THE ROLE OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN ENHANCING

WORKPLACE LITERACIES FOR GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE

COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN WINDHOEK

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary tertiary institutions and workplace organisations face a raft of challenges in coping with competing demands and rapidly changing environments. Today's challenging economic situation indicates that it is no longer sufficient for a new graduate to have knowledge of an academic subject; increasingly it is necessary for students to gain those language competencies and literacies which will enhance their productivity and prospects of employment after completing an ESP course. With such demands and changes come the need for tertiary education to skill young graduates adequately to meet these challenges both now and in the future. There is a growing concern in Namibia that tertiary education is not meeting the needs of employers and the workplace, such as occupation specific knowledge, generic skills and competencies, as well as language specific competencies.

This study investigated the role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in enhancing workplace literacies for graduate employees in the Namibian commercial sector in Windhoek. The study mainly looked at the language literacies and competencies that new graduates in the commercial sector in Windhoek had in their repositories which could enable them to operate effectively in that sector. The sample was purposively selected, and the investigation was conducted in ten public and private sector institutions that employ graduates from three tertiary institutions, namely the University of Namibia, the Namibia University of Science and Technology and the International University of Management, in Windhoek. A mixed-methods design was adopted where survey questionnaire and interview protocols were employed. The questionnaire instrument was a rating scale that required participants (young graduates) to rate their level of agreement to a specific issue. The data from the survey were computer analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Information was then coded according to the survey questions and cross tabulations and frequency information were determined. An interview protocol was administered to employers and representatives of tertiary institutions. The recorded interviews were transcribed and subjected to a preliminary analysis shortly after completion of the interviews. After several close readings of the transcribed texts, an open coding

process was conducted. The employers and lecturers' responses in the transcripts were highlighted according to the different units of meaning that could be discerned, and then grouped together in categories.

The findings of this study reveal that graduate employees were lacking in the language competencies of oral, reading, written and non-verbal language communication, as well as non-technical skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, which are valuable in any workplace. Furthermore, it appears that tertiary institutions were not providing courses related to English for Specific Purposes for this particular commercial sector; but appeared to be content with the current offerings of language courses by centres and units. The study reconceptualised the meaning of workplace literacy in the Namibian context, and found that workplace literacy could not be regarded as a skill, but rather as what is done or performed in a given context, such as the workplace. Based on the findings, the recommendation is to formulate clear policies to guide curriculum development in courses, such as ESP, in tertiary institutions to ensure that these curricula are aligned to the language literacies typical of various workplaces. Due to the identified shortcomings in the tertiary education offerings of English language ESP courses, a *'narrow-angled' ESP and 'competency' models* for tertiary institutions in Namibia are proposed.

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LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CoP	Communities of Practice
CUP	Common Underlying Proficiency
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESL	English Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FL	Foreign Language
GE	General English
IUM	International University of Management
LSP	Languages for Specific Purposes
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
NLS	New Literacy Studies
NUST	Namibia University of Science and Technology
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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To Almighty God for His unending grace, I say thank you.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Toini Nduru Mungongi, and my late father, Eino Sirungu Mungongi, for being such positive role models for me and always believing in the power of education. You set such a solid foundation in my life from which I have grown. Thank you for teaching me to appreciate people and the opportunities that I have in life. I love you both.

DECLARATIONS

I, Fillemon Mungongi, hereby declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the study

This study investigated the role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and its relevance in enhancing workplace literacies for graduates employed in the Namibian commercial sector in Windhoek. The research design comprised quantitative and qualitative methods of scientific inquiry, employing a triangulation of sampled sources which included graduates, employers and tertiary institutions, as well as the triangulation of methods comprising survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The urgency of the study spawned from concerns raised by government and employers in both the public and private sectors who seemed to be discontented with Namibian graduates employed in these sectors.

It appears that, not only in Namibia but throughout the world (Unwin, 2003), different countries are trying to create closer synergies between the competence/knowledge demand of industrial organisations and the competence/knowledge offer by educational institutions. This is largely a result of an international consensus which, though contested, argues that people and organisations need to embrace new literacy competencies, skills, dispositions and knowledge at regular periods in order to meet the challenges of a much more dynamic and unstable economic climate (Unwin, 2003). It was, therefore, imperative for research to be conducted into whether or not current ESP courses prepared young graduates in the area of workplace literacies for the working world.

