayevaa, Kulakhmetova & Kapanovac, 2016).

Perspective Oxford University Press (2009) defines perspective as a particular way in which one views something according to their personal experiences or knowledge.

1.8 Summary

This chapter presented the background of the study, the description of the statement of the problem, together with the purpose of the study, the research questions the study aims to address, the significance of the study, its limitations and delimitations as well as a definition of terms.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of relevant literature that informed and guided this study. The organisation of the chapter begins with a brief conceptual framework that guided the study, apprenticeship as key in the Zone of Proximal Development, a definition of critical thinking, the nature of critical thinking, Paul-Elder's model and Bloom's Taxonomy. It also includes a description of the Rukwangali language education questions, what makes an ideal critical thinker, the scope of critical thinking, critical thinking in Rukwangali language education and ends with academic writing strategies for developing critical thinking in Rukwangali language modules.

2.2 A brief Conceptual Framework Guiding the Study

The conceptual framework for this study was constructed by synthesising social constructivism theory and the Paul & Elder's critical thinking model to identify potential conceptual links.

2.2.1 Social Constructivism Theory

Kalpana (2014) notes that a social constructivist approach (SCA) influenced by Vygotsky's work emphasises the social contexts of learning and that knowledge is mutually built and constructed" (p. 28). By interacting with others, students get the opportunity to share their views and thus generate a shared understanding related to the concept. From Piaget to Vygotsky, the conceptual shift is from individual to collaboration or assisted performance, social interaction and sociocultural activity. In Vygotsky's theory, content of the knowledge is influenced by the culture which includes language, beliefs important to that culture and skills considered important in

that culture (like computer skills, communication skills and collaboration skills). To elaborate on social constructivism theory one must examine the work of Vygotsky. The theory of social constructivism was founded by Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) who was a Russian psychologist. He is considered the father of social constructivist theory. He followed the work of John Piaget – who laid the foundation of constructivism. While Piaget focused on stages of child development and individual construction of knowledge, Vygotsky identified the greater socio-cultural context (Jones, 2015). In addition, Vygotsky postulates that what a child can today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow (Jones & Araje, 2002). To extend this point this entails that the pedagogy underpinning social constructivism as a theory advocates that children have to be scaffolded as they take in new content for a certain extent before they are left to do things on their own. That is to say, if they have reached a peak of understanding and they are deemed fit to work on their own as the lecturer facilitates the learning process. This is done by giving a task to the student to execute on their own or in a group since the knowledge being used was gained through social interaction within the social context. This theory goes hand in hand with the phenomenon under study using key terms in the research title “critical thinking and academic writing” the reason being that critical thinking is a cognitive skill that requires a framework to be mastered and monitored from time to time (Bhavana, 2015). Accepting this, both critical thinking and academic writing are skills that are acquired through learning. Since social constructivism emphasises the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge is based on this understanding (Derry, 1999) we can finally reach a consensus and postulate that critical thinking in academic writing of students can only prevail when social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive

development (Jones, 2015). Concurrently, Vygotsky felt social learning precedes development. He stated that, every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level. The social level occurs between people who are called inter-psychological and the individual level which occurs inside the child is called the intra-psychological level. In the inter-psychological level, the child gains knowledge through contacts and interactions with people and then later the child assimilates and internalises this knowledge adding their own personal value to it in the intra-psychological level (Jones, 2015).

Jones (2015) asserts that the more knowledgeable other (MKO) refers to anyone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. The MKO is normally thought of as being a teacher, coach, or older adult, but the MKO could also be peers, a younger person, or even computers. Typically, this increased knowledge can be acquired by students who are initially incapable of critical thinking in academic writing. They can start as novices and as they gain momentum in the knowledge they can transfer the skill of thinking critically and employ it in their academic writing.

Another important aspect in Vygotsky's theories is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) defines the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer. In the ZPD, a teacher and a learner work together on a task that the learner could not perform independently because of the difficulty level. It also reflects the idea of collective activity, where those who know more or are more skilled share that knowledge and skill to accomplish a task with those less informed. A good deal of guided participation

is required when working in the ZPD and learners bring their own understandings to social interactions and construct meanings by integrating those understandings with their experiences in the context (Jones, 2015). To provide an illustration of this, when a lecturer aims to enhance critical thinking in his/her students, they should use the zone of proximal development first and provide guidance until such time when the student/students are able to work on their own.

To provide an illustration, when the lecturer aims at enhancing critical thinking in his/her students' Rukwangali academic writing he and she first uses the zone of proximal development where he provides guidance until such a time when the student/students are able to work on their own without any guidance of some sort. That is to say, a lecturer can lecture students on how to write a certain piece of work and continue giving them guidance as they practice on the guidelines until they are fit to be left alone to try it on their own.

The central philosophy behind the decision to focus on the areas of critical argument and writer identity in understanding English Second Language students' academic writing abilities is social constructivism; a learning theory based on the ideas of Vygotsky (1978) that human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others. Narrowing it down to this study, it appears to be that social constructivism was provided by Rukwangali language education lecturers to their students to master academic writing competencies in their first language needed. This was done by giving group assignments to students and group presentations which enable students to hear views of others and agree on one answer before the final product is handed in to the lecturer.

Creswell (2009) asserts that social constructivism serves as a useful theoretical framework as it allows for necessary qualitative analysis to reveal insights on how

people interact with the world. Social constructivist theory asserts that two people's ideas coincide with their experiences and build on their socio-cultural awareness, a key point in identity construction.

2.2.2 Paul Elder's Critical Thinking Model in Academic Writing

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking about any subject, content, or problem in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them (Paul & Elder, 2010). The Paul-Elder framework (TPEF) has three components as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

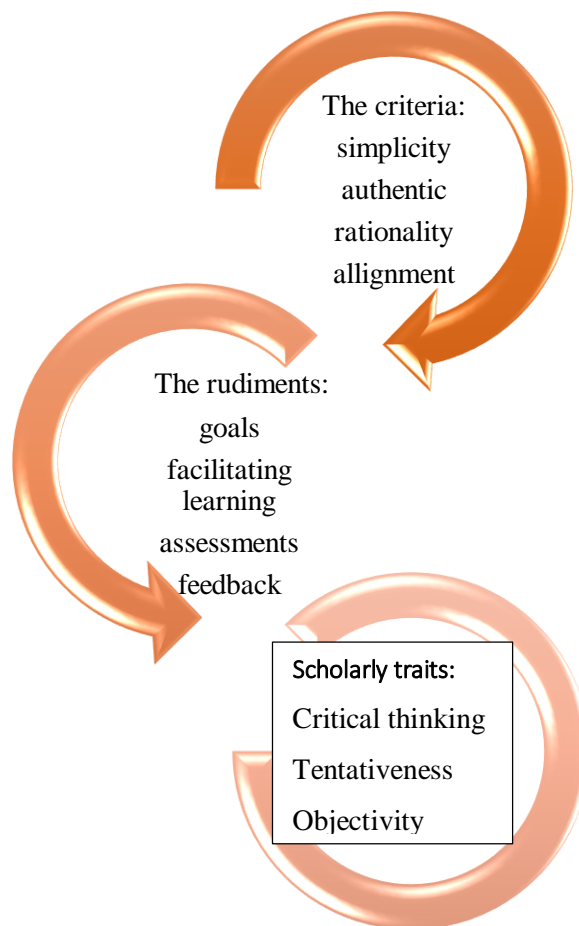


Figure 1: Adopted from Paul and Elder (2010, p. 21)

According to Paul and Elder (2010), there are two essential dimensions of thinking that students need to master in order to learn how to upgrade their critical thinking in academic writing. Inferring from the Paul-Elder's critical thinking model, Rukwangali language education lecturers need to apply the criteria of simplicity, authenticity, rationality and alignment to set goals in helping Rukwangali language education students to apply critical thinking when they write tests and assignments. The criteria of critical thinking may still be used to facilitate learning through assessments aimed at enhancing students' critical thinking in Rukwangali academic writing. This can be done by asking WH- (What, Why etc.) questions that trigger students' critical thinking and provides guidance on how to respond to questions in tests and assignments. In addition to that, assessment feedback should be done using the question format so that students read their comments on their assessment tasks upon getting the feedback and think about the questions posed to them, rather than just commenting 'very good, excellent job', etc. the students may thus become reflective thinkers in academic writing and be thoughtful and objective when they undertake academic writing because these are the core components of good academic texts. This is to say that, being objective means that the academic writer tries not to let his / her personality intrude too much into the writing, in order to allow the facts and the evidence to speak for themselves. Tentativeness is the opposite of being assertive. When we use this term to apply to academic writing, we imply that the academic writer is cautious about making very definite or categorical statements, or arriving at conclusions too hastily. Such a writer, in other words, writers should know that it is important to acknowledge that the truth is complex and new facets of it are being uncovered all the time.

2.2.3 Justification of choice (social constructivism and critical thinking model as a conceptual framework)

Social constructivism emphasises “the social contexts of learning and that knowledge is mutually built and constructed” (Kalpana, 2014, p. 28). By interacting with others students get the opportunity to share their views and thus generate a shared understanding related to the concept. Whereas, the Paul-Elder critical thinking model follows the following components: the elements of thought (reasoning), the intellectual standards that should be applied to the elements of reasoning, the intellectual traits associated with a cultivated critical thinker that result from the consistent and disciplined application of the intellectual standards to the elements of thought.

Based on the above distinctions, these two theories (social constructivism and critical thinking model) form a link and they are also complementing each other as the theory of social constructivism advocates that students who are in a social context tend to mutually build and construct knowledge together as they interact with other students to generate understanding and as they interact, their critical thinking skill is being enhanced and they can implement it better when they are left to work alone. Moreover, the Paul-Elder’s critical thinking model also emphasises that a student need to portray good reasoning skills and intellectual traits associated with a cultivated thinker. It is against this background that the researcher have decided to merge the two theories (social constructivism and critical thinking model) to form a conceptual framework because all theories talk about the role of interaction and the emergent reasoning to reach an understanding. This informed the current study to answer on how lecturers can help students who have inabilities to employ critical thinking in their academic writing by using the zone of proximal development and teaching them to be logic as possible when they are involved in Rukwangali academic writing.

Working in teams helps students to achieve higher levels of thought. Information is also held longer (Johnson and Johnson, 1986; Slavin, 1990). This is supported by Totten, Sills, Digby and Russ (1991) and Gokhale, (1995) who assert that collaborative learning enables students to become critical thinkers.

2.3 Cognitive Apprenticeship Defined

Collins, Brown and Newman (1989) define the concept of a cognitive apprenticeship as learning through guided experience on cognitive and metacognitive, rather than physical skills and processes. This has its roots in social learning theories. One cannot engage in a cognitive apprenticeship alone, but rather it is dependent on expert demonstration (modelling) and guidance (coaching) in the initial phases of learning. Learners are challenged with tasks slightly more difficult than they can accomplish on their own and must rely on assistance from and collaboration with others to achieve these tasks (Dennen & Burner, 2008). In other words, learners must work with more experienced others and with time move from a position of observation to one of active practice. The learning tasks in cognitive apprenticeship are holistic in nature and increase in complexity and diversity over time as the learner becomes more experienced. A major advantage of learning by cognitive apprenticeship as opposed to traditional classroom-based methods is the opportunity to see the subtle, tacit elements of expert practice that may not otherwise be explicated in a lecture or knowledge-dissemination format.

The researcher did not observe some cognitive apprenticeship provided by Rukwangali language education lecturers to their students to master academic writing competencies. Evidently, the lecturers gave activities in the class in a form of an assignment after they were done lecturing. Students did not have time to practice on the skills gained prior to trying it on their own.

2.4 Critical Thinking Defined

The past decade or so has witnessed the release and dissemination of a variety of books and articles on Critical Thinking. There is widespread consensus that the instruction of critical thinking is an all important issue standing in need of further research (Appleby, 2006; Halpern, 2002). However, language methodologists have difficulty putting forward a precise and rigorous definition of critical thinking. That is why Halanon (1995) states “that critical thinking scholarship is in a mystified state. No single definition of critical thinking is widely accepted” (p. 75). “Along the same lines, Minnich (1990) asserts that critical thinking is a mystified concept” (p. 5). Fasko (2003), too, is aware of such indeterminacy when he asserts that “there is no consensus on a definition of critical thinking” (p. 8) in psychology, education or philosophy, and indeed the definitions of critical thinking have been changing (Huitt, 1998). Siegel (1988) points out that “despite widespread recent interest in critical thinking in education, there is no clear agreement concerning the referent of the term” (p.5), but he mentions that the notion of critical thinking has to be delineated with some precision for it to have significant impact on educational thinking and practice. Reviewing the many definitions of critical thinking, Siegel (1988) identifies two rather different conceptions of critical thinking running through the related literature: the “pure skills” (p. 6) and the “skills plus tendencies” (p.6) conceptions of critical thinking. According to Siegel, the 'pure skills' conception of critical thinking concentrates entirely upon a person's ability to assess correctly or evaluate certain sorts of statements. Basing this to the students of the current study, they are unable to evaluate certain sorts of statements, especially questions in tests and assignments but rather answer questions wrongly because they tend not to understand what the action verb in the questions. A

person is a critical thinker, from this viewpoint, if she has the skills, abilities, or proficiencies necessary for the proper evaluation of statements. However, as Siegel (1988) illuminates, this conception is incomplete because it overlooks the salience of the actual utilisation of these skills and abilities in a person's everyday life. The impact of this conception of critical thinking on the educational context could be less than promising if students drew upon critical thinking in tests only to get good grades in exams but not outside the testing context. Siegel (1988) argues that critical thinking needs something more than skills. Siegel (1988) calls the second conception of critical thinking the “skills plus tendencies” (p. 6) conception, resting on the idea that a critical thinker has both the skills and proficiencies necessary for the proper assessing of statements (and actions), and also the tendency to exercise those proficiencies in their ordinary statement- (and action-) assessing activities. Following this view, a person is a critical thinker, if he or she is able and ready to think critically. This is to say that students should not be used to questions that require them to remember a chunk of information to enable them to pass examinations or tests but they should always await questions that allow them to use their mind and think critically. Unams’ students have a problem regarding this aspect because they think lecturers want to challenge them and they do not want them to excel with their studies. On the side of the lecturers, some feel that asking questions that requires their students to think critically will yield more work for them when they will assess. With this, they resort to setting multiple choice questions so that they are able to mark fast and with ease. These all means that, even though we claim that students do not think critically, it might be that we are also contributing to their inability. As Siegel (1988) mentions this conception of critical thinking extends critical thinking beyond the skill of assessing statements and actions. The second conception of critical thinking concerns the characterisation not simply of

a set of cognitive skills or criteria of reasoning assessment, but more importantly of a certain sort of person. To recognise this is to recognise the depth of the concept of critical thinking, and the importance of character, values and other moral dimensions of the concept. The first one is “the ability to assess reasons properly which is referred to as the reason assessment components” (p. 23). “The second one is the critical attitude or critical spirit” (p. 23) component of critical thinking. “It is the willingness, desire, and disposition to base one's actions and beliefs on reasons; that is to do reason assessment and be guided by the results of such assessment” (p. 23). Siegel asserts that “both components are essential to the proper conceptualisation of critical thinking, possession of which is essential for the achievement of critical thinking by a person” (1988, p.23). Some authors believe that these differences could partly be attributed to different terms used to offer an unequivocal definition of the concept of critical thinking. For example, Atkinson (1997) points out that a variety of definitions of critical thinking have been offered and that they differ to some degree. On the contrary, Davidson (1998) argues that if one scrutinizes these definitions, it is easy to notice large areas of overlap. The definitions are, in fact, often simply paraphrases of the same idea. They simply link critical thinking to rational judgment. Siegel (1988) calls critical thinking the educational cognate of rationality (p. 32). Alternatively, Lipman (1991) defines it as health uncertainty, whereas Norris and Ennis (1989) call it “reasonable and reflective thinking that is focused upon deciding what to believe and do” (p. 3). Taking a similar path, Halpern (2003) defines critical thinking as “the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome; thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal oriented” (p.6). Similarly, Bensley (1998) defines it as “reflective thinking involving the evaluation of evidence relevant to a claim so that a sound conclusion can be drawn from the evidence” (p. 5).