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ESP and literacy, or more specifically, workplace literacy, the focus of this study, has had to endure many interpretations over the past decades. It was conceptually useful and timely to consider the nature of ESP courses and their relationship to the workplace literacy discourses in terms of an analysis of needs related to the workplace. The present work aimed to establish whether or not such an analysis was present in the elaboration of the English programmes to former graduates of commercial courses in the Namibian context, and, if in the affirmative, how far such needs were taken into consideration in the teaching of such ESP courses. To date, little evidence has been published regarding whether university programmes are effective or not in equipping commercial graduates in the relevant language workplace literacies to operate effectively in the area of languages typical of their industry.

1.2 The context that gave rise to this research

Language acquisition is believed to be most effectively facilitated when it is embedded within the learners' fields of study or work (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2007). Today's employers often require those completing undergraduate degrees to add immediate value to their sphere of work by means of successful participation and innovation in the workplace. In today's environment, however, technical competence is not sufficient for career success. It is widely acknowledged that undergraduates must develop non-technical competence attributes such as those necessary for effective oral and written communication, teamwork (ability to work well with others), problem solving and information technology (IT) competence, as well as disciplinary expertise, to achieve this goal (Hancock, 2009; Jackling & Keneley, 2009; Jones, 2010). What a student needs to, or indeed, can, learn beyond disciplinary content in a university degree, and how and why they should learn it, are issues with practical implications

for those charged with the responsibility of facilitating their learning. The question concerning what they need to learn and why, have a range of possible answers when examined from different perspectives, taking into account institutional and workplace expectations and students' and lecturers' views on the role and purpose of a university education. How learning for the workplace might be accommodated within a university degree and, more specifically, the relationship between disciplinary learning, generic graduate attributes and professional practice, raises another set of questions about the nature of knowledge and the nature of learning.

As indicated by research on English Language Teaching (ELT), there are diverse language use and particular subject-matter needs in different contexts (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This means that language teaching would not be adequate or efficient if it only covered generic language contents and skills without considering target language varieties and specific learners' needs (Long, 2005). The field of ESP emerged to address "the communicative needs and practices of particular professional or occupational groups" (Hyland, 2007, p. 391). It focuses on the application and requirements of English in specific contexts (Gatehouse, 2012). It does, however, not just involve specialist language and content, but should be guided by the results of a needs analysis (Robinson, 1991). The cognitive, socio-cultural and ideological interpretation factors complicate the understanding of literacy and/or workplace literacy which may apply to this study. It calls for understanding that far exceeds the barking-at-print definitions popularly understood as reading. Street (1984) stresses that all readers and writers carry values and assumptions with them in their engagements with texts. And texts carry their writers' assumptions, values and positioning. Hence literacies are shaped by social and cultural factors which change over time. However,

Street (1992) stresses that the social and the cultural are by their very nature also political. There are always contests over "the meaning and use of literacy practices" and these are "always embedded in power relations of some kind" (Street, 1992, p. 36). Seen from this stance, advocates of an autonomous model may be viewed in two ways. The more generous stance is to see such advocates as naive in assuming simplistic understandings of literacy as a value-neutral and context-free skill. The second, more 'critical' stance is to view such advocates with suspicion. The lack of willingness to acknowledge or discuss the values underpinning the literacy they promote suggests such advocates may have something to hide. Workplace literacy with specific reference to English for Specific Purposes, the focus of this study, refers to the ability of individuals to respond effectively to the literacy demands of their specific workplace (Gowen, 1992), characterised by an English hegemony.

Much work conducted in the academy is supposed to be preparation for the professional occupations students are likely to pursue when they graduate and, therefore, their language needs could probably be classified as English for Specific/Occupational Purposes. Currently, such specific courses at the University of Namibia (UNAM), the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), as well as the International University of Management (IUM), are offered to a selected few faculties, such as Education, Law and Nursing. University programmes should prepare students for workplaces seeking 'work ready', technically competent graduates with high-level, communication skills (Frenkel, 2005). There has been concern about Namibian graduates' workplace literacies and competencies as required by the industry (Angula, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2011a, 2011b; Dentlinger, 2006; Ihuhua, 2011; Links, 2010; Shipanga, 2012). Therefore, it was imperative to interrogate this issue through

the expectations regarding the offered ESP courses and their relevance in schooling

the would-be graduates in workplace literacies and effective communication skills in

English. This was conducted by means of consulting a trinity of graduates, employers

and tertiary institutions' (see Figure 1 below) thoroughly. Workplace literacy is a new

field being looked at in different contexts, and it appears that workplace literacies in

the Namibian context have as yet not been researched.

Graduates/Employers

1. What do they come to do?
2. What do they expect from institutions?
3. Must the TIs get them more? If Yes, what is it?
4. If No, why?