Diestler (2001) believes critical thinking is the use of specific criteria to evaluate reasoning and make decisions. In a similar vein, Levy (1997) defines critical thinking as an active and systematic cognitive strategy to examine, evaluate, understand events, solve problems, and make decisions on the basis of sound reasoning and valid evidence. Paul (1985) also defines critical thinking as learning how to ask and answer questions of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Along the same line of inquiry, Brookfield (1987) believes that critical thinking encompasses two interconnected processes, namely, identifying and challenging assumptions, and imagining and exploring others. Pithers and Soden (2000) agree that critical thinking involves a number of abilities such as identifying a problem and the assumptions on which it is based, focusing the problem, analysing, understanding and making use of inferences, inductive and deductive logic, and judging the validity and reliability of assumptions and sources of data. Critical thinking can also be described as the scientific method applied by ordinary people to the ordinary world (Schafersman, 1991). This is true since critical thinking is aligned with the well-known method of scientific investigation: a question is posed and a hypothesis formulated, germane data are sought and gathered, the hypothesis is further tested on the basis of the data, and conclusions are made at the end of the process. All the skills of scientific investigation map onto critical thinking abilities. So, critical thinking is scientific thinking. Although all the above-mentioned definitions differ in scope and emphasis, they all place a premium on both the process and the outcome of learning. UNAM students and lecturers teaching Rukwangali language education modules do not practice CR in both their teaching and learning. If they do is minimal. This is seen in the assignments that the lecturers set and how the students answer the questions. If the questions do not trigger students to think critically then the students will not have time to think critically

but rather remember chunks of information. The ultimate objective for teaching critical thinking is to help students make correct judgments based on the careful weighing of available evidence. However, critical thinking is a very intricate endeavour. Buskist and Irons (2008) mention that such an enterprise requires students to learn several subtasks which include, among others: a. Developing a skeptical approach to problem solving and decision making; b. Breaking down problems into their simplest outcomes; c. Searching for evidence that both supports and refutes a given conclusion; d. Maintaining a vigilant attitude toward their personal bias, assumptions, and values that may interfere with making an objective decision. Still some other researchers (Atkinson, 1998; Benesch, 1993) emphasise the social and democratic aspects of critical thinking. They believe that social practice is one of the indispensable components of critical thinking. Atkinson (1998) strongly explicates that critical thinking is cultural thinking. However, he is dubious as to whether it can be taken for granted, and he further mentions that language educators should embark upon its adoption judiciously and cautiously. He states four reasons for this speculation: (a) Critical thinking may be more on the order of a non-overt social practice than a well-defined and teachable pedagogical set of behaviours; (b) critical thinking can be and has been criticised for its exclusive and reductive character; (c) teaching thinking to non-native speakers may be fraught with cultural problems; and, (d) once having been taught, thinking skills do not appear to transfer effectively beyond their narrow contexts of instruction. Similarly, Fox expresses concerns as to the cultural load of the concept of critical thinking: This thing we call ‘critical thinking’ or ‘analysis’ has strong cultural components. It is more than just a set of writing and thinking techniques it is a voice, a stance, a relationship with texts and family members, friends, teachers, the media, even the history of one’s country. This is why

“critical analysis” is so hard for faculty members to talk about; because it is learned intuitively it is easy to recognise, like a face or a personality, but it is not so easily defined and is not at all simple to explain to someone who has been brought up differently (Fox, 1994). Benesch (1993) emphasises that critical thinking is not simply higher order thinking; instead, it is a quest for the social, historical, and political roots of conventional knowledge and an orientation to transform learning and society (Brookfield, 1987; Shor & Freire, 1987). Conversely, Davidson (1998) casts doubt on the social dimension of critical thinking. He criticises Atkinson (1998) arguing that critical thinking appears to be something more universally relevant than just a social practice. If some cultures vary in their present ability to appropriate the tools of critical thinking, it is probably only a difference in the degree to which critical thinking is endured in certain parts of life. In any case, part of the task of the English Second Language /English First Language teacher is to prepare students for the world outside their societies. In Rukwangali as a first language with its culture, students grow up knowing and believing that you do not question parents when they talk, even if a question is posed the student should be quiet. This is the opposite with European cultures because their students come from homes where question a parent is not termed disrespect but they embrace inquisitiveness as a right path to mastering critical thinking. Until the belief in the Rukwangali language of associating inquisitiveness to disrespect is ironed out it will be difficult to push towards the direction of critical thinking amongst the Rukwangali language education students. There is even evidence that many students are ready for and in need of critical thinking abilities. Viewing critical thinking as an inherently social and cultural concept, Oster (1989) concedes that social and cultural illuminations necessary to fully grasp its features. He admires the Western education system for its being open to a plurality of views, and

encouraging originality and analysis, rather than memorisation and quotation. He stipulates that if students are to enter an American or European university, they must be taught to think like the members of the target community, not to presume things to be universal when they are culture-sensitive, to feel free to express their thoughts and experiences and to find value in so doing. To these ends, he offers the study of the target language literature and its analysis as a safe and promising ground for developing critical thinking skills in foreign or second language learners. The researcher can conclude that students doing Rukwangali language education modules are not well prepared by their lecturers to use CR in their academic writing because they do not favour questions that require them to think and in most cases they perform poorly. The students are not well prepared by their lecturers to use CR in their academic writing because lecturers spend most of their times lecturing to students and giving them notes and give them a scope on where the test or examination will be based. Lecturers tend to recycle test, assignment and examination question which makes it easier for them to get hold of the past questions and memorise the answers beforehand. It is advisable for lecturers to be innovative by always coming up with new styles of asking questions that may trigger students' critical thinking skills.

2.5 Bloom's Taxonomy in Academic Writing

It is imperative to interweave critical thinking and academic writing to achieve the required levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. This is because, Bloom's Higher Order Thinking Levels (HOT) advocates for assessors to ask assessment questions that activate students' higher order thinking skills. This can be the level of creating, analysing and evaluating stances. Bloom and his colleagues developed their ideas in the context of an educational system which was dominated by rewarding recall. Following extensive observation and discussion with young learners, they postulated

their six levels of 'cognitive processes' (Khan, 2017). This is shown in Figure 2 below. Their goal was to challenge those who set examination papers to classify questions into one of their six levels. This allowed examiners to reduce the emphasis on recall (what Bloom referred to as 'knowledge' and Krathwohl called 'remember') and to aim to generate more questions that tested the cognitive processes like understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (RUAAEC), see Figure 2 below. In this, they appear to have had considerable success. Narrowing it down to this research, the Rukwangali language education lecturers may use the higher-order thinking levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to enhance their Rukwangali language education students' critical thinking by asking questions in tests and assignments that enable them to think, rather than merely remember facts. The researcher has observed that Rukwangali language education lecturers have not prepared or exposed their students to the high-order thinking questions. This is evident in the type of questions they give to their students in forms of tests and assignments. Their concern is to give questions that will give them little time to mark rather than give high- order thinking questions which will require them to spend more time to read before the student is assessed.

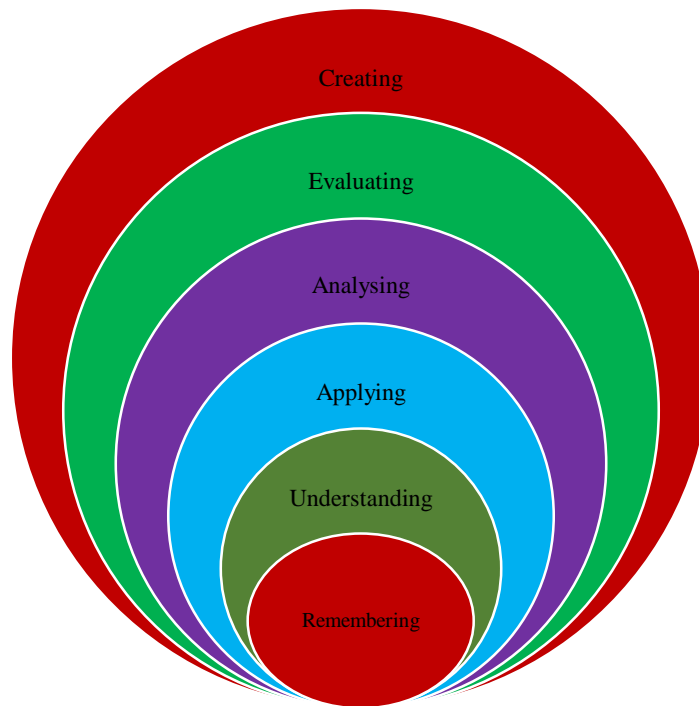


Figure 2: Adopted from:

<http://www.kurwongbss.qld.edu.au/thinking/Bloom/blooms.htm>

2.6 An ideal Critical Thinker in Academic Writing

Critical thinking is a cognitive skill that requires a framework to be mastered and monitored from time to time (Bhavana, 2015). Moreover, just as any other skills, critical thinking may be possessed by an individual to a higher or lower degree. Huge responsibility is placed on the learner to master critical thinking (Nosich, 2012). Hammer and Green (2011) noted that the disposition of the student/thinker is as important as that of the teacher in developing attention to critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking is the ability to engage meaningfully in an activity, process or procedure. Moreover, critical thinking is considered to be a transferable skill across the curriculum and real life contexts (Tertiary Education Commission, 2015). It is imperative for the learner to have a predisposition for these skills (Vardi, 2015). Halpern (1998) as cited in Bhavana (2015) adds the idea that student dispositions can influence how they use critical thinking skills. She surmises that it is not enough to

teach skills, or for students to develop abilities, if they are simply not motivated to use them. This is to say that after students have been trained in how to be critical thinkers in academic writing they are then left alone to articulate the skills gained with practical help. To enhance these newly acquired skills, Rukwangali language education lecturers should set tests and assignment questions that allow students to implement their critical thinking skills to answer a question that require higher order thinking abilities. For example, a lecturer may ask the following question; ‘Why is it important to teach listening skills in senior primary language classrooms?’ This type of question requires the student to think critically about the structure of the response before they answer the question. Furthermore, *Bowell and Kemp (2015)* postulate that a successful critical thinker is one who can act and believe in accordance with good reasons, and who can articulate and make those reasons explicit.

Facione (2011) asserts that critical thinking skills are developed alongside one’s critical thinking spirit, or character. Being skilled at critical thinking involves knowing, perhaps implicitly or without the ability to articulate this knowledge, both a set of procedures and when to apply those procedures (*Vardi, 2015*). Linking this idea to this study, Rukwangali language education students should respond critically to their academic writing by understanding what the assessment question in tests or assignments want them to do and respond accordingly. Failure to understanding the key word in each question will result into poor/ wrong response.

Hamby (2015) considers personal ‘motivation’ as the chief facilitator for critical thinking, whereas *Nosich (2012)* asserts that ‘enjoyment’ in thinking critically is the chief factor that drives an individual to critical thinking. Sometimes the need to solve a complex problem or to make a crucial judgment in life or a ‘dilemma’ (*Mezirow, 2012*) leads to critical thinking.

Critical thinking involves deep knowing of self, and a strong critical thinker is able to consider the holistic picture instead of merely criticising a particular argument (Mason, 2008).

Correspondingly, Karakoç (2016) notes that critical thinking individuals are people who research, question, refuse the information's as it is, active, think analytically and synthesis, evaluate the information and explain with true basis, treat open-minded and aware of thinking processes. . If you develop the ability to analyse people's attempts to persuade so that you can accurately interpret what they are saying or writing and evaluate whether or not they are giving a good argument then you can begin to liberate yourself from accepting what others try to persuade you off without knowing whether you actually have a good reason to be persuaded.

Another prolific writer about critical thinking is Paul, a leader in the philosophical group of critical thinking theorists, who is associated with the Centre for Critical Thinking in California. Elder and Paul (2008) assert that to think critically, individuals must utilise seven intellectual standards. These standards included: Clarity, determining whether a statement is clear; Accuracy, determining whether the statement was accurate or relevant; Precision, determining the specificity of the statement; Relevance, determining connection to the problem or issue; Depth, determining the complexities of the situation; Breadth, considering multiple points of view; and Logic, determining if a statement makes sense.

Paul, Elder and Bartell (1997) as cited in Purvis (2009) identified interrelated and interdependent components of critical thinking. These components include the ability to engage in a reasoned discourse that operates in the context of intellectual standards, involve analytic inferential skills, and a commitment to a fundamental value orientation that includes certain traits and dispositions. Their concept of critical

thinking is multi-dimensional, including intellectual, psychological, sociological, ethical, and philosophical realms.

Purvis (2009) further espouses that individuals who can think critically in the strong sense have overcome ego-centric and socio-centric reasoning to demonstrate: skilled thinking which meets epistemological demands regardless of the vested interests or ideological commitments of the thinker, skilled thinking characterized by empathy into diverse and opposing points of view, skilled thinking that is consistent in the application of intellectual standards, holding one's self to the same rigorous standards of evidence and proof to which one holds one's antagonist, and skilled thinking that demonstrates the commitment to entertain all viewpoints sympathetically and to assess them with the same intellectual standards, without reference to one's feelings or vested interests of one's friends, community or nation. When one reaches the peak of critical thinking they tend to be subjective. That is to say they do not let their feelings or perception overlook things. They are always open for advice and they are eager to be corrected and learn. They involve in a lot of debates to sharpen their thinking more.

2.7 Scope of Critical Thinking

Higher education aims to prepare graduates with critical thinking skills to deal with unseen complex realities. Gardner (2009) asserts that education must elevate human understanding about who we are and what we can do. This is identical to Barnett's (1997) theory of 'critical being' and 'critical doing'. Explaining it in depth, he says the essence of understanding is that it is performative. Critical thinking is an inherent part of education (Leicester, 2009). Barnett (2015) describes critical thinking as fundamentally collaborative in character, and rooted in interventions in the world of action, when understood as a practice. When students in academia learn to look through things (Nosich, 2012) through their critical thinking skill, they develop a

critical stance (Barnett, 1997), a critical capacity oriented to the world of knowledge. Critical knowledge always aspires not only to be critical, but to be reflective and self-reflective (Klikauer, 2015).

The literature highlights the immense scope of critical thinking, spanning every field. It is also evident that critical thinking of any kind is never universal in any individual; everyone is subject to episodes of undisciplined or irrational thought (Paul & Elder, 2010). Critical thinking is therefore typically a matter of degree and dependent on, among other things, the quality and depth of experience in a given domain of thinking or with respect to a particular class of questions. No one is a critical thinker through-and-through, but only to a certain degree, with particular insights (Paul, 1993).

Critical thinking is also enhanced when students are helped up to the time when they are seen to be fit to work on their own. Critical thinking is socially situated; it is a social learning process (Brookfield, 2012). The emergent nature of collective group cognition in sense making offers a potential new direction for research into critical thinking (Stanton, Wong, Gore, Sevdalis & Strub, 2011). Brookfield (2012) affirms that small group participation offers the most engaging moments in learning to think critically for students. The diversity of responses and lively exchange of ideas among peers in small groups benefits the students. Group work, working with peers or working in pairs fosters critical thinking in students. This links with Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD. This is to say that, when Rukwangali language education students are involved in small group discussions in lecture rooms it gives them time to talk to each other and agree on one answer while in the process their critical thinking is triggered. A good example can be introducing a new topic by using gallery work. Students are grouped in reasonable groups and they answer questions in their groups while being timed.

2.8 Critical Thinking in Rukwangali Academic Writing

Brookfield (1997, p. 18) claims that “critical thinking is “irrevocably context bound and learning to think critically is an irreducibly social process”. This statement supports what was mentioned in the earlier section regarding how the concept of critical thinking is shaped by the context to which it is applied such as writing in academic contexts. Critical thinking involves thinking critically about something and that something has a direct influence on how much thinking is needed before any decision is made. Critical thinking can be further promoted when there is some interaction taking place as feedback gained about the choice made provides some indication of the quality of the thinking. The object for thinking and its function for communication contribute to the relevance of teaching critical thinking in academic writing lessons. Academic writing provides a context for developing critical thinking skills especially as it involves the expression of certain ideas to be shared with a particular audience. Communication between the writer and the reader via the text is indeed a social act. The writer shares ideas and views with an audience and the feedback obtained from the audience benefits the writer’s development of critical thinking.

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Bean (2001) asserts that writing "requires analytical or argumentative thinking and is characterised by a controlling thesis or statement and a logical, hierarchical structure" (p. 17). Similarly, Schafersman (1991) explains that "writing forces students to organise their thoughts, contemplate their topic, evaluate their data in a logical fashion, and present their conclusions in a persuasive manner" (p. 7). Good writing is therefore a reflection of good critical thinking. When Rukwangali language education lecturers were interviewed most of them responded to a question of how will one know that a certain student have reached a peak of critical thinking by saying that you look at how they student have structured their write up. If there is no logic and the question was wrongly or inadequately responded to then that particular student do not qualify to be a good critical thinker in academic writing. The sources of ideas can be from across a variety of texts and those based on observation, experience and reflection (Vardi, 1999). Hence, critical thinking in Rukwangali academic writing is a manifestation of an author's ability to understand and analyse the ideas, evaluate and synthesise the arguments in a variety of sources before making any conclusions, and then presenting them clearly to an audience. It entails the ability to: understand key concepts and ideas; distinguish the main ideas and arguments from the subordinate ones; judge their relevance and provide reasons; judge the credibility of sources of information; and be able to paraphrase them and later draw conclusions based on all the justifications made. Engaging oneself in all these tasks exercises thinking and heightens it. Olson (1992)

argues that thinking can be refined through pre-writing, writing, revising and editing activities. In the pre- writing phase one have to figure out what they want to write about. A working thesis is generated at this stage. For an essay, you might generate a working thesis or a main idea that you would want to explore, and then start collecting information and ideas that relate to that idea. At the stage of drafting the concentration is put on getting the ideas on paper, organising the information logically, and developing the topic with enough detail for the audience and purpose. The revising stage allows the writer to re-look at their writing. You may need to change the order of your information, expand certain sections, or cut details in others. Most writers find it helpful to have someone else read their written work and thesis statement. While revising focuses mainly on making your content clear for your readers, editing focuses on making your documents meet the conventions of stands written English. During the editing stage, ensure that grammar, sentence structure, word choice, punctuation; capitalisation, spelling, citation and document format is free from mistakes. This means, as a writer is engaged in the writing process, the writer is using his/her judgments to evaluate his/her own text and make any necessary changes to express his/her ideas clearly and confidently to readers. Thus, engaging students in critical thinking during academic writing classes is very important but it can only be achieved if the writing assignments foster such work (Reynolds & Moskovitz, 2008). In Rukwangali classes students write narrative, factual and argumentative essays and in all the types they supposed to follow the academic writing process of pre writing, drafting, revising and editing but it does not happen due to the number of students in the class that does not allow more time for lecturers to look at each and every student's draft and give positive guidance. What happen is that students are given assignments and only bring it for assessment. The writing process is always omitted.

2.9 Academic Writing Strategies for Developing Critical Thinking in the Rukwangali Language Modules

Although there are numerous strategies to develop critical thinking in academic writing, here strategies such as writing (writing is seen to be relevant because students involve in writing and writing triggers students to think critically on what they are writing), assessment, explicit instruction/infusion approach, teacher questioning, assessment rubrics/scoring rubrics and peer evaluation will be discussed, because of their relevance to writing.

The role of a teacher as a listener supplements the role of a ‘facilitator’ in class who supports alternative views, and challenges the views through open-ended questions for constructive discourse (Murriss, 2014). Interactive feedback from teacher aids in the thinking capacity of students. A study by Wass, Harland and Mercer (2011) suggests that conversation with lecturers and peers scaffolds students’ understanding for critical thinking in Rukwangali. Another study focusing on teacher-student interaction by Grantham, Robinson and Chapman (2015) conclude that teachers’ approachability and frequent interaction with students help to elevate the confidence and academic skills of students. Motivation and self-esteem are fundamental for student teaching (David & Brown, 2012) and are important parameters for a better performance. DeVriese (2008) claims teachers can create the foundation for justice, equality and empowerment through their pedagogy of inquiry.

Role modelling by the teacher encourages critical thinking (Brookfield, 2012). Students learn better when teachers explain their actions to students (Nosich, 2012; Brookfield, 2012) as it gives the students the confidence that they are in hands of a ‘trusted guide’ (Brookfield, 2012). Clarity of purpose by the teacher serves as favourable ground for facilitating critical thinking in students (Lovatt, 2014) as

students start to follow the thinking patterns of their educators. Narrowing it down to this study, critical thinking is very important for students in their academic writing, thus explaining to students what the questions requires them to do is very important rather than telling the students to read the questions and answer then grade the students afterwards. During classroom observations lecturers did not take time to explain what the questions required the students to do but encouraged them to read the questions prior to answering them.

Critical thinking is a questioning process (Nosich, 2012; Brookfield, 2012). Deckert and Wood (2013) explain that using Socratic questioning in class helps to draw information on any topic from the students through arguments and class discussions. Asking questions is a way to discern that students are thinking critically in that subject area (Chan, 2013). It is imperative for the teachers to know that critical thinking does not always end with a right answer but at times it ends up in a series of open questions that may puzzle the student (Nosich, 2012). This idea goes hand-in-hand with the current study as the researcher was trying to discover what perspectives lecturers have towards the use of critical thinking by their students and how critical thinking can be enhanced amongst the students when they undertake Rukwangali academic writing.

Brookfield (2012) proposes a 'critical conversation protocol' in which students bring in a situation they are struggling with and discuss it in class, peers share their opinion, what they think the student should do in the scenario, and everyone learns from that process. He also advises lecturers to use a 'scenario analysis' to build up critical thinking in students. In this strategy, students have to discuss a choice made by a particular character in a fictional vignette and provide alternative suggestions checking the assumptions the character holds.

Critical thinking is a social learning process (Brookfield, 2012). Active learning takes place in a class environment of enquiry (Nosich, 2012; Rowan, Kommor, Herd, Salmon & Benson, 2015) that engulfs students into negotiation, reflection, gathering information, communication and decision making. The same opinion is reflected in Barnett's (1997) belief that the interchange of ideas among peers facilitates critical thinking. There is great interplay of reasoning and thought in cooperative learning. In fact, cooperative learning leads to deeper learning and increased critical thinking (Millis, 2010). Students become receptive to multiple perspectives as open mindedness and freedom of thought are interlinked (Murriss, 2014). Davis (1993) agrees that students learn best when they engage actively in the learning process.

Interdisciplinary studies motivate a critical thinking environment, where students from different disciplines come together to solve a problem (Rowan et al., 2015). Interdisciplinary studies mirror the interrelationship across a variety of fields, and encourage the students to think about multiple perspectives. Problem-based learning and experiential learning equally foster critical thinking, as Kolb (1984) defines learning as a "process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of concrete experience" (p. 38). This study researched on perspectives of Rukwangali lecturers towards students' inability of critical thinking in academic writing. Thus when students are given a fair chance to solve problems that arise in what they write helps them think about the subject matter before they write. Provided that the lecturers have taught their students what to do when a question or how question is met.

Some writing tasks encourage critical thinking such as open-ended assignment questions and essays (Cottrell, 2005; Nosich, 2012; Paul & Elder, 2010; Brookfield, 2012; Whitehead, 2006). Cottrell (2005) mentions the involvement of motor memory in writing that makes it a good tool for teaching critical thinking, whereas Nosich

(2012) includes the SEE-I model in writing to make it effective. The SEE-I model stands for statement, elaboration, exemplification and illustration. He indicates that the main goal of critical thinking is always to keep the whole in mind as you are working through the parts. This refers back to essay writing and utilising questions that adhere to Bloom's Taxonomy of higher order thinking skills fosters critical thinking in students (Smith & Szymanski, 2013).

Lectures are effective for teaching and synthesising information, especially when information is complex, large classes make lecturing economical, and lecturing conforms to the way universities are currently configured relative to space and time (Lumpkin, Achen & Dodd, 2015). Literature reveals that long lectures do not keep minds engaged as many students mentally check out after only a few minutes (Lumpkin et al., 2015), therefore a break of 10-15 minutes within lectures (Brookfield, 2012) by a diversity of learning activities keeps students focused and engaged, fostering their learning.

It is difficult to explain the learning that takes place when an individual deals with a new situation or learns material that is totally new to them (Shuell, 1986). Brookfield (2012) illustrates that students are compelled to think in different ways about an unnerving dilemma, or a 'disorienting dilemma' (Mezirow, 2012). Brookfield (2012) describes how people think and change drastically after 'reappraisal of our meaning schemes and meaning perspectives' (p. 71). Mezirow (2012) states, "questions raised regarding one's values are apt to be viewed as a personal attack" (p. 84). For example, culture, customs, religious beliefs, social norms, learning styles, and self-concepts guide our life unless we face a critical reflection (Mezirow, 2012; Ennis, 2008).

Murris (2014) says that for some students, university is the first time that they have to genuinely mix and explore ideas with other races, religions and cultures, which may

lead to personal disturbance. Questioning for reasons, seeking alternatives, being open-minded are considered derogatory in certain cultures (Bali, 2015; Grosser & Lombard, 2008).

Cultural diversity may work as a barrier for students in the development of critical thinking when students enter tertiary education. Norris (1998) refers to the case of the Inuit in Northern Canada, who find it offensive when asked to reason or reveal their mental status. So too the difference in the education systems of the Amish of North America (as cited in Ennis, 1998) acts as a barrier to the development of critical thinking. In this facet of global education, tertiary teachers should be mindful of the cultural traits of students while teaching critical thinking (Bali, 2015; Brookfield, 2008).

A model of teaching critical thinking in higher education may benefit student learning (Nosich, 2012; Smith, 2011; Ellerton, 2015). Critical thinking is a practice (Nosich 2012; Brookfield, 2012) and students should be given tools of thinking to process information (Nosich, 2012). Whether lecturers at UNAM's Rundu campus have used strategies to enhance students' critical thinking in their writing needed to be established. Whitehead (2004) clarifies this need further by exemplifying, "just as a carpenter needs tools, the thinking tools allow one to construct knowledge that is more significant" (p. 2). Barnett (1997) asserts the use of a framework in higher education on which critical teaching can be mounted. He states, irrespective of whether it is internal or external to an object, a framework will enable students to view their education in a genuinely critical way. Murriss (2014) believes in the essence of pedagogical opportunities to cultivate critical thinking in students.

Teaching and learning critical thinking is not an easy task (Sahamid, 2016). To enable students to think critically, teachers must be critical thinkers themselves (Sulaiman,

2012). Preparing a positive classroom climate that includes inquiry and problem solving processes, students may be motivated to maximise their learning and experience to enhance their critical and reflective abilities (Sulaiman, 2012). Correspondingly, critical thinking should be practiced daily, for instance, in reading and writing. A lot of questions are needed to explore the meaning and value of learning that is suitable to an individual's culture, values, and beliefs. Perhaps, if one wants to integrate new information with existing knowledge, one might ignore, consider, question, criticise, defend, challenge, or use humour to better understand the issue.

Various teaching strategies can help promote critical thinking. Appropriate strategies to enhance critical thinking may be to relate school subjects and topics to practical situations the students deal with on a daily basis so that they can associate what they learn with what they experience (Ten Dam & Volman, 2004) as cited in (Sulaiman, 2012). Moreover, Sulaiman (2012) alludes that through teaching strategies, students should be encouraged to understand, discover, analyse, and synthesize issues or challenges. Alternative teaching strategies to increase students 'critical thinking in academic writing may be peer evaluation were students evaluate their peers work and see if they have answered the questions correctly, metacognitive self-regulation were students' preparation involves goal setting and task analysis to identify relevant prior knowledge that is applicable to a current task. Monitoring involves tracking or focusing attention as a student reads, self-testing, and questioning. Regulating activities are those adjustments the student makes to check and improve performance as a task unfolds, organisation were students chose appropriate and relevant information, then identify meaningful connections between multiple pieces of information. Clustering, outlining, and identifying main ideas in passages and elaboration were students implant information into long-term memory by constructing

internal connections between multiple pieces of information. Elaboration strategies include paraphrasing, summarising, creating analogies, and note taking which assist the student to synthesise and integrate new information with prior knowledge (Nold, 2017).

2.9.1 Writing

Strong critical thinking and writing skills are a good combination to enhance students' ability to think critically (Green & Klug, 1990). Students who are critically literate and simultaneously able to express their thoughts in writing have the advantage of improving their reasoning skills (Hillocks, 2010). Through writing, critical thinking is expected to evolve empirical arguments and logical reasoning. Lecturers did not provide adequate writing activities that enhance students' critical thinking. The writing activities which were given to students only allow them to memorise or remember chunks of information. An understanding of the components of critical thinking is important for a demonstration of critical thinking through Rukwangali writing. Teachers should give proper ground rules and a rubric that guides critical thinking in writing (Green & Klug, 1990). Writing is a suitable medium for use across disciplines plus students' self-regulation and self-efficacy will also improve through writing (Hammann, 2005). Consequently, writing enhances learning by incorporating writing to learn (WTL) such as journal entries and reading responses, formal assignments (Gunnink & Bernhardt, 2002), persuasive writing (Hillocks, 2010), essay exams, and reports (Hammann, 2005). There is the drawback that teachers may be concerned with the effort and time needed to assess critical thinking among a large number of student papers (Green & Klug, 1990). Students, too, may be resistant to the use of writing skills if they do not believe that writing is important to understanding concepts (Hammann, 2005). Teachers must actively update the topics of the writing

assignments to correspond with changes in career fields. Furthermore, teachers play a role in supporting students' learning through writing by providing specific instructions, rubrics, questions, and explanations (Hillocks, 2010). Green and Klug (1990) suggest that students could collaborate on writing in small groups where they share ideas and suggestions and review their peers' work. Practically, lecturers at UNAM Rundu campus allowed students to collaborate and write assignments, present and micro-teach in small groups. Lecturers at UNAM Rundu campus allow students to collaborate and write assignments, present and micro-teach in small groups. This is evident because students do assignments in groups and submit one assignment for assessment. They still do micro-teaching in groups. This mostly happen when the students are a lot and micro-teaching individually will take up more time for other activities in the class.

2.9.2 Assessment

One of the aims of this study was to explore the strategies that could be used to enhance students' academic writing at UNAM Rundu campus. Assessment is central to the integrity and accountability of a university (Ferns & Zegwaard, 2014). Assessments should reflect how well the student has understood a particular concept and how the student can analyse and implicate the concept in different situations (Cotter & Tally, 2009). It is crucial for the student to understand the cause and effect of the concepts rather than just applying concepts to situations without comprehending them. A study conducted by Lee (2012) made a significant suggestion for the assessment of students' thinking abilities by presenting an open-ended and exploratory approach rather than a directive approach to scrutinise and comprehend student's developing thinking competence.

The purpose of assessment is to improve student's ability to think, Saxton, Belanger and Becker (2012) list three criteria that may be recognized as best practice in critical thinking assessment: First, the target of critical thinking assessment should be the thought process, focusing on the rational evaluation and explanation in the student's answer. Secondly, critical thinking assessment should invoke topics that are not directly instructed in the classroom. Thirdly, assessment of critical thinking should measure cognitive skills and critical thinking dispositions in the writing. Literature suggests the use of rubrics in assessment, to draw students' attention to the centrality of the skills and dispositions (Saxton et al., 2012; Lee, 2012).