1. What do they offer employers?
2. What else are they supposed to offer?
3. Do they feel they can offer what is expected?
4. If Yes/No, why?

Communication

Institutions

1. What is happening at the moment?
2. What is their mandate?
3. How do academics see their role?
4. Do they ever ask/tell employers what employers need?

Stakeholders/Employers

1. What do they want?
2. What do they get?
3. What do they offer themselves?
   a) What do they suggest?
   b) Do they know what they want?
   c) Do they offer some kind of workplace place literacy training?
   d) Do they tell anybody what they want?

Figure 1: *The Three-Pronged Approach (Trinity)*

Note. Mungongi (2014)

Figure 1 above shows the role of the trinity in preparing workplace literacies and competencies required in the commercial workplace. The communication of English language literacies expectations of each stakeholder becomes imperative. Graduates went through ESP training; therefore, this study wanted to establish the measurable ESP outcomes (i.e. to what extent graduates and employer's expectations were met by tertiary institutions). The workplace literacy profile of students in a First Language (L1) country may not be the same as workplace literacy in Second Language (L2) countries. Hence, students' needs may be different.

For an example, the Language Centre (LC) of the University of Namibia offers only English for General Communication, English Communication and Study Skills and English for Academic Purposes as core English university courses. At present these courses are designed to assist students in improving their ability to perform in all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (see Figure 2 below) as well
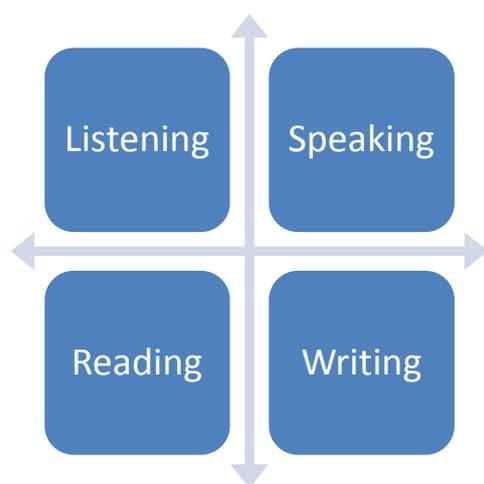
Figure 2: *Language skills*
Note. Mungongi (2014)

as language usage while studying at tertiary institutions, as well as prepare them for the workplace. Nowhere in its course objectives, for instance, does the LC mention the importance of imparting graduates with those applied English competencies they need in various occupational/vocational careers, such as commerce, an issue this study intended to establish.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The issue of ESP competencies and skills, in particular the perceived inability of the country's training authorities to produce graduates with skills, workplace literacies and competencies as required by the industry, has become something of a controversial topic in Namibia over the last decade. Much attention has been focused on skills training in English for Specific Purposes, as well as English for Academic Purposes (EAP), courses at tertiary institutions, whereas it is clear that workplace literacy involves much more than skills. De la Harpe, Radloff and Wyber (2000) suggest that there is concern world-wide that existing undergraduate programmes are not producing graduates with the kind of life-long and life-wide learning and professional competencies and workplace literacies which they need in order to be successful in their careers. A similar concern had been raised in Namibia (Angula, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2011a, 2011b; Dentlinger, 2006; Ihuhua, 2011; Links, 2010; Shipanga, 2012). Based on that concern, the study investigated how ESP courses, offered by tertiary institutions in Namibia, prepared graduates for the world of work. This research followed graduates in their professional practice to understand their perceptions of the practical relevance of their ESP courses to the 'literacies' required in their workplaces.

1.4 The research questions

The study was guided by the following main research question:

How does the ESP course prepare graduates for those workplace literacies to equip employees in the Namibian commercial sector in Windhoek?

To support this central conceptual question, five further research questions were identified:

1. What specific communicative English language competencies do young professionals regard as essential in order to fulfil their work roles?

2. What specific communicative English language literacies do young professionals regard as essential in order to fulfil their work roles?

3. What are employers' expectations of graduates as far as workplace literacy and communicative competencies are concerned?

4. What are employers' experiences of graduates as far as workplace literacy and communicative competencies are concerned?