For a holistic evaluation of students' critical thinking skills, Bhavana (2015) suggests taking into consideration the dual scope of assessment. McPhun (2013) advises that integrated assessments should be used to prepare learners for the realities they may face in their future careers. Hurley and Hurley (2013) encourage problem-based assignments to highlight students' intellectual growth and critical thinking, whereas Saxton et al. (2012) suggest performance based online assessment using the Critical Thinking Analytic Rubric (CTAR) to assess critical thinking. Ibrahim Holi Ali (2012) suggests collaboration between core subject teachers and language teachers to promote and develop critical thinking as this will facilitate assessing critical thinking skills. However, Ibrahim Holi Ali (2012) cautions about the endurance of the critical thinking skills in an individual; even if generic skills are proven to be effectively developed, the applicability of these skills outside the educational context is still in question.

2.9.3 Explicit Instruction/ Infusion Approach

This approach calls for the direct approach of CT principles. The explicit instructions have the goal of advancing CT competence through explaining to students the skills and dispositions required in mastering CT. Researchers have argued that learning how

to think critically is an automatic by-product of studying certain subjects (Zhao, Pandia & Singh, 2016).

Van Gelder (2005) as cited in Zhao, Pandia and Singh (2016) suggests that CT be practiced deliberately and taught explicitly as an indispensable part of the curriculum. Since critical thinking is crucial to students in their Rukwangali academic writing, students should be taught explicitly how to be critical thinkers as they write. Incorporating critical thinking in academic writing leads to sound logic and objectivity. The research concurs with Van Gelder (2005) with the inclusion of CT in the curriculum of the University of Namibia to ensure consistency in all modules taught across courses offered at the institution so that it becomes part and parcel of each student's learning which will lead to an improved pass rate. Additional support for explicit instruction comes from a recent study by Bensley and Spero (2014), which reveals that in a regular course instruction, direct teaching of specific CT skills (e.g., argument analysis and critical reading skills) significantly improved college students CT performance and metacognition. Students ought to be taught CT skills such as analysing arguments in tasks and tests or examinations as it puts them in a better position to think critically about the questions posed analyse their arguments and use the academic writing features to put their responses in writing. Hence writing is a process. Teaching CT overtly and explicitly is particularly necessary to students from a non-western cultural background as they are often lack experience and practice in CT (Egege & Kutieleh, 2004) as cited in Zhao, Pandian & Singh (2016). Explicit instruction is not only about teachers' comprehension of how CT relates to language learning, but also has the capability of explaining, modelling and infusing the concept of CT into their lesson designs and classroom activities. In order for the lectures to ensure that CT is being promoted in students' academic writing they should ensure

that the lecture objectives and the activities that are given in the classroom correlate and advocate critical thinking. Rukwangali education lecturers should be careful as they use this important strategy. While setting assessment task they should make sure that there is a systematic vary in which they structure their task to incorporate higher level questions so that their students can get used to thinking critically as they involve themselves in academic writing. Student are flexible people, they answer according to the level of the questions posed assuming they were taught about/ explained to explicitly what instructional verbs questions require them to do.

2.9.4 Teacher Questioning

Questioning is an important way to stimulate students to think critically. If a teacher is aiming at developing his/her students' level of critical thinking skills, they should refrain from lower lever questions. This is because lower level question call for recognition of factual information previously presented, whereas higher level questions call for the manipulation of previously learned information to create a response, these questions go beyond memory and factual information and require students' effort to infer analyses and evaluate. Lecturers of Rukwangali language education do not always set higher-order thinking questions for their students but rather have a lot of questions requiring their students to recognise factual information previously learnt. It is on rare cases when you get to see lecturers asking questions that go beyond memory. This is a problem and it needs to be addressed. The level of student thinking is generally related to the level of questions that the teacher poses, therefore if teachers systematically raise the level of their questions, students tend to raise the level of their responses correspondingly (Orlich, Harder, Callalan, Trevisian, Brown & Millet, 2013). Lecturers should be careful when they use this strategy, when setting an assessment task they should make sure that there is a systematic variation in which

they structure their task to incorporate higher level questions so that their students can get used to thinking critically as they involve themselves in academic writing. Student are flexible, they answer according to the level of the questions posed assuming they were taught about/explained to explicitly what instructional questions require them to do.

2.9.5 Assessment Rubrics/Scoring Rubrics

The scoring rubrics support the process approach to writing by outlining the criteria or expectations for a particular piece of work. When the criteria are made available as measures against which assessment is made learning becomes more focused and self-directed. The scoring guide or rubric which defines the assessment criteria improves the reliability and validity of marking, contributes to a more explicit and transparent assessment, and most importantly, actively engages students with the criteria. (Elander, Kalterine, Norton, Robison and Reddy (2006) as cited in Nor Shidrah (2012). In fact, the rubric is capable of quantifying students' performance objectively and students can see the specific learning areas that need improvement and mastery (Anthur & Mctighe, 2000, and Groeber, 2007, as cited in Nor Shidrah, 2012). When using the assessment rubric, the lecturer is able to comment on where the student went wrong and which part need improvement rather than just guessing marks for students and comment with a 'very good' or 'you could improve'. This type of comments do not fully provide the students with concrete feedback on what to do but give them a lot of questions as what one could improve or why is a very good. Lattuca (2005) as cited in Nor Shidrah (2012) further explains that a rubric allows the lecturer to "break a complex performance into discrete components that can be individually assessed against a standard '(p. 40). The established criteria and defined standards helps to direct students to excel as the use of a rubric is to give students feedback about their

progress as well as detailed evaluation of their final products. The provision of concrete feedback to students after assessing their written work gives them direction where they are headed to and where they may need assistance. When students are provided with the scoring rubric prior to embarking on written work it makes it easier for them to work closely with the expected criteria, rather than merely writing and seeing the comments after completion. The researcher strongly supports the idea of giving the students the scoring rubric first in order for them to read it comprehensively before they start the writing process.

In Rukwangali academic writing, rubrics help to channel students to focus on critical thinking (Nor Shidrah, 2012). He further argues that for academic writing instruction the learning goal is to help students develop the self-regulation skills needed to successfully manage the intricacies of the writing process. He urges that this can only be achieved by the use of an instructional rubric.

2.9.6 Peer Evaluation Approach

Nor Shidrah (2012) suggests that peer evaluation (also known as a critical friend) encourages active learning among students. Both the writer and the evaluator have roles to play and both are learning through interaction. Anamer (1998) as cited in Nor Shidrah (2012) explains that working with peers provides opportunities for a student to (a) question the present quality of his/her draft (b) seek out elaboration of something that was recently learned, (c) receive constructive correction for misuse of a structural aspect of writing and (d) listen to redirection advice regarding a work in progress without the stigmatism of failure that frequently accompanies such assistance directly from a teacher (p. 268). Students that receive time to do drafts and allow their peers to have a look at their work build strong confidence and learn to think critically about the comments they have received from their peers. If Rukwangali language education

lecturers practice this strategy it will make students become good critical thinkers when they are left alone to write.

2.10 Summary

The conceptual framework for this study was constructed by synthesising social constructivism theory and the critical thinking model to identify potential conceptual links. The organisation of the chapter began with a brief conceptual framework guiding the study. Vygotsky's relevant theories were explored; the concept Critical Thinking and its manifestations were defined and explored as well as Paul-Elder's model and Bloom's taxonomy. Rukwangali language education critical thinking nature of critical thinking, Paul- Elder's model, Bloom's Taxonomy and Rukwangali language education questioning type, an ideal critical thinker, scope of critical thinking, critical thinking in Rukwangali language education and ends with academic writing strategies for developing critical thinking in Rukwangali language modules This chapter illustrated the variety of definitions and strategies for the development of critical thinking in the extant literature. Abundance of literature around development of critical thinking was discussed in detail. As seen in the literature review of this study, the development of critical thinking relies not just on teaching but also on the dispositions and abilities of an individual and how lecturers go about to assist students with this necessary skill. Critical thinking is globally recognised as a key competency graduates need to acquire. In the subsequent chapter the research design and methodology for this research study are explained and presented.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The central aim of this research was to explore the lecturers' perspectives on the inability of students to employ critical thinking in academic writing at the Rundu campus in the Kavango East Region. This qualitative research study employed the constructivism paradigm for the collection of data. This chapter introduces and outlines the methodology used to collect and analyse data in this research. It presents an explanation for why the qualitative research paradigm was considered the best method to extract rich data. It further examines the limitations of the qualitative design. The data gathering methods adopted for this research, namely, semi-structured interviews, observation check lists and document analysis guides are explained and justified. Consideration is given to the ethical aspects in the data gathering process used in this phenomenon.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach using a case study design. De Langen (2009, p. 59) describes the qualitative approach as “a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and situations to give them meaning.” Similarly, Bryman (2012) considers qualitative design to be a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Rahman (2017) notes that qualitative research approach produces the thick (detailed) description of participants' feelings, opinions, and experiences; and interprets the meanings of their actions.

In accordance with the traits listed above, Mohajan (2018) designates qualitative research as a type of social science research that collects and works with non-

numerical data that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help us to understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places. Certain authors consider qualitative research as an effective tool in which research may explore experiences. This includes the ability to explore in detail what is to be evaluated and lower operating costs (Denscombe, 2010) and increase validity when compared to quantitative methods of research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Constructivists refuse to adopt any foundational standards by which truth can be universally known (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), as opposed to quantitative enquiry which relies on numerical data and objectivism. On careful consideration, in order to gain data that is rich and personal (Cohen et al., 2011), a qualitative methodology for this study was suitable to deduce lecturers' perspectives on students' inability to think critically in their academic writing at Rundu campus in the Kavango East Region.

This study sought answers within the socially constructed nature of reality between the researcher and what was studied.

However, qualitative research is often criticised for its imprecise and personal nature of enquiry (Bryman, 2012). According to Bryman (2012), some quantitative researchers argue the methods used to gather and interpret qualitative data lack scientific integrity, lack of statistical correlations in results and rely on the researchers' interpretation of what is significant or insignificant to the study.

These considerations aside, qualitative methods as compared to quantitative methods allow the detailed analysis of change, whereas the latter are only able to measure that the change has occurred over time, but not how (what processes were involved) and why (in terms of circumstances and stakeholders) it has occurred (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) goes on to say that statistical analysis is unlikely to go beyond counts, frequencies, graphs or cross tabulations. The qualitative method is well designed to

explore the multitudes of experiences and differences put forth by people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This further strengthens the choice of qualitative methodology for this study, as this study sets out to review the perceptions of educators.

A number of researchers Cohen et al. (2011) and Bryman (2012) argue that the best qualitative research methods rely on the ‘interplay’ of resources and the personal judgments of those involved; suggesting a multi-method approach is useful when attempting to understand a given phenomenon. In this study, the researcher adopted the conceptual framework by synthesising social constructivism theory and the critical thinking model to identify potential conceptual links. Document analysis guides, semi-structured interviews and observation check lists were used as data collection methods. These are discussed in detail under research instruments in the following paragraphs of this chapter.

3.3 Research Population

De Langen (2009) defines population as “the total number of units from which data can be collected”, such as individuals, artifacts, events or organisations (p. 58). The target population included four (4) Rukwangali lecturers teaching in the faculty of education at UNAM’s Rundu Campus and eight students whose test scripts and assignments were analysed. The researcher observed the Rukwangali language education classes.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures

The sample size of the research consisted of four lecturers of Rukwangali language education modules for second year and third year students. Purposive sampling was employed to select the sample size because purposive sampling is a method that advocates using participants that are already known to have the information that the researcher is looking for. Substantively, purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of

a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

3.5 Research Instruments

In this study three types of research instruments were used: i.e. semi-structured interviews, an observation check list and the document analysis guide. The subsequent paragraphs under research instruments justify/give reasons for these choices.

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

In this study four Rukwangali lecturers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews (see appendix 1) because the main focus of this research topic is concerned with eliciting the Rukwangali lecturers' perspectives on students' inability to encompass critical thinking in academic writing.

Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozovic', and Sinha (2016) point out that a significant advantage of semi-structured interviews is the opportunity for previously unknown information to emerge. Participants can be regarded as experts by experience; therefore when sufficient opportunity to speak freely is provided, new and novel information can emerge. For example in this study, participants were asked questions and through those questions new information emerged which were not part of the interview questions. Henceforth, this tool allows participants and the researcher to engage in a meaningful conversation until the intended information is acquired.

3.5.2 Observation Check List

Non participant observations in this study were used as instruments to observe the four Rukwangali language education lecturers who were purposively selected. Lesson observations were conducted to observe and note how lecturers advocate for critical thinking in their lectures. The observation checklist (see appendix 2) was used to check how the lesson was conducted. The classroom observations focused on: lecture

structure, methods employed in the lecture, lecturer-student interaction as well as the content to derive the required data from these lecturers of why students are unable to use critical thinking in Rukwangali academic writing.

According to Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999), observations help one to identify and guide relationships with informants, to learn how people in the setting interact and how things are organised and prioritised in that setting, to learn what is important to the people in the social setting under study, to become known to participants, and to learn what constitutes appropriate questions, how to ask them, and which questions may best help you to answer the research questions. Collecting data using this instrument allowed the researcher to see and grasp first-hand information on how the lecturers advocated for critical thinking during their Rukwangali lectures.

3.5.3 Document Analysis

The document analysis guide (see appendix 3) in this study included the assignment tasks and tests which were set by lecturers and answered by students. This was meant to analyse how the questions were set and how the students used the skill of critical thinking to answer the questions.

There are many reasons why researchers choose to use document analysis. Firstly, document analysis is an efficient and effective way of gathering data because documents are manageable and practical resources. Documents are commonplace and come in a variety of forms, making documents a very accessible and reliable source of data. Obtaining and analysing documents is often far more cost efficient and time efficient than conducting your own research or experiments (Bowen, 2009). Also, documents are stable, “non-reactive” data sources, meaning that they can be read and reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher’s influence or research process (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). Thus, analysing the assignment and tests was

also important as it informed the researcher on how well critical thinking is being employed in Rukwangali assessment tasks given to students.

3.6 Procedure

Permission to carry out this study was sought from the Campus Assistant Pro-Vice Chancellor (APVC) by writing a formal letter setting out the intentions of the research. Firstly, four (4) Rukwangali lecturers were interviewed using the semi-structured interview guide (see appendix 1). Secondly, The Rukwangali lecturers were further observed during their Rukwangali language education lessons and the observation checklist (see appendix 2) was used. Thirdly, written assignments and test scripts of Rukwangali students were analysed using the document analysis guide (see appendix 3). The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder with the consent of the participants. The recorded data were later transcribed. Written notes were taken during the observations and interviews using the observation guide and the semi structured interview guide.

An observation schedule was set up to guide the observation process. Semi-structured interviews actively involved the respondents in the research process.

3.7 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview transcriptions was carried out to identify any commonalities, differences or/and relationships among the data pertaining to the interview questions (Gibson & Brown, 2009). In order to do this, relevant details were sorted out and collated according to the themes derived from the patterns emerging from the data.

A grounded theory of the document analysis (assignments and tests) was carried out as follows: Firstly, data was presented without interpretation and abstraction. Secondly, the data was then checked using themes (i.e. every analysis criteria formed

a theme of its own). Thirdly, a conclusion in the form of findings would be deduced. Heist (2012) defines grounded theory as a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded substantive theory about a phenomenon.

A qualitative content analysis of the observation checklist was used to find a label that allows the grouping of several elements under one concept, so that one would form a more or less limited number of codes (or categories) rather than a large variety of diverse phenomena (Flick, 2013).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In order to maintain a climate of trust in the practice and outcomes of social research, it is inevitable that systems of ethical assurance were established and needed to be maintained by all those engaged in work of this nature. The trust of the public, professional colleagues, those who commission and fund research and those being studied requires an effective system of ethical review, clear lines of responsibility and a manageable degree of independent overview (Iphofen, 2011). Research ethics refers to taking the sole responsibility for the ethical conduct of the researcher. We can say ethics are researcher's responsibilities. First and foremost responsibility of a researcher is to take care of safety, dignity, rights and well-being of the participants.

Bryman, (2012) has suggested four significant ethical considerations for researchers to avoid; namely, lack of informed consent; harm to participants; invasion of privacy; and deception. This research study has followed the core ethical issues of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and minimising harm to participants.

3.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology employed for this research project, and clarified the methodological processes and position of this study. The choice of

semi-structured interviews, observation checklists and document analysis guide was explained and justified. Finally, the ethical considerations implemented in this research study were explained. Data findings from the document analysis guide, observation checklists and semi-structured interviews are presented and analysed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research method and the process used in the study were described, setting out the decisions made with regard to the design of the research, the reasons for these decisions and how the decisions were carried to fulfilment.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study. Firstly, the researcher reveals the findings regarding the semi-structured interview protocol according to the lecturers' responses. Secondly, the results pertaining to the observation checklist that the researcher used when observing the lecturers and lastly, the document analysis guide results are described based on the students' written tests and assignments. As discussed earlier in Chapter Three, the sample for the qualitative study comprised four lecturers lecturing Rukwangali modules in education. An interview was conducted with each lecturer, followed by a classroom observation and sample tests and assignments were selected and analysed. The students' written tests from each module were selected as well as their test scripts ranging from the highest score to the lowest score in each module lectured by the four Rukwangali lecturers. This was done to measure whether a similarity existed between the responses of the lecturers during their interviews pertaining to the students' inability think critically in academic writing and the way they formulate their tests and assignment questions and the way students respond to them.

4.2 Qualitative data obtained through semi structured interview protocol responses

This section discusses the results that were generated from the qualitative part of this thesis, in which the following specific research questions were explored:

- **RQ1:** What strategies are used by Rukwangali lecturers to enhance critical thinking?
- **RQ2:** What barriers do lecturers encounter as they teach for critical thinking in the Rukwangali language education modules?
- **RQ3:** What hindrances do Rukwangali students encounter in using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing?

4.2.1 Theme 1: The definition of critical thinking

When asked to explain the term critical thinking in relation to academic writing, four out of four lecturers who participated in the study were of the view that critical thinking is the type of thinking that allows a student to think in-depth and show logic as they reason. The following narratives illustrate the different views held by the four lecturers who participated in the study:

Lecturer # 1 the respondent took time to define the term critical thinking. *‘Critical thinking means to think about something in-depth, not how you are seeing it, it’s about how you are thinking. You give views on how you are thinking. The way we see things is not the way things are.’*

Lecturer # 2 *‘In my opinion critical thinking is a skill to be able to think critically. The students need it because whatever they are learning they need to think critical so*

that they don't reproduce or memorise or give the content as it was given to them but they have to apply it in new situations. That is what I consider to be critical thinking.'

Lecturer # 3 *'In my understanding critical thinking is a way of engaging thoughts in a manner that looks at a phenomenon from the different points of view. It is multi-angular kind of. So you are looking at the issue from different points of view. You are thinking critically, i.e. what are the cons and pros, the causes and effects, etc.'*

Lecturer # 4 *'Deep thoughts about something. It's actually looking at something at a deeper level. You can do this by explaining, evaluating and reflecting.'*

The findings of the respondents revealed one group with a similar school of thought. The findings in this camp revealed that critical thinking is a skill which involves individual thinking and not merely memorisation. All respondents have an idea of what critical thinking entails although they could not really define what critical thinking is. Hence, it was difficult for all of them to arrive at a definition of critical thinking. They were all hesitant and they did not have much to offer on what exactly critical thinking entails.

Respondent number 3 defined critical thinking as a way of engaging thoughts in a manner that looks at a phenomenon from a different point of view. 'It is multi-angular kind of. So you are looking at the issue from different points of view.' This is supported by Bhavana (2015) who considers critical thinking to be skilful, responsible thinking that is conducive to good judgment because it is known to be dependent on criteria, it is self-corrective and it is sensitive to context.

Generally this study revealed that respondents had comparable perceptions on the definition of critical thinking. Four out of four lecturers who participated in the study attempted to define critical thinking.

4.2.2 Theme 2: The significance of critical thinking to writing as a skill

Rukwangali language lecturers' perceptions were sought regarding the relevance of critical thinking as a skill in Rukwangali academic writing. Their views were as follows:

Lecturer # 1 *'It enables the students to solve problems given to them. When they are given written work they first think critically before they write'*

Lecturer # 2 *'It is very important especially in our faculty where we are training teachers to be reflective practitioners. Where they have to reflect after teaching each and every lesson they taught. They are expected to reflect on their lessons taught (what went well, what could be improved, how it can be improved). Furthermore they also need this skill to respond to written assignments, tests or examinations. They should not reproduce notes as they were given to them, but they are expected to employ the content in different situations. Hence, in lesson reflection, critical thinking is required. Teachers write a lot, whatever they write critical thinking should prevail.'*

Lecturer # 3 *'They need the skills so that they are able to solve complex issues. Because when they are faced with problems to solve in real life; being a decision they want to make for them to understand something or to take action, they need that so that they are able to take a considered decision which is taken with a thorough understanding of what the cause of the problem is and how best the problem can be*

approached so that in the approach they are taking to solve the problem they are not causing more effect but they have considered which will enable them to solve a problem in a way that is really a solution that is lasting rather than causing more minor problems with it.'

Lecturer # 4 *'They all need this skill so that they are able to use perceptions and evaluate subject matters or questions.'*

It is worth noting that they all agree that critical thinking is of utmost importance to their students and as a result it needs to be embraced and nurtured. They said this expertise is needed by students to enable them to solve the problems presented to them, it helps them to extend their answers beyond reproducing their notes, and they are expected to employ the content in different situations, for lesson reflections, to produce good pieces of writing, to solve complex issues and to evaluate subject matter and/or questions.

Research previously done by Rezaei, Derakhshan and Bagherkazemi (2011) asserts that meaningful education prevents students from being involved in the unreflective learning of information, and equips them with the tools necessary to thoroughly understand the world they live in. Critical thinking is very important, because it results in the ability to draw the 'right conclusions more often' (Zulfiqar, 2016). Dong (2016) underlines the importance of critical thinking as it enables one to evaluate and improve one's own thinking processes and helps you to think open-mindedly in situations that require analytical thinking and assessment. The upshot is that when you come across something you don't know or understand, critical thinking pushes you further to explore the depths of the given information and to test your limits of comprehension.

A study conducted by Murat (2016) revealed that increasing one's capacity to think critically is a significant element in modern education approaches and models. In addition, the skill of thinking critically is now commonly accepted as a dynamic stage in every field of learning. A study carried out in Nigeria about developing critical thinking skills in students agrees with Murat (2016) by underpinning the fact that critical thinking enables one to analyse, evaluate, explain and restructure thinking, thereby reducing the risk of adopting, acting on, or thinking with a false belief. However, even with knowledge of the method of logical inquiry and reasoning, mistakes can happen due to a thinker's inability to apply the methods or because of character traits such as egocentricism.

Thomas (2011) conducted a study at an Australian Catholic University and proposed that critical thinking is a crucial skill that students need to develop while at university. It is important for a well-educated person to be able to make well-informed judgments, be able to explain their reasoning and be able to solve unfamiliar problems.

Participant number two revealed that, 'It is very important especially in our faculty where we are training teachers to be reflective practitioners. Where they have to reflect after teaching each and every lesson they taught. They are expected to reflect on their lessons taught (what went well, what could be improved, how it can be improved'. This is supported by Islam (2015) who pinpointed critical thinking as crucial for self-reflection. In order to live a meaningful life and to structure our lives accordingly, we need to justify and reflect on our values and decisions. Critical thinking provides the tools for this process of self-evaluation.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Writing as a skill

Participants were asked to state whether they offered writing as a skill in their course content, and if so, how they accomplished it. All participants alluded to the fact that

they do offer writing as a skill in their modules. However, one participant noted that the module does not focus on writing but rather on listening and speaking as a skill. These views were expressed as follows:

Lecturer # 1 *‘Students are given narrative essay topics where they are given a topic to go think about it and compose a narrative essay. This can only happen when they have mastered the skill of critical thinking.’*

Lecturer # 2 *‘Students do writing as a skill. Sometimes they are given assignments or tests. And the questions given to them requires them to apply the critical thinking skill. They are even given a task to narrate a story that does not exist and for one to narrate a story they should have a skill of critical thinking.’*

Lecturer # 3 *‘The students do writing as well. And since the module is based on listening and speaking, the students are asked to compose stories/pieces of writing that their learners will listen to and compose questions from the passages they have composed and give to the learners to evaluate whether they have listened or not. The students’ composed stories are also given to their peers for proof reading and taking orthography into account.’*

Lecturer # 4 *‘They write a poem which is required in unit 4. The poem is based on phonics and specifically on the letter that they are concentrating on.’*

It is evident from the data that incorporating the skill of writing at higher institutions of learning is important. The first participant was of the opinion that narrative essays help to encourage writing as a skill which in turn promotes critical thinking, whereas the second participant maintained that students engage in writing as a skill which then

enhances their critical thinking by forcing them to apply their minds to express themselves.

This is supported by Green and Klug (1990) who explain that strong critical thinking and writing skills are a good combination to enhance students' ability to think critically. Students who are critically literate and simultaneously able to express their thoughts in writing have the advantage of improved reasoning skills (Hillocks, 2010).

4.2.4 Theme 4: Hindrances Rukwangali students face in using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing

When asked to state what hindrances exist that prevents their students from using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing, the lecturers indicated that they find the following problems: their students lack questioning skills in poetry, translating content from English to Rukwangali, a lack of resources in their native languages, insufficient research carried out on their own, they resort to memorisation, the language barrier, a lack of conversational sessions, not enough time, there are too many students, excessive explanations from the lecturer and the subject content is narrow. It appears that each lecturer experiences different deterrents encountered by their students in terms of using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing. The divergent views were expressed as follows:

Lecturer # 1 *'Lack of analytical skills in poems, because when you are analytic you are able to scrutinise questions given to you and able to compose a poem.'*

Lecturer # 2 *'What I have observed is that it is difficult for them to read notes in English and translate them. Instead, they just resort to the lecturers' notes and memorise. The factors could be lack of resources in native languages before they*

translate, the second factor is memorisation, lack of research on their own and as well as language barrier.'

Lecturer # 3 *'I think critical thinking skill is a practical skill and for them to be critical thinkers they need to indulge in conversational sessions. We don't get to involve individual students in conversational sessions. Hence, the underlying factors could be the number of students we have, insufficient time (we don't get time to engage them in conversational sessions when they get to debate and critique each other's thoughts).'*

Interviewee number three is of the opinion that the skill of critical thinking can be enhanced and touted when students are repeatedly involved in conversations to boost the way they think and get used of reasoning before they transfer the knowledge to writing. This is supported by the literature which maintains that in social constructivism the emphasis is on the social contexts of learning and knowledge which is holistically built and constructed. It is further noted that when students interact with others they tend to share their opinions while concurrently generating a concrete comprehension related to the concept (Kalpana, 2014).

Lecturer # 4 *'Too much explanations of subject matter from the lecturer which makes students not to think for themselves and also the module content is narrow so it does not allow students to think critically.'*

It is clear that the limitations that emerged from the current study are not all consistent with those mentioned in the literature. Nine out of eleven factors are similar to the factors listed in the literature. This study revealed that the hindrances that students face

when using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic do not reflect the findings in earlier literature. Here, the obstacles that students face when using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing are: subject knowledge, authorial voice, the essay genre, parental education, lack of effort from colleges and universities, teacher competence, the nature of students, the type of learning environment, organisational ethos and resources, content driven curricular and assessment criteria.

Based on these factors, the presumed hindrances that emerged from the study and those of the available literature are similar in the following areas:

The fact that the essay genre was listed as problematic in the available literature plus the use of memorisation merge because the essay genre as a factor underscores that in higher education, students need to do more than acquire and reproduce knowledge; they need to transform and to recreate knowledge by using the rhetorical tool of argument. This 'transformed knowledge' or 'argument' should then be organised into a structured whole, linking the different components in a logical manner (Vyncke, 2013). When students fail to produce an argued essay, it is not necessarily due to cultural interference, but as Andrews (2007) argues, because they did not fully understand the framework of the essay genre which they have to operate within. Similarly, the other commonality that emerged from the study - memorisation - concurs with the respondents' opinion that students do not use critical thinking because they are prone to rather memorising content than fostering learning for understanding. In addition, it emerged from the literature that subject knowledge and the narrowed subject merge. This is because the study revealed that the Rukwangali modules on offer have scant subject content and the exit learning outcomes do not really take a stance in supporting critical thinking but rather reward remembering chunks of information. These are supported by the available literature which states that sufficient

subject knowledge has been regarded as an essential requirement for the development of critical thinking skills. It can be seen as the fertile soil on which the seed of critical thinking can take root and grow. Since it is impossible to think critically about something of which one knows very little, critical thinking is dependent on an adequate base of knowledge” (Vyncke, 2012). Andrews (2007) underscores that students first need to acquire sufficient subject knowledge before they can attempt to develop their own position within their field and acquiring subject knowledge is therefore the crucial initial step in developing a critical dimension in their writing.

Furthermore, lack of effort from colleges and universities combined with a lack of resources in native languages exacerbates the problem. The current study revealed that the Rundu Campus library does not have an adequate number of books in native languages which students can use when they want to conduct research. As a result, they are forced to use what is available on the shelves and if these are on loan to other students it means that they will only get to use them after three months when they are returned and by that time the due date for submitting the assignment has passed. This situation supports the available literature which concurs with the study that little is being done in colleges and universities in developing CT skills, especially in ensuring a plentiful supply of study material. Added to this, library facilities are not in a good state and internet facilities are poor. Most of the time, students only consult their study guides for content and are unable to acquire knowledge from a variety of prescribed academic sources (Shaheen, 2012).

Teacher competence and lack of conversational sessions as a problem concur with my research findings. The study’s findings revealed that when students are involved in sessions that allow them to express their views and when this occurs often, it sharpens their reasoning and in the long run critical thinking as a skill is enhanced. This in turn

can be used in their academic writing when questions requiring analytical thinking arise. Unfortunately the lecturers under study did not have these sessions with the students because they were unaware that involving students in conversational gatherings could enhance students' critical thinking skills. This is supported by the current literature which concurs with the study conducted by (Khan, 2017) where he argued that a lack of background knowledge and attitudes related to what critical thinking is and how to teach it is a limiting factor in teaching critical thinking to students.

The study revealed that the nature of students, their lack of analytical skills in poetry especially and the lack of personal research all intertwined to produce a negative result. The outcome is that if students lack analytical skills they will struggle to master the skill of critical thinking and if they do not research on their own they will not be proficient in thinking critically when they engage in academic writing. The nature of students has a great impact on how critical thinking in academic writing is nurtured and applied. The available literature agrees with the findings of (Cassum, Profetto-McGrath, Gul, Ashraf & Kauser, 2013) who stated that teachers were well aware of the way teaching and learning are conceptualised at school level. This was seen as generating a context where students did not take learning seriously because the goal of many students was recording information dispensed by the teacher and memorising it. Thus, time spent in thinking, discussing or challenging was perhaps not valued.