5. To what extent do academics/lecturers in the commercial field regard the tertiary institutions as effective in providing communicative competencies and workplace literacies to graduates for effective participation once employed?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study is a contribution to the evolution and growth of knowledge regarding the link between ESP in tertiary education and workplace literacy in Namibia. The area of workplace literacy and its relationship and relevance to the ESP domain related to the workplace seem to have been overlooked and under-researched to date. This is an area

to which this study contributes by preventing this relationship from being overlooked. The central role of workplace competencies in determining the development of curricula and the standards to be expected in training, flourished in the vocational education and training sector but absent in the university sector was dissected in this study. This study may also prove that it is a universal norm that higher education is both an instrument and a means for the training of specialised manpower, appropriate for different vocational purposes; consequently, courses, such as ESP, should preferably be tailor-made to suit the varying demands of different workplaces needs. The study also shows that, currently, there was little evidence of what students actually needed and that lecturers often guessed based on their own experience. This research highlights how well or not graduates were served by current instructional practices. A study like this may help in translating research findings more effectively into sound teaching and policy making and improve the delivery of courses, such as the ESP, in order for graduates having completed such courses to see workplace literacies as comprehensible and usable for the enhancement of production in the various sectors of our industries.

Evidence of the real workplace demands and purposes for engaging with language learning established by this study may help identify possible factors that could be included in the curricula for English language courses, such as ESP, that are meant to prepare students for the workplace.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The study explored an issue related to the macro-economy. There are fourteen political regions in Namibia. Consequently, one of the major limitations was the diversity of

the industries to be targeted. This study intended to target only the urban, commercial industry in Windhoek as the location for fieldwork, and refers to the geographic character of Namibia's capital city. Demographic factors were further limitations of this study as only the urban area was targeted and, as such, findings cannot be generalised to other areas. However, as a case study intended for one particular industry, the sampling was still appropriate and commensurate with the purpose of the study which investigated the role of ESP in enhancing workplace literacy for graduates employed in the commercial sector in Windhoek. However, these limitations found an alleviation in the way I used the methodological procedures through triangulation. This study could gain additional validity through future expansion of this research and comparison with studies done in other industries.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study was confined to the Windhoek matrix/area for fieldwork, and refers to the urban geographic character of Namibia's capital city. Windhoek was a relevant location for research concerning workplace literacies for graduate employees employed in the commercial sector. The capital city boasts of tertiary institutions, financial firms, banks and the headquarters of the Ministry of Finance. Windhoek, as a city, has the advantage of attracting young graduates leaving the University of Namibia, the Namibia University of Science and Technology, as well as the International University of Management.

1.8 Definition of terms and concepts used in the study

1.8.1 Literacy

Fourty years ago literacy was conceptualised as the ability to read and write texts. However, that conceptualisation has since changed and literacy is now regarded not as a skill, but rather as what is done or performed in a given context, such as the workplace as a contextualised activity.

1.8.2 Workplace literacy

Workplace literacy refers to the ability of individuals to respond effectively to the literacy demands of the workplace.

1.8.3 English for Specific Purposes

ESP is an approach of teaching English used in academic studies or for vocational professional purposes.

1.8.4 Competence and competency

'Competence' means a skill and the standard of performance reached while 'competency' refers to the behaviour by which it is achieved. In other words, competence describes what people can do while competency focuses on how they do it.

1.9 Outline of the chapters

The presentation of this study is divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: *Introduction* discusses the background and orientation to the study.

Chapter 2: *Becoming literate and developing literacies* gives an overview of the pertinent conceptual framework of research done in the area of literacy and theory of learning by probing rationales and theories.

Chapter 3: *The nature and development of workplace literacies* gives an overview of the pertinent theoretical literature in the area of workplace literacy, competencies, language skills, ESP and course design.

Chapter 4: *Research Methodology* surveys the differing paradigms of mixed methods research design and methodology of the study. Its procedures, but also possible limitations, are discussed. The way in which the methodology was operationalised in the Windhoek setting is explained and includes the population and sampling, research methods and instruments, as well as data collecting and analysing procedures.

Chapter 5: *The presentation of Findings and Discussion* presents the data analysed from the survey questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions. It, furthermore, discusses the findings gained from these strategies employed.

Chapter 6: *Conclusions and Recommendations* presents *and* summarises the findings, draws conclusions of the study and identifies the pedagogical implications of the research, as well as provides recommendations.

1.10 Conclusion

This introductory chapter provided the general direction and set the tone which delineated its scope and posit its focus. The study was conceived against the backdrop of concern that tertiary education in the country was not meeting the needs of employers and the workplace, such as occupation specific language knowledge, generic skills and competencies. Next, the statement of the problem was discussed and the research questions presented. This was followed by discussion of the significance

of the study signifying why this study was relevant and imperative to stakeholders. Some limitations of the study were also outlined. Finally, the terms literacy, workplace literacy, ESP, competence and competency were discussed.

CHAPTER 2

BECOMING LITERATE AND DEVELOPING LITERACIES

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 the background that gave rise to this study was introduced. This chapter discusses conceptual frameworks, concepts and themes relevant to the research at a macro level. The concept regarding becoming literate and how to develop literacies will be explored.