To add to this, the type of learning environment and too much explanation from lecturers emerged as issues undermining the practice of critical thinking. As a result of the interviews, this study is of the opinion that the lecturers do all the talking during lectures so they do not follow the paradigm shift to the learner/student centred approach where the lecturer is supposed to be the facilitator of the lesson while the

students do the rest of the activities in the class. When the lesson is teacher-centred it implies that students will just be followers in the classroom which results in students not developing critical thinking as a skill. This is supported by the available literature where Cassum et al. (2013) found that teachers were well aware of the vital role of sound student-teacher relationships and the different roles that should exist in the classroom. There needs to be an environment in the classroom that allows students to be engaged and voice their opinions, without loss of control.

Organisational ethos and resources were issues raised in the study with the number of students in the classroom proving problematic. This was deduced from the participants' explanations where they alluded to the fact that the number of students in the classroom leads to a lack of individual attention to students as they are not given the space to ask questions and for the lecturers to probe their students for justifications. In addition, the resources in the classrooms are inadequate to execute their lecturing duties. There are not enough classrooms and students and there is not enough space in the classroom for students to break into group discussions and present to the rest of the class. This is supported by the available literature where Cassum et al. (2013) revealed that teachers are fully conscious of the need for a supportive educational culture where the goals to develop critical thinking were shared across the entire institution.

The content driven-curricula and insufficient time were also highlighted. This is because the modules taught by the researcher's participants have a lot of exit learning outcomes and it takes time for the lecturers to cover all the descriptors for each learning outcome. Added to that, the curricula seem to be rich in content rather than advocating for critical thinking. In this scenario, critical thinking is totally forgotten when covering the subject content. This is supported by the available literature where Halpern (2014) argued in the US context that the content-driven nature of many higher

education courses hinders the development of critical thinking skills. This often arises with overloaded curricula (Chaffee, 1992; Reed & Kromrey, 2001, as cited in Khan, 2017). Illustrating this, Paul, Elder and Bartell (1997) as cited in Khan (2017) found that, while the majority of faculty (89%) believed that critical thinking should be a primary goal in higher education, more than 75% could not conceive how to cover their course content while fostering critical thinking.

In addition to the factors that emerged from the current study as issues that hinder students from using critical thinking in their academic writing, in this context one needs to add the language barrier and the inability to translate content from English to Rukwangali as factors which may inhibit students from using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing.

4.2.5 Theme 5: Lecturers' perceptions towards teaching for critical thinking

When asked to explain whether critical thinking could be taught and if so, how can one teach for critical thinking? Three out of four agreed that critical thinking can be taught to students and justified this stance with practical examples on how critical thinking could be taught. The remaining participant held a different opinion, he felt that critical thinking cannot be taught but it can be evoked and nurtured. The divergent expressions are as follows:

Lecturer # 1 *'The skill of critical thinking can be taught to students. The teacher can come up with a topic, "women are breadwinners and men are breadwinners". Afterwards you divide them into two groups whereby one group is seconding women are breadwinners and the other group will second men are breadwinners. Henceforth, the students should be instructed to give views as to why women could be regarded as*

breadwinners and vice versa. The teacher can also prepare an essay; it can be a different one or the same one.'

Lecturer # 2 *'Critical thinking can be taught, but it is very tricky. You need to challenge your students on something you did not teach yet. Give them a concept and let them conduct a mini research. Or give them indirect questions instead of direct questions to enhance critical thinking.'*

Lecturer # 3 *'I don't think critical thinking can be taught, but I can say that it can be evoked and nurtured. This can be through activities we give them and evoking questions. This is to say. When you provide feedback to students try formulating your comments into questions so that it evokes their critical thinking skills.'*

Lecturer # 4 *'Critical thinking can be taught. This can be done by giving students a topic to go research on. You can also give them questions. E.g. you are in the inland and students do not have Rukwangali textbooks and what do you do as a teacher to make sure that the teaching continues? Such questions boosts critical thinking as a skill.'*

Constructively, the literature supports that critical thinking should be taught to students. Van Gelder (2005) as cited in Zhao, Pandia and Singh (2016) suggests that CT be practiced deliberately and taught explicitly as an indispensable part of the curriculum. Henceforth, (Bahr, 2010); Rezaei, Derakhshan and Bagherkazemi (2011) maintain that some educators believe that critical thinking cannot be taught explicitly

and some feel that they do not have the capacity or confidence to teach for critical thinking.

4.2.6. Theme 6: Course duration to deliberate on the subject matter of critical thinking within the Rukwangali module

When asked to comment whether the course duration is sufficient to cover the subject matter, the participants had divergent opinions. Two out of four said that the allocated times was long enough provided that they incorporate critical thinking in their daily lectures to enhance the skill. One out of four said that it was not enough because of the number of students and the amount of subject content that needed to be covered. So the consensus was it could be enough because the module is offered throughout the year but a limiting factor was the different abilities among students who worked at different paces to understand subject matter.

The full expressions are as follows:

Lecturer # 1 *'The course content in the course outline is a lot, but that does not prevent lecturers from stressing the skill of critical thinking among Rukwangali students. Time is adequate provided that you are able to maintain the skill of critical thinking in the daily lectures and assessment activities.'*

Lecturer # 2 *'I don't think that it's enough. The number of students has increased, +- 100 students. We only have three periods per week. In the three periods we need to teach them theory, methodology and sometimes they need to present. The course content is also too much. In the first semester I teach reading as a skill and in the second semester I teach writing as a skill. We are again expected to practice on 'ABC*

junior font. 'In most cases we only teach them the theory part and neglect the practical part due to inadequate time.'

Lecturer # 3 'It can be looked from two angles. The course content could be covered in a year since the module have a duration of a years' time but due to a lot of students time could not be enough because I need to teach people who uses different paces to understand the subject matter.'

Lecturer # 4 'I think it's enough because it's a year module and we lecture three unit per semester. I can say it's enough.'

To sum up, time is viewed as a constraint to deliberate on the subject matter of critical thinking within the Rukwangali module. Thinking takes time, and critical thinking requires an individual to set aside a period for reflection as they write. A study conducted by (Van Der Werff, 2017) supports the findings of the study that not enough time exists in the curriculum to allow for reflection, and to effectively teach critical thinking skills (Van Der Werff, 2017).

4.2.7 Theme 7: Strategies used by Rukwangali lecturers to enhance critical thinking in academic writing

When asked to mention the types of strategies they use to teach critical thinking in academic writing to Rukwangali students, three out of four noted that they use strategies such as drafting, proof-reading and peer evaluation. While one out of four said they do not use any writing strategies because their module covers listening and speaking as a skill but not writing as a skill. The divergent views are expressed as follows:

Lecturer # 1 *'I use writing phases such as before writing, while writing and post writing. I use strategies in this order: drafting (for me to know that the student handed in a draft, the piece of writing will have a lot of writing or typing errors. The second strategy is called proof-reading (students have to review their own written work and see how they can make amendments were necessary). Lastly, I use a strategy called peer- evaluation (students are instructed to exchange their written work with other students to review the syntax of the Rukwangali language).'*'

Lecturer # 2 *'I use teaching strategies in writing as a skill in creative writing: I always ask them to draft their work, second they revise their work and lastly they do peer evaluation (here they are instructed to review their peers work and make necessary amendments before a final draft is handed in for grading purposes).'*'

Lecturer # 3 *'Writing in my module is a support skill and is not really key. This module is more on speaking and listening.'*

Lecturer # 4 *'I use a simple text where they come up with a topic and introduce what they want to write about, develop the content and conclude it.'*

To sum up, we can clearly conclude that lecturers do not know what strategies they can use to enhance the critical thinking of students in their academic writing. Drafting and proofreading which was termed to be strategies the lecturers used in enhancement of critical thinking in student's academic writing are not strategies but rather they constitute part of the writing process. Therefore, out of the three strategies which were

mentioned only one is directly of use in the enhancement of critical thinking in student's Rukwangali academic writing. This is supported by the available literature where Nor Shidrah (2012) suggests that peer evaluation encourages active learning among students. Both the writer and the evaluator have roles to play and both are learning through interaction. Anamer (1998) as cited in Nor Shidrah (2012) explains that working with peers provides opportunities for a student to (a) question the present quality of his/her draft (b) seek out elaboration of something that was recently learned, (c) receive constructive correction for misuse of a structural aspect of writing and (d) listen to redirection advice regarding a work in progress without the stigmatism of failure that frequently accompanies such assistance directly from a teacher (p. 268).

4.2.8 Theme 8: Prior explanation of assessment instructions to students

When asked to explain how they give assessment instructions to students, they all said that they group students in manageable groups and explain the written instructions given to them orally and allow discussion by asking students themselves to paraphrase the given instructions before they do the activity. It is very important to explain to students what exactly the assessor wants them to do in each question. Their explanations follow:

Lecturer # 1 *'My students are always given instructions on the written activities given to them. Instructions are given in written form as well as orally. When an assignment is given to students they are asked to read the questions to the assignment for self-comprehension. Later they are then given time to ask for clarity from the lecturer.'*

Lecturer # 2 *'When I give them assignments I explain to them the instructions orally and about the test, they are first asked to read the instructions and questions and they are given the liberty to ask for clarity where they lack comprehension.'*

Lecturer # 3 *'I use classroom discussions. I give a list of instructions and ask individual students to paraphrase the instructions to see if they understand the instruction to the questions.'*

Lecturer # 4 *'I give hard copies of the assignment and allow them to sit in groups and explain to them in their smaller groups. And if it's a test I provide instructions in written form and explain at ones in class and allow questions before they write.'*

One can draw the conclusion that the participants do have an idea of what can be done to encourage an understanding of the assessment criteria before the students respond to written assessments. This is supported by the literature where (Andrews, 2007) argues that students should fully understand the framework of the essay genre in which they have to operate. It is therefore vital that the purpose and rhetorical conventions of the essay-genre are made clear to students. Even where there are guidelines on 'what makes a good essay', there can be a preoccupation with surface form, or unclear terms employed, such as evaluate, discuss, or structure without a specific explanation of what each entails. This uncertainty as to what educators mean by 'essay', and what students understand by it, can result in students' writing not fulfilling the requirements of the genre.

4.2.9 Theme 9: Measuring students' critical thinking in academic writing

When asked to explain how they recognise that their students have reached a peak of critical thinking using their classroom assessments of academic writing, two answers emerged; one is they use questions that require their students to use open ended answers and number two they look at how the student have answered the questions. In other words, if they have memorised the answers to the questions they will copy precisely from their notes. Their divergent expressions are as follow:

Lecturer # 1 *'There are some questions that are answered by students that enables the lecturer to see that they did not employ critical thinking in their academic writing. Students who employ critical thinking answer questions in depth without answering the way the notes are.'*

Lecturer # 2 *'I look at what they have written because when I teach I use slides. The way you will measure is about how they have answered their questions. If they are giving new examples to the questions posed then they have employed critical thinking. But if they are given similar examples from my slides then they did not employ critical thinking in their writing. When critical thinking was used, students tend to paraphrase and give examples of their own.'*

Lecturer # 3 *'The type of questions I ask do not require a uniform answer but diverging answers and questions of reasoning as well and ask them to justify their takes. This shows that they have thought of what they wrote.'*

Lecturer # 4 *'The way questions were answered will definitely tell me that they have used critical thinking as they tackled the questions. A question that needed thinking.'*

i.e. (what if question) Will invite a lot of answers. But when you see that a student have answered using your notes but the question was not answered then you will definitely know that the student did not use critical thinking as a skill.'

Generally, we can say that it is always easy to measure students' critical thinking abilities if the assessor has an idea of what critical thinking is and how it can be identified. The available literature refers to Nosich (2012) who asserts that 'enjoyment' in thinking critically is the chief factor that drives an individual to critical thinking. Sometimes the need to solve a complex problem or to make a crucial judgment in life or a 'dilemma' (Mezirow, 2012) leads to critical thinking.

4.2.10 Theme 10: Provision of feedback to students after grading their academic work

When asked to explain how they provide feedback to students after grading their academic work they said that they provide written comments on their test papers or assignment papers in areas where they need to improve, they discuss the mistakes in class and provide the correct answers. The responses are as follow:

Lecturer # 1 *'My students are always given feedback according to what they have responded in their written work. Students are showed where they have gone wrong as they answered their work. I always provide written comments where students need improvement.'*

Lecturer # 2 *'When I give them their assignments or tests back I normally go through with them, question by question. I go through the questions and tell my students how they supposed to answer each question.'*

Lecturer # 3 *'I first mark the activities and give the papers back. I will first ask what could be the correct answer for the specific question and also ask others. Secondly I will review the way they answered and pinpoint how different students approach the same question and correct them on the question supposed to be answered.'*

Lecturer # 4 *'I give a correction on how i wanted them to answer. I further discuss with my students about their responses and correct them where necessary.'*

All in all, it is very practical to provide concrete feedback to students after their work is assessed. This is not because it makes the students feel better but it also teaches them to be careful as they write and make sure that they have understood what is expected of them. The available literature supports this. Nor Shidrah (2012) further explains that a rubric allows the lecturer to 'break a complex performance into discrete components that can be individually assessed against a standard' (p.40). The established criteria and defined standards help to direct students to excel as the use of a rubric is to give students feedback about their progress as well as a detailed evaluation of their final products.

4.2. 11 Theme 11: Bloom's Taxonomy's levels incorporated in students' assessment questions

When asked to stipulate the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy they incorporate in students' assessment questions, they said that they incorporate all the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure that the students' critical thinking is enhanced. Their views are as follow:

Lecturer # 1: *'For a lecture to enhance critical thinking amongst student, all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy need to be employed so that students develop their level of*

critiques. I.e. they are able to analyse, synthesis, evaluate and draw conclusions as they write.'

Lecturer # 2: *'It depends on the topics. I use the Bloom's Taxonomy guide. I ask questions that reflect the content given to them and also go beyond by asking them evaluation and application levels.'*

Lecturer # 3 *' I go up to the analysis level, starting from the first level which is knowledge depending on year groups and by the middle of the year we try to move from asking knowledge questions to analysis questions.'*

Lecturer # 4 *'I incorporate all the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy because I want my students to build their thinking capabilities and their critical thinking skills and think beyond what is given to them.'*

In the final analysis, it is deduced that critical thinking in academic writing is fostered when the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are incorporated in Rukwangali students' written academic work. This is substantiated by Khan (2017) who argued for six levels in what was to be assessed. Bloom and his colleagues developed their ideas in the context of an educational system which was dominated by rewarding recall. Following extensive observation and discussion with young learners, they postulated their six levels of 'cognitive processes' (Khan, 2017). This is shown in Figure 2. Their goal was to challenge those who set examination papers so that they could classify questions into one of their six levels. This allowed examiners to reduce the emphasis on recall (what Bloom referred to as 'knowledge' and Krathwohl called 'remember')

and to aim to generate more questions that tested the cognitive processes like understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

4.3 Qualitative data obtained through Observation Checklist Protocol

This sub-section presents the data that was collected during lecture visits in the form of observations. The fundamental drive was to form a link between what was said during interviews and how the lecture process is administered. In order to gain this evidence, the researcher looked at lecture structure, methods, lecturer-student interaction and content. The researcher looked at the following within each criterion:

Lecture structure: Review of previous day's course content, an overview of the day's content, a summary of course content covered that day and whether the lecturer directs students in preparation for the next class.

Methods: provide well-designed materials, employs non-lecture learning activities, and invites class discussion to trigger critical thinking and critical thinking strategies that were employed.

Lecturer-student interaction: solicits student input, involves a variety of students, and demonstrates awareness of individual student learning needs.

Content: appears knowledgeable, appears well organised and advocates critical thinking.

The following was observed in different four lecture rooms:

4.3.1 Lecture structure

Participant # 1 The lecturer reviewed the previous day's course content; where a sentence was written on the chalkboard "The crocodile is catching the dog." The lecturer demarcated the sentence into three parts: / crocodile/ is catching/ the dog/

'Crocodile' – subject: a subject in linguistic terms is someone who is doing the action in a given sentence.

'Is catching' – auxiliary verb and gerund verb: these show action in a sentence.

'Dog' – object: the recipient of the action.

Explanations of the three parts of the sentence was given whereby an explanation was provided for each part.

The teacher started off by telling the students what the lesson was going to be about.

The topic was 'reading comprehension.' A question was asked what reading comprehension is. The lecturer explained that, reading comprehension 'the full ability of one comprehending on what is being read or what you have read'. The lecturer further explained that a person who has reading comprehension skills can:

- Create mind images
- The person is able to paraphrase
- Think about their own thinking
- Ask questions

Participant # 2 The lecturer started off by reviewing the previous day's course content. The course content's overview was given orally, but the slides did not show the lesson objectives. The lecturer did not summarise the course content covered at the end of the lecture and could not direct student preparation for the next class.

Participant # 3 The lecturer did not review the previous day's course content to show logic and build knowledge. The lecturer gave an overview of the course content, with objectives. The objectives were explained to students prior to lecturing the subject matter. A summary of the course content covered was observed. No direction was made for students to prepare for the next class.

Participant # 4 The previous day's course content was not reviewed. The lecturer gave an overview of the day's course content. She stated the topic of the day which was grammar. The lecturer asked the students to define what grammar entails and what content underpins grammar. Lesson objectives constituted the first slides. No summary of the lesson was done. Students were directed to the next class 'topic which is "orthography"'.

All in all one can deduce that not all lecturers see the importance of reviewing previous course content and forming a link with the new day's lesson and their conclusion of their lessons was poor. It is worth noting that lecturers should be able to embrace introductions and conclusions of lessons to enable students to think critically about what they are about to learn and what they have learnt. Thus, further research is needed to find ways that can help lecturers to manage their lecturing time effectively while incorporating all the necessary stages of an effective lecture to foster critical thinking in students.

4.3.2 Methods

Participant # 1 The lecturer did not provide well-designed materials. The flip charts were written in free hand. There were not up to standard. An activity was given to the students on reading comprehension, but the questions did not trigger critical thinking as a skill. The questions were mostly on “knowledge”. Furthermore, an activity was given to the students in the form of reading and answering questions according to comprehension. Critical thinking strategies were employed; that is writing and assessment. Students were first given an activity to read and write and the writing task was an assessment.

Participant # 2 The materials were well designed. The lecturer invited class discussions but did not trigger critical thinking as the level of Bloom’s Taxonomy employed was ‘**knowledge**’. Henceforth, no critical thinking strategies were employed as the lecturer taught reading as a skill and not writing as a skill.

Participant # 3 The lecturer provided well-designed materials, i.e. a power point presentation with lesson objectives. The slides were not so visible; the lecturer could still improve this by using a different theme for the slides. Thereafter the lecturer employed non-lecture learning activities (i.e. the participants used small group discussions to deliberate on, ‘the importance of a rich-vocabulary amongst Rukwangali student teachers and how it influences their future learners.’ During the introductory phase the lecturer prompted student’s prior knowledge by asking them to define terms. Moreover, the lecturer advocated critical thinking throughout the lecture. The participant went on to explain to students that questions or key terms in questions can change but the content of the question given remains universal. It was emphasised

that it is very important to know the vocabulary in the language - Rukwangali - to enhance comprehension and give the correct responses to questions.

Participant # 4: Power point presentation was used to display the content but the slides were not visible. The lecturer used non-lecture learning activities where students discussed types of nouns in their small groups and gave feedback. No critical thinking was activated in the classroom apart from remembering the content learnt in previous years. No critical thinking strategies were employed.

It is good to note that when the lecturers where interviewed about the strategies that they use to enhance critical thinking in academic writing half of them mention peer-evaluation but during my observations I noted that they resorted to assessment and writing as strategies to enhance critical thinking amongst their students. This may be that they do not know which strategies are appropriate for critical thinking.

4.3.3 Lecturer-student interaction

Participant # 1 Student inputs were embraced. So when the students answered correctly they were acknowledged but not all students were involved during the lecture. The lecturer acknowledged that there are some students who still need help in demarcating sentences.

Participant # 2 Students' input were sought during lectures, students were asked questions regarding the subject matter for the day. Moreover, the lecturer involved a variety of students in meaningful learning and demonstrated awareness of individual student learning needs.

Participant # 3 The lecturer was able to interact with the students and acknowledged their input. Moreover, a variety of students were involved in the lesson, i.e. students were asked to list how students or people acquire words in Rukwangali using the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in languages. Moreover, the lecturer was aware of individual student needs, i.e. she helped students who had difficulties in comprehending a certain term (**vocabularies**) in Rukwangali.

Participant # 4 The lecturer acknowledged students' responses. A variety of students were involved in the lesson. The lecturer did not demonstrate awareness of individual student learning needs.

All lecturers involved students as they lectured and ensured that they understood the subject matter. Some lecturers acknowledged that there are some students who need individual attention for comprehension. This was a good move, because in each and every class you will get students who learn at a different pace and they need to be helped. This is supported by the literature in (Kalpana, 2014) who asserts that a social constructivist approach influenced by Vygotsky's work emphasises "the social contexts of learning and that knowledge is mutually built and constructed" (p. 28). By interacting with others, students get the opportunity to share their views and thus generate a shared understanding related to the concept. From Piaget to Vygotsky, "the conceptual shift is from individual to collaboration or assisted performance, social interaction and sociocultural activity".

4.3.4 Content

Participant # 1 The lecturer appeared knowledgeable. This was demonstrated when the importance of reading comprehension was explained and its importance highlighted.

Participant # 2 The lecturer appeared knowledgeable and well organised as the subject matter was deliberated on. Critical thinking as a skill was not really advocated.

Participant # 3 The lecturer appeared knowledgeable in delivering the subject matter. The lecturer appeared well organised as she lectured. The teacher advocated critical thinking as a skill. She followed the Bloom's Taxonomy levels to deliver the subject matter.

Participant # 4 The lecturer appeared knowledgeable but not organised. This is because the activity given in the class was created in the classroom orally, but it did not form part and parcel of the slides. The lecturer did not advocate for critical thinking but used the first level of Bloom's Taxonomy (Knowledge).

Subject content is important for students because this is where they develop their reasoning skills. The lecturers on the whole appeared knowledgeable and well organised, despite one of them only creating the activity for the class discussions in class. These issues may contribute to students' inability to embark on critical thinking because the questions given to them are not well-thought out and because they were created in a hurry only knowledge will be assessed. This is supported by the available

literature, since it is impossible to think critically about something of which one knows nothing, critical thinking is dependent on a sufficient base of knowledge (Vyncke, 2012). Andrews (2007) underscores that students first need to acquire sufficient subject knowledge before they can attempt to develop their own position within their field and acquiring subject knowledge is therefore the crucial initial step in developing a critical dimension in their writing.

4.4 Qualitative data obtained through Document Analysis Protocol

This sub-section presents the data that was collected and analysed from two documents; that is the test scripts and the assignments set by the lecturers. The purpose for doing this analysis was to form a link between the interviews conducted with the lecturers on students' critical thinking in academic writing, what was observed in lecture rooms when the lecturers conducted their lessons and how the students reacted during lectures and finally how the lecturers set the questions in tests and assignments and how the students responded to the questions.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Triggering the application of critical thinking in students' tests questions and assignments

4.4.1.1 Lecturer One's test questions and Assignments

The researcher concluded that students' critical thinking skills in writing is not being enhanced because the questions asked during assessments are based on the first level of Bloom's Taxonomy which is 'knowledge'. Questions such as list, give, explain were asked. Thus critical thinking skills in writing could be enhanced when students are exposed to questions that require them to critique and apply the knowledge gained rather than memorisation.

Additionally, the researcher compared what the interviewees said pertaining to students' inability to think critically in academic writing by looking at Rukwangali

language lecturers' perspectives and comparing them against the students' responses to the test questions set by the lecturers. The test answers were analysed using the document analysis guide and its criteria. Firstly, the researcher examined the students' marked test scripts and scanned them. Secondly, the test scripts were analysed to see where the discrepancy lay between the students' inability to apply critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing. The findings revealed that the first student got 49/50 not because they had an understanding of what he or she was responding to but this was because they had memorized the subject content. The test questions did not allow him/ her to think critically but rather recall the subject content. On the other hand, the second student under evaluation scored 24/50 which is a fail. The researcher is of the opinion that he she could have done better if the questions had encouraged thinking.

4.4.1.2 Lecturer Two's test questions and Assignments

The researcher concluded that students' critical thinking skills in writing was not enhanced because the questions set deliberated on verbs such as; explain, list, give and name. These are not the wrong verbs to use in setting tests, but they work much better when they are combined with the other verbs used in the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy such as; evaluate, discuss and analyse. The focus of this research was finding out Rukwangali lecturers' perspectives on why the students are unable to apply critical thinking in their academic writing. One reason that emerged was that the questions set in tests and assignments did not cater for the enhancement of critical thinking in academic writing.

4.4.1.3 Lecturer Three's test questions and Assignments

The questions the researcher reviewed revealed that 90% of them were not designed to activate critical thinking because they used verbs such as mention and explain.

Whereas 10% of the questions required students to describe, and extract words from a poem denoting onomatopoeia. The researcher deduced that 10% of questions that could enhance critical thinking in academic writing is far too small a number to elicit any deeper thinking on behalf of the students. Thus, many more questions that involve students to think are needed to achieve the objective.

4.4.1.4 Lecturer Four's test questions and Assignments

The researcher looked at the questions asked by the lecturer and noted the following: the lecturer used multiple choice questions; students were required to mention, divide, and give. As a result, out of the 12 questions asked, only one question required students to think critically. Again one can draw the same conclusion as above

4.4.2 Theme 2: Evidence of students responding using critical thinking

4.4.2.1 Lecturer One's test questions and Assignments

Due to the nature of the questions asked, the test scripts revealed no evidence of responding using critical thinking because most of the questions were knowledge based, using verbs such as list and give. Students cannot think critically when the questions list these requirements.

4.4.2.2 Lecturer Two's test questions and Assignments

Due to the types of questions asked, the students were not expected to use any critical thinking expertise in their answers.

4.4.2.3 Lecturer Three's test questions and Assignments

There was little evidence of students responding using critical thinking although the majority of the question required them to remember and write. Although there were some questions that could have enhanced students' critical thinking, most students could not answer these questions, possibly because they have not mastered the proficiency required to answer using thinking as a skill.

4.4.2.4 Lecturer Four's test questions and Assignments

Since most of the questions were close-ended students had no room to think beyond what was asked apart from one question. Most questions wanted students to remember exactly what constituted the question and answer. The only way the lecturers can promote critical thinking is by setting questions that enhance critical thinking. This would involve questions that provide scenarios or allowing students to solve certain problems could mitigate the problem under study.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Critical thinking as a learning outcome

4.4.3.1 Lecturer One's test questions and Assignments

Looking at the nature of the test questions, critical thinking as a learning outcome was not evident because the lecturer focused on recalling subject matter rather than their use of the subject matter and synthesising it. However, the lecturer's assignment question did display some use of critical thinking as a learning outcome as students were expected to write a narrative essay on the topic (I almost committed suicide because of rage I had within me). The instructions that accompanied the assignment revealed that the lecturer expected students to use an outline of the essay genre where they had to have an introduction as well as a conclusion for the essay. And for one to have a comprehensive and coherent introduction and conclusion, they need to think critically on how they would want to structure their essay for easy comprehension by the marker.

4.4.3.2 Lecturer Two's test questions and Assignments

Observing the test questions and the assignment question I noted that they did not tackle critical thinking as a learning outcome because the lecturer seemed to be interested in how well the students could remember the subject matter rather than how

well they used the subject matter. This is because the lecturer used verbs such as list and name.

4.4.3.3 Lecturer Three's test questions and Assignments

The researcher concluded that the learning outcome of critical thinking was not required in this question, a possible reason being that the lecturer concerned did not know what critical thinking is,

4.4.3.4 Lecturer Four's test questions and Assignments

By the look of things critical thinking was not the targeted learning outcome because the setter assessed how much content they had grasped rather than how the content would enable them to think outside the box and derive answers to questions from different angles.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Designated time allocation in completion of task

4.4.4.1 Lecturer One's test questions and Assignments

Both the assignment and the test paper did not specify the time available to complete the task. On the assignment it was stated that the due date would be communicated in class, whereas on the test questions it was not indicated. The researcher is of the opinion that this can lead to students becoming procrastinators because they do not have the due date, they decide to bank the assignment and get around to it too close to the due date. Test questions and assignments are supposed to be accompanied with time and date information. Hence, for one to think critically about writing one needs time for reflection.

4.4.4.2 Lecturer Two's test questions and Assignments

Both the assignment and the test paper listed the time to complete the task. The assignment had a two day time limit while the test was scheduled to take an hour. The researcher is of the opinion that the time allocated to complete the task was sufficient

as there was no questions which required the students to think but rather just to remember and write.

4.4.4.3 Lecturer Three's test questions and Assignments

The test paper did not indicate how long the test would last, while the assignment paper did not stipulate how long the assignment was supposed to be. Time is very important if one wants to enhance critical thinking. Students need to know how much time they have so that they can plan to get their work done.

4.4.4.4 Lecturer Four's test questions and Assignments

Both the assignment and the test paper stated the time available to complete the task. The assignment allowed for a week to complete, while the test was scheduled to take an hour. The researcher is of the opinion that the time allocated was adequate as there were no question which expected the students to think but merely just to remember and write.

4.4.5 Theme 5: Evidence of logic and coherence in responses

4.4.5.1 Lecturer One's test questions and Assignments

This criterion could not be evaluated in the test scripts because of the nature of the questions. Students responded using the subject content they had memorised. However, the assignment question did concern itself with critical thinking, but students were not able to write logically and coherently. Paragraphs contained more than one idea, they were too long and some were off topic. The researcher is of the opinion that students have not mastered the academic writing genre and they do not understand the requirements of the question.

4.4.5.2 Lecturer Two's test questions and Assignments

This criterion could not be evaluated in the test scripts as well as the assignments because of the nature of the questions. Students responded using the subject content

they had memorised. There was no question that required students to think critically in their responses.

4.4.5.3 Lecturer Three's test questions and Assignments

Questions that require students to remember and answer do not require them to think critically. When one is asked to "mention or list" there will be no evidence of logic or coherence. For the betterment of the students, lecturers should incorporate questions that generates or assesses critical thinking in students' academic writing.

4.4.5.4 Lecturer Four's test questions and Assignments

Logic and coherence could only be measured when students have responded to questions which require them to think critically. In this case, the questions were close-ended so only needed one answer. Not much thinking was involved. Thus, it was impossible for the researcher to evaluate using this criterion of seeing evidence of logic and coherence in the students' responses.

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented a descriptive summary on the collected data and analysis, according to the research aims and questions that guided the study. The chapter further interpreted the data and discussed the findings in relation to the views express in existing literature. Therefore, the results obtained reflected the participants' perceptions, knowledge, personal experiences as well as beliefs in accordance with the research aim and research questions of the study. There were similarities as well as differences in the information provided by the participants. It can be concluded that participants' perceptions varied, as some perceive that critical thinking can be taught to students to enhance their academic writing while others argued that critical thinking can be taught when incorporated within the module's content. Participants were also conscious of the possible factors that hinder students to use critical thinking in their

academic writing and the strategies that could be used to enhance critical thinking amongst students. In the subsequent and final chapter the researcher summarises the study, gives recommendations for further research and draws conclusions based on the data and the literature review.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, suggests what the study contributes to knowledge, and makes recommendations for ways of improving the situation explored. The chapter also demonstrates how the findings are linked to existing theory of critical thinking in academic writing. The conclusions reached and recommendations made are firmly based on the findings of the study which looked at perspectives of Rukwangali Language Education Lecturers about students' critical thinking in academic writing.

5.2 Summary of the key findings

The purpose of this study was to explore Rukwangali language lecturers' perspectives on students' inability to demonstrate critical thinking in academic writing, at the Rundu campus of the University of Namibia. The study sought to suggest strategies that could be used by educators to improve students' critical thinking skills in academic writing.