This chapter begins by exploring the theoretical work of Vygotsky regarding learning and social development. Secondly, it provides a historical perspective by tracking the evolution of literacy and literacies, as well as the role of English and multilingualism in Namibia. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework of this study.

2.2 Vygotsky's theory of learning and intellectual development

In order to put Vygotsky's work into perspective, mention is first made to Piaget. Perhaps the most widely known theory of conceptual development is that of Piaget (1958). Educators have relied on Piaget's work for several decades to aid in understanding the intellectual capabilities of children and adolescents. Psychologists have borrowed from Piaget's theory to explain processes underlying comprehension and memory performance. A common interpretation of Piaget's theory is that intellectual development results from maturation or biological processes; therefore, children can achieve mature forms of

intellectual functioning even if they are not exposed to the types of knowledge and instruction provided by teachers in schools.

An alternative theory of cognitive development was advanced by Vygotsky in his work of modern translation in 1978. What distinguishes Vygotsky's theory from the schema theories of Piaget and others is Vygotsky's (1978) claim that all higher level cognitive processes arise out of social experience. Vygotsky (1978) conceptualised the socio-cultural theory of development. Vygotsky's theory emphasises the complex but critical interactions between social, cultural and personal factors, elements that weave together to create a learning environment that is as unique as the individual. While the theory explains how children learn, it is also relevant and could apply to how students, who are adults at tertiary level, learn and develop the language required in the workplace, as covered in ESP courses.

Schunk (2007) notes that fewer discussions address the adequacy of Vygotsky's theory. For the purposes of this research, I will briefly examine the research surrounding the following specific issues/concepts as defined by Vygotsky.

2.2.1 The social origins of intellectual development

According to this theory (Vygotsky, 1978), children acquire symbolic processes, like spoken and written language, by interacting with their parents, teachers and other adults. Such interactions allow children to identify and abstract effective means for speaking, remembering and problem-solving. Internalisation occurs only after children have first

used cognitive operations in situations where adults or experts mediate verbally and regulate their performance. Gradually children transform or reconstruct these external operations and the means for regulating them in order for them to occur internally. Some operations may always remain external but if an operation is internalised, the structure of the child's mind is reorganised, creating new abilities in the child which would not have existed otherwise (Vygotsky, 1978).

Thus, Vygotsky proposes that cognitive development results from learning experiences in which children are taught to use various intellectual or cognitive skills through social interactions with others. A basic implication of his theory is that the structure and quality of the intellectual abilities children develop reflect the structure and quality of the social interactions children have had with their parents and other adults. For example, students can learn by observing activities and interactions of others in a social setting, as well as interact within those settings. If students have access to a more knowledgeable person or persons with whom they communicate or interact socially, their level of language acquisition and learning would improve. Conversely, if adult students at university level had interacted meaningfully with their knowledgeable lecturers and peers, their level of workplace literacies and competencies, the focus of this study, would be improved. In a classroom setting, a student may benefit from being able to interact freely and socially with other students while the teacher takes on a facilitating and monitoring role. It is evident that Vygotsky's emphasis on the social origins of development makes his theory of cognitive development distinct from the theories of most Western psychologists. Consequently, it can be argued that, as children employ social interactions to acquire many

language aspects, adults can also learn a great deal about literacy required in the workplace from interactions, even though the offered ESP course was not adequate.

2.2.2 Self-regulatory speech functions and concept formation

While Vygotsky saw all higher mental functions as arising from social interactions, he was mainly interested in the regulatory or executive functions of inner-speech (Wertsch, 1979). In more prosaic terms, Vygotsky attempted to account for people's ability to do things 'mentally'. Vygotsky's description of inner-speech functions mirrors the Western construct of metacognition.

In both constructs, inner-speech and metacognition, self-regulatory skills are defined as routines people use to plan, monitor and direct their own cognitive behaviour based on insights they have about how their own minds work. For each cognitive function people acquire, like text comprehension, self-regulation appears only after the function has been used and practised unconsciously for long periods of time. Vygotsky, as a first point of departure, emphasised self-regulation as a language function that children acquire through social interactions with their parents, teachers and peers. Secondly, he attributed the development of this function specifically to students having to learn abstract concepts, such as those taught in the academic courses of most schools. To put the above theory into the context of this study, it is possible that the teaching of an ESP course could only be preparing students as far as abstract concepts, such as those taught in the academic courses of most universities, are concerned, without relating these concepts to actual workplace literacies; therefore, this study intended to establish how prepared the students were for