The findings of the study has led to the realisation that the inability of students to display critical thinking in their academic writing is influenced by a combination of factors such as subject knowledge, authorial voice, the essay genre, parental education, insufficient effort by colleges and universities such as teaching for critical thinking, teacher competence, the nature of the students, the type of learning environment, organisational ethos and resources, content-driven curricula, assessment criteria, an inability to translate content, and the language barrier.

Critical thinking is a skill which involves active thinking rather than memorising, but to use strategies such as writing, assessment, explicit instruction/infusion approach,

teacher questioning, assessment rubrics/ scoring rubrics and peer evaluation approach in order to master it. Generally speaking, the respondents in this study had comparable perceptions of the nature of critical thinking. All four lecturers who participated in the study attempted to define critical thinking as a skill to think deep. Most of them had positive views on the importance of critical thinking but they seem not to understand what critical thinking is and how one can teach for critical thinking in academic writing. They further highlighted that it is not easy to teach the skill of critical thinking to students due to lack of time.

One of the findings of the study revealed that critical thinking is important to students as it is a skill needed by to enable them to solve problems given to them. Instead of reproducing notes as they were given to them, they are expected to employ the content in different situations: for example, for lesson reflection, to produce good pieces of writing, to solve complex issues and to use their perceptions to evaluate subjects or questions.

Furthermore, it was found that some modules offered at Unam's Rundu campus concentrate more on listening and speaking as a skill than teaching students how to write critically. Thus lecturers do not do much to enhance critical thinking in academic writing. The study further reveals that incorporating the skill of writing at higher institutions of learning is important because it can enhance students' critical thinking by using application questions.

Thus lecturers do not do much to enhance critical thinking in academic writing. The study reveals that incorporating the skill of writing at higher institutions of learning is important because it can enhance students' critical thinking by obliging them to apply their knowledge to answer a range of questions.

The study has identified the following hindrances faced by students when using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing: a lack of analytical skills in reading poems; translating content from English to Rukwangali; the lack of educational resources in native languages; a lack of independent research; memorisation; problems with linguistic fluency; the lack of conversational sessions; insufficient time; the sheer numbers of students; too much explanation from the lecturer; and narrowness of subject content.

A central finding is that students do not use critical thinking in their academic writing because they are prone to memorising content than understanding and applying it. The Rukwangali modules offered have inadequate subject content, and the exit learning outcomes support not critical thinking but rather remembering chunks of information. The current study found that the Rundu Campus library does not have enough books in native languages for students to use when they want to conduct research. As a result, they are forced to use the few books which are on the shelves; if they are already on loan they may only get to use them after three months when they are returned, and by that time the due date for submitting the assignment will have passed.

The study's findings revealed that when students are regularly involved in sessions that allow them to express their views, this sharpens their way of reasoning. Their critical thinking skills are enhanced in ways that they can use to improve their academic writing. If students lack the analytical skills that are needed for critical thinking, and if they do not conduct research on their own, they will not be proficient in thinking critically when they engage in academic writing.

The study reveals that lecturers do all the talking during lectures, apparently not having followed the paradigm shift to the learner/student centred approach in terms of which the lecturer is merely the facilitator of the lesson while the students do the rest of the

activities in class. Thus, there needs to be an environment in the teaching room that allow students to be engaged, without loss of order or control.

The study findings reveal that the number of students in the classrooms makes it difficult for lecturers to give full attention to individual students, for students to ask questions and for lecturers to probe them for reasons and justifications. In addition, the resources in the classrooms are inadequate for the execution of lecturing duties. The classrooms are few and students do not get enough space in the classroom to engage in group discussions and present to the rest of the class.

The study findings revealed that modules have numerous exit learning outcomes and it takes time for the lecturers to cover all the descriptors for each learning outcome. The curriculum seems to be rich in content than orientated towards the skills of critical thinking. Critical thinking is often totally forgotten when the subject content is being covered.

The study found that three out of the four participants agreed with the literature that critical thinking could be taught to students, while one voiced reservations about the extent to which critical thinking could be taught. Another constraint militating against the development of critical thinking within the Rukwangali module is that of time. Critical thinking requires that an individual set aside sufficient time for reflection before and as they write.

The study concluded that the following strategies could be used by Rukwangali language lecturers to enhance students' critical thinking skills in their academic writing: writing, assessment, an explicit/infusion approach, teacher questioning, assessment rubrics/scoring rubrics and a peer-evaluation approach to academic writing.

The study findings revealed that it is very important to explain to students what exactly the assessor wants them to do in each question before students attempt to answer it. It is also imperative to provide concrete feedback to students after their work is assessed. This is not simply to make the students feel better, but to teach them to be careful as they write and make sure that they have understood what is expected of them.

The study findings revealed that critical thinking in academic writing is fostered when the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are incorporated into Rukwangali students' written academic work.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Lecturers should use strategies such as frequent writing assignments, assessment, assessment rubrics/scoring rubrics, an infusion/explicit approach, teacher questions and peer evaluation to enhance critical thinking in their students' academic writing.
- Lecturers should provide a concrete definition of what constitutes critical thinking as a skill to their students before they guide them in the direction of becoming critical thinkers.
- Lecturers should explain the importance of critical thinking in academic writing to students.
- The university's curriculum should explicitly incorporate critical thinking in academic writing as an exit learning outcome for each module offered.
- Rukwangali lecturers should write more books in their language to equip the library, so that their students can have access to more resources for their research.

- Lecturers should do away with questions that require students to recite content and move rather to questions that require their students to analyse, synthesise and apply knowledge in different situations.
- Rather than the lecture-centred approach, Rukwangali lecturers should engage their students in conversational sessions to trigger students' thinking for themselves.
- The university needs to build more lecture rooms so that there is adequate space for students to disperse and engage in group discussions, and for the lecturer to be mobile in the classroom rather than standing in front of the podium during the entire lecture.
- Lecturers are to explain key terms in assessment activities, and they should incorporate high levels of Bloom's Taxonomy in questions they ask.

5.4 Future Research

Future research could be conducted to establish strategies to employ in order to ensure the effective utilization of lecturing time, incorporating all the necessary stages of an effective lecture to foster critical thinking in students.

Since this study was limited to only one campus (Rundu campus in the Kavango East Region), a further study might cover other regions where students' critical thinking skills are problematic, in order to establish a wider perspective on the attitudes of lecturers towards critical thinking and academic writing.

Since this study was limited to Rukwangali language lecturers' perspectives, future research should include the perceptions of Rukwangali students on the main challenges they face in their efforts to use critical thinking in their academic writing.

Further studies should also look at management strategies to deal with large numbers of students in nurturing critical thinking.

5.5 Conclusions

This qualitative study sought to describe the perceptions of Rukwangali language lecturers towards their students' failure to exhibit critical thinking in their academic writing at Rundu campus in the Kavango East Region of Namibia. It was further guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What strategies are being used by Rukwangali lecturers to enhance critical thinking in academic writing?
- (2) Which barriers are lecturers encountering as they teach critical thinking in Rukwangali modules?
- (3) What hindrances do Rukwangali students face in using critical thinking in their Rukwangali academic writing?

The study concludes that there are numerous constraints that interfere with the effective teaching of critical thinking in the Rukwangali modules. These constraints includes lecturers' lack of understanding of the requirements for teaching critical thinking skills to students, their lack of training and of information, their personal beliefs and preconceptions, and time constraints.

The study also concludes that Rukwangali students face a number of hindrances when they attempt to use critical thinking in their academic writing, including lack of analytical skills when interpreting poems, translating content from English to Rukwangali, a lack of resources in native languages, a lack of research on their own, memorisation, lack of language proficiency, the absence of conversational sessions, insufficient time, the excessive number of students, too much explanation from the lecturer and the narrowness of the subject content.

It was concluded that Rukwangali language lecturers should use the following strategies to enhance critical thinking in the academic writing of their students: writing assignments, assessment, explicit/infusion approach, teacher questioning, assessment rubrics, scoring rubrics and peer-evaluation exercises.

The results of the present study provide evidence that establishing the perceptions of Rukwangali language lecturers of students' inability to employ critical thinking in academic writing has an important role to play in changing the way in which they perceive the notion of critical thinking in academic writing. This raising of awareness results in lecturers wanting to lecture for critical thinking, and design questions in such a way that critical thinking is becomes a feature of academic discourse at Rundu campus. Generally speaking, participants in this study demonstrated a strong belief in the effectiveness and utility of articulating critical thinking in academic writing. Thus one can conclude that critical thinking in academic writing is valuable and necessary. Being aware of this can help Rukwangali lecturers, students, the university's curriculum designers and other native language lecturers to ensure that critical thinking skills are incorporated into the syllabus content at university campuses in Namibia.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Rukwangali Lecturers' Semi- Structured Interview protocol

University of Namibia

(Faculty of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Studies)

STUDENTS' INABILITY OF CRITICAL THINKING IN ACADEMIC WRITING:
PERSPECTIVES OF RUKWANGALI LANGUAGE LECTURERS' AT RUNDU
CAMPUS

Number: _____

Date of interview: _____

Directions: Please answer all the questions as accurately and as honestly a possible. The information provided here will be used in strict confidence for the sole purpose of research. The following study semi- structured interview was developed to ask you a few questions regarding the Rukwangali modules offered at the Bachelors Honours Degree and Diploma level. Moreover, comments on your lecturing familiarity on the Rukwangali modules offered at Unam Rundu Campus at the Bachelor and Diploma level is exceptionally valued and will assist the University of Namibia to make improvements in the academic endeavours in impending years. I would be most obleeged if you could answer the subsequent questions open-heatedly. The interviews will be audiotape recorded using audio recorder.

Semi- Structure Interview Guide Questions

1. Critical thinking is singled to be of utmost importance at higher institutions of learning. What then is critical thinking?
2. What do you term to be academic writing?
3. Why is it a necessity that students should develop critical thinking at higher institutions of learning? Please provide examples.
4. What could be the underlying factors that impede students to articulate critical thinking in their academic writing?
5. Despite the negative connotations about teaching for critical thinking and the revolving debates pertaining critical thinking. What are your perceptions regarding teaching for critical thinking? Do you think critical thinking could be taught? How can one teach for critical thinking to students?
6. Is the course duration efficient to deliberate on the subject matter of critical thinking within the Rukwangali module? Justify your take.
7. What writing teaching strategies do you use as you lecture and how often do you use each strategy?
8. At what extent do you explain the instructions of the assessment activities to students before they write it?
9. Students' written work can clearly show that critical thinking was used or not used. How do you measure your students' critical thinking in their writing?
10. How do you provide feedback to your students after you have graded their academic work?
11. What questions do you ask your students? How much of Bloom's Taxonomy's levels do you incorporate in your students' assessment questions?

Appendix 2: Rukwangali Lecturers' Observation Checklist Protocol

University of Namibia

(Faculty of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Studies)

STUDENTS' INABILITY OF CRITICAL THINKING IN ACADEMIC WRITING:
PERSPECTIVES OF RUKWANGALI LANGUAGE LECTURERS' AT RUNDU
CAMPUS

Number: _____

Date: _____

Module Name Observed: _____

Time: _____

Observer: _____

Department: _____

Faculty: _____

Criteria: Lecture Structure	Could improve	acceptable	Excellent	observed
Reviews previous day's course content				
Gives overview of the day's course content				
Summarizes course content covered				
Directs student preparation for next class				

Comments

Criteria: Methods	Could improve	acceptable	Excellent	observed
Provides well-designed materials				
employs non-lecture learning activities (i.e. small group discussion, Student-led activities)				
Invites class discussion to trigger critical thinking				
Critical thinking strategies employed				

Comments

Criteria: Lecturer-Student Interaction	Could improve	acceptable	Excellent	observed
Solicits student input				
Involves a variety of students				
Demonstrates awareness of Individual student learning needs				

Comments

Criteria: Content	Could improve	acceptable	Excellent	observed
Appears knowledgeable				
Appears well organised				
Advocates critical thinking				

Comments

4. Analysis Criteria: Designates time allocated in completion of task

Comments

5. Analysis Criteria: Evidently shows logic and coherence

Comments

Appendix 4: Rukwangali Language Lecturers' Consent for participation in an Interview

University of Namibia

(Faculty of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Studies)

STUDENTS' INABILITY OF CRITICAL THINKING IN ACADEMIC WRITING:
PERSPECTIVES OF RUKWANGALI LANGUAGE LECTURERS' AT RUNDU
CAMPUS

Please answer the questions as accurately and honestly as possible. The information provided here will be used in strict confidence for the sole purpose of the study.

I, Prof/Dr/Mr/Ms/Mrs....., in my capacity as am hereby legally authorised to represent my organisation. I have read the recorded responses to the interview questions posed to me and am satisfied that it represents the answers I have been given regarding the study. I gave the information freely and was not intimidated. I am satisfied that the information was recorded pseudonymously.

I have received a copy of this consent form and information sheet. I understand that taking part in this study was/is voluntary. I consented to the researcher collecting and processing the information given for research purposes.

Participant's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 5: Consent for analysing written tests and assignments for

Rukwangali students

University of Namibia

(Faculty of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Studies)

STUDENTS' INABILITY OF CRITICAL THINKING IN ACADEMIC WRITING:
PERSPECTIVES OF RUKWANGALI LANGUAGE LECTURERS' AT RUNDU
CAMPUS

The students' written tests and assignments will be analysed using the document analysis guide to draw conclusions whether critical thinking prevailed in their Rukwangali academic work. The written work will be derived from you through your lecturer for the specific module under study. The information which will be deduced here will be used in strict confidence for the sole purpose of the research.

I, /Mr/Ms....., in my capacity

as am hereby legally authorised to represent my organisation. I have read the sole purpose of this phenomenon and the criteria used and am satisfied that it represents the motive of the research. I gave my written work freely and was not coerced. I am satisfied that the information was recorded pseudonymously.

I have received a copy of this consent form and information sheet. I understand that taking part in this study was/is voluntary. I consented to the researcher collecting and processing the information given for research purposes.

Participant's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 6: Consent for Campus APVC

P O Box 2521

Rundu

26 March 2019

Office of the Campus APVC

University of Namibia

Rundu Campus

Kavango East Region

Subject: Seeking for authorisation to conduct a study on students' Critical Thinking in Academic Writing: Perspectives of Rukwangali Language Lecturers' at Rundu Campus

I am an Assistant Lecturer at Rundu Campus pursuing post-graduate studies (Master of Education) at the University of Namibia.

My proposal titled: **Students' Critical Thinking in Academic Writing: Perspectives of Rukwangali Language Lecturers' at Rundu Campus**, was approved mid last year. I am therefore, seeking your permission to conduct a qualitative study on the above-mentioned topic. The population was drawn from where the researcher lecture as it's the only satellite campus amongst the University of Namibia campuses' that offer Rukwangali as an African language. The study intends to interview and observe four Rukwangali lecturers that are lecturing in the faculty of education. Henceforth, Rukwangali language students' academic written work (i.e. tests and assignments) will be analysed.

Participation in the research by the campus and individuals will be voluntary.

All information obtained will be treated confidentially.

The field work for this research is planned to start as soon as permission is granted by your office and it will be highly appreciated if a written response is given and I humbly appeal for your earliest response to enable me to do the interviews and observations before lectures end for first semester.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at the given details.

Yours Sincerely

Natalia Reino

Appendix 7: Ethical Clearance



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE/531/2019 Date: 22 November, 2019

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: Lecturers' Perspectives On Students Inability Of Critical Thinking In Academic Writing

Researcher: NATALIA S. REINO

Student Number: 201169011

Supervisor(s): DR. F. Mungongi

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
- (d) The UREC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

Dr. E. de Villiers: HREC Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. de Villiers", written over a horizontal line.

Ms. P. Claassen: HREC Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Claassen", written over a horizontal line.