the literacy requirements of their workplace after completing the ESP course offered by their institution. Since schools are established to transmit this type of knowledge, Vygotsky proposed that school instruction induced two interrelated types of cognitive function, namely concept-formation and self-regulation. Vygotsky (1979, 1986) argues that by learning concepts in school students acquire a type of knowledge that is fundamentally different from concepts they acquire from everyday experience. Learning such systems creates hierarchical knowledge structures which enable students to classify and generalise ideas and to think in relational terms. Students must practise these thinking skills or operations unconsciously under adult guidance before they can subject the operations to deliberate direction and control. However, once students have grasped the significance of the structure of relations between ideas in one content area, they can transfer and use this type of knowledge to learn more complex concepts in that area, as well as concepts in other domains of university instruction. This theoretical stand is an important observation for young graduates, for example those employed in the commercial industry, in terms of how much of what is learnt is grasped and transferred to the workplace. The argument here is that the teaching of an ESP course could fall into the trap of being at an abstract and academic level without including a practical part on ground level or at working places where each has unique workplace literacies. Therefore, this study explored the ways in which the ESP courses offered at tertiary institutions in Namibia prepared graduates to relate to the literacy that their workplaces required.

According to Vygotsky (1979), as students acquire new knowledge, they also acquire new routines for regulating and controlling their use of that knowledge. Self-regulation occurs

only after students have perceived the significance of structural relations among concepts used in a real-life situation, such as a workplace. This can happen only after teachers have verbally mediated and guided students' use of the concepts for extended periods of time in real social interactions, such as workplaces, which have their own unique literacies. Such an approach could improve the workplace literacy as students would see the relevance of what they learn in class as preparatory ground for the real life situation of their employment.

2.2.3 The zone of proximal development

According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 86), the zone of proximal development, or ZPD, is "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 peers." The bottom level or entry point of this zone can be equated to where the learner is currently operating individually on his or her own, whilst the top level or target objective is where the learner currently cannot function adequately without assistance. The teacher's role is to guide and provide a way that can guide the learner in this endeavour through the zone by way of scaffolding to reach the top level of the zone. The teacher, therefore, would then act as a helper that can be referred to when students need questions to be answered. Learners, therefore, collaborate and assist each other in problem solving, which draws on Vygotsky's belief in assisted discovery (Vygotsky, 1978).

In relation to the current study, Vygotsky's theory is applicable in that it highlights that lecturers should treat students as individuals who cannot be separated from their socio-cultural contexts and life experiences as they tend to draw on knowledge and language used or learned in previous communications. The teacher is said to be successful if the learner completes the journey to the target objective, and when the learner is let loose, he or she is able to operate independently at a higher developmental level as a result. Vygotsky's definition of the ZPD includes the phrase 'under adult guidance' or 'in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978). One is, therefore, inclined to say that the theory is applicable to teachers, as well as lecturers.

It is thus important to consider the way in which tertiary institutions in Namibia assist their young graduates to acquire workplace-ready knowledge, competencies and attitudes to prosper in the workplace. It is generally accepted that universities must pass on knowledge and skills; however, as it can be deduced from employers' outcry about the perceived incompetence of Namibian graduates (Angula, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2011a, 2011b; Dentlinger, 2006; Ihuhua, 2011; Links, 2010; Shipanga, 2012), much more needs to be done. Whether or not the teaching of a course like ESP is well tied to real world applications, such as equipping students with various workplace literacies, was one of the main aims of this study.

Vygotsky's theory suggests an intriguing framework for teaching and learning. One should consider how his theory applies to actual practice. Vygotsky believed that the most effective learning occurred within, and was inseparable from the socio-cultural context in

which it was found. With this belief in mind, lecturers of English for Specific Purposes need to consider and envision where students are at the time they begin their tertiary studies. It is mostly accepted that by the time students enter tertiary institutions, they have traditionally acquired the basic knowledge of English which one could regard as the bottom level of the zone. Once there, the lecturers are supposed to take them through this zone by way of graduated assistance, where lecturers use scaffolding, collaborative techniques and cued help towards an understanding of how those concepts apply in everyday contexts, such as workplaces. In addition, the theory posits that full development during ZPD depends upon full, social interaction. The range of skills that can be developed with adult/lecturer/teacher guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone.

In a wide range of ways, lecturers and teachers mediate the world for students/learners and make it possible for them to gain access to it (see Figure 3 below).
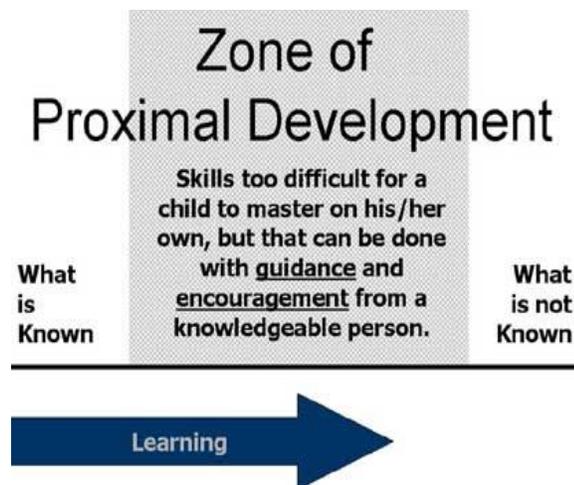
Figure 3: *Vygotsky's zone of proximal development*
Note. Mungongi (2016)

In Vygotskian terms, speech can grow as the child takes over control of the language used initially with other children and adults. Language thus provides the child with a new tool, as well as opens up new opportunities for doing things and for organising information through the use of words as symbols. Children, or more specifically students', second or third language learning depends on what they experience. Within the ZPD, the broader and richer the language experience that is provided to Namibian university students through a course, such as ESP, the more they are likely to learn and succeed in their workplaces. Social interactions are key to filling the gap between what students have learnt in this course and what actually goes on in a workplace in terms of workplace literacy. The idea of providing work-related learning, as well as internship and induction training to newly employed graduates, is key in the ZPD connotation.

This study looked at the teaching of an ESP course in terms of how it equipped students with adequate workplace literacies for commercial/accounting related workplaces. The study aimed to establish those literacies dominant in the commerce-related workplace and how the newly employed students and graduates, having completed an ESP course during their undergraduate studies, would relate to that workplace literacy for effective, everyday communication without breakdowns in communication due to what may appear to be alien workplace literacies not covered in the offered ESP course.

2.3 Literacy and literacies

2.3.1 Historical development

Literacy was once thought to be concerned with the ability to read and write, but the notion of 'literacy' was expanded by UNESCO in 1957 to include basic mathematics and functional literacy. Since the mid-1970s, a number of social scientists have taken a fresh look at national literacy programmes and at the singular concept of literacy. Some researchers were psychologists with a cross-cultural perspective. Scribner and Cole (1981) working in Liberia and Heath (1983) in the United States, suggest that researchers should resist making broad statements about literacy and its consequences (social or cognitive) because there exist a variety of literacy programmes and activities.

One way for understanding the changing nature of how to understand 'literacy' comes in the form of New Literacy Studies (NLS). In the last two decades of the twentieth century an interdisciplinary group of academics, including Gee (1991), Barton (1994), The New London Group (1996), Cope and Kalantzis (2000) as well as Street (2000) started to approach literacy from a pluralist and sociocultural point of view. This multi-literacies framework extends the more traditional definition of literacy – the ability to read and write – to encompass "dynamic, culturally and historically situated practices of using and interpreting diverse written and spoken texts to fulfil particular social purposes" (Kern, 2000, p. 6). This new twist in direction has shifted the predicated single referent of literacy to different literacies. Pluralists believe not only that we should speak of 'literacies' rather than 'literacy', but reject the notion that literacy practices are neutral with regard to power, social identity and political ideology. Within this framework, reading and writing are

integral to meaning construction rather than support skills. It was, therefore, important to establish the many workplace literacies graduates needed in the field of commerce.

They continued to review 'literacy' in a traditional way, as 'reading and writing', but looked to move away from defining it as a merely cognitive process. This became known as New Literacy Studies (NLS). Thus, Gee (2010) postulates that:

> The NLS opposed a traditional psychological approach to literacy. Such as the approach that viewed literacy as a 'cognitive phenomenon' and defined it in terms of mental states and mental processing. The 'ability to read' and 'the ability to write' were treated as things people did inside their heads. The NLS instead saw literacy as something people did inside society. It argued that literacy was not primarily a mental phenomenon, but rather a sociocultural one. Literacy was a social and cultural achievement. Thus, literacy needed to be understood and studied in its full range of contexts … not just cognitive but social, cultural, historical, and institutional, as well. (p. 10)

Literacy, therefore, was no longer a journey that a teacher could take a child upon to a predictable destination, but something that resulted from thought and an evolving understanding of the world. Literacy became, explicitly, a construct. In fact, a plurality of literacies is necessary, NLS theorists argue, because texts can be read in different ways. The Bible, for example, can be read from a religious, historical or hermeneutic point of view meaning that literacy always involves 'apprenticeship' to a group. Being literate is always being literate for entry into a particular community or group as Gee (2010) posits:

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Many different social and cultural practices incorporate literacy, so, too, there are many different 'literacies' (legal literacy, gamer literacy, country music literacy, academic literacy of many different types). People do not just read and write in general, they read and write specific sorts of 'texts' in specific ways; these ways are determined by the values and practices of different social and cultural groups. (p. 11)

This study endeavoured to establish the many 'texts' graduates were expected to read and write in specific ways in the context of the commercial workplace. Proponents of the NLS, therefore, do not consider literacy directly but always through the lens of organisations, institutions and groups. Confusingly, though, New Literacies Studies, instead of focusing on viewing literacy in a new way, investigated literacies beyond print literacy. The NLS was part of a wider 'social turn' which shifted the focus away from individual minds towards social interactions. Proponents of NLS argue that literacy (i.e. 'reading and writing') is always for a purpose and, therefore, must be understood as operating within social and cultural contexts. The specific practices of literacies, taking place within specific contexts, are known as 'discourses'. Discourses are connected stretches of language about what one says and how it is said in given contexts. Discourses are required by all of us as we live our lives. It is not something that is learned or taught in a classroom, but is acquired over the course of living, working and interacting with people.

Understanding literacy as operating within such discourses can lead to two different types of 'new literacy'. Understanding workplace practices and literacies has a major influence on learning by graduates. Every workplace can be understood to have a learning culture,

strongly affected by those practices. Therefore, this study aimed to establish the many learning cultures and contexts that are prevalent in the commercial workplace.

As Lankshear and Knobel (2006) point out, educational practices within the realm of the first type of new literacy often fall into the trap of 'old wine in new bottles'. Just because new contexts are being used through the use of new technologies does not mean that any form of 'literacy' is involved. For new discourses to be created, both new contexts and new literacy practices are necessary. In other words, literacy is more than merely the mastery of procedural skills. Literacy also confers some kind of status to a set of practices. For something to be a 'literacy' means that it is a socially-acceptable practice to be engaged in and, therefore, something with which an 'educated' person needs to be familiar. There is a tendency for educational institutions, conservative at the best of times, to focus on the denotative, procedural, and cognitive elements of literacy. The 'social turn' that came about because of the new way to reconceptualise literacy has meant, in some cases, to use traditional, literacy practices with new technologies: requiring students to 'type up' their essays, for example, or produce a PowerPoint presentation. These, however, fail to immerse and induct young people into the kind of 'discourses' that they encounter outside and beyond school, college and university.

Cazden, Cope, Fairclough and Gee (1996), in their seminal discussion of multi-literacies, describe a fundamental shift in the understanding of reading and writing literacy from one which assumes a page-bound, monolingual, mono-cultural environment to one which includes multicultural, multilingual and multiple channels of communication. This has

included moving away from a text-based approach to literacy development to one that includes print, visual and multimedia resources.

To establish whether or not the teaching of a course, like ESP, was well tied to the various workplace literacies as espoused above was one of the driving forces of this study. Street (1993) used the term 'literacies' to indicate that literacies vary according, not least, to different contexts, purposes and social relationships. This definition is echoed by Barton and Hamilton (2000, p. 180) who state that "Literacies are coherent configurations of literacy practices: often these sets of practices are identifiable and named, as in 'academic literacy' or 'workplace literacy', and they are associated with particular aspects of cultural life." In his reading, Street describes some disagreement between himself and the linguist, Gunter Kress, about the value of the concept of 'multiple literacies'. Street (2000) stresses that there is no need to make literacy plural because it is a normal and fundamental characteristic of language and literacy to be constantly remade in relation to the needs of the moment. For Kress (1997), plurality or multiplicity is a fundamental feature of language and, therefore, it is also superfluous or even misleading to talk of 'literacies'. Street (2000) agrees with Kress's theory of language and literacy but argues that, for strategic reasons, it is important to stress plurality in order to challenge the view that there is only one kind of literacy which is both uniform in nature and in terms of outcomes. Street's assertion is exactly what the current study intended to establish from tertiary graduate employees, tertiary institutions and employers regarding their perceptions of the concept of workplace literacy in the Namibian context, namely whether one should employ the term 'literacies' in the research context and what was meant by that.

As Wringly and Guth (1992) point out, the lack of a single definition of literacy has led educators to adopt different approaches to ESL literacy instruction. However, it is of critical importance that educators and curriculum developers identify a theoretically sound model of literacy that is appropriate for their target group of students in order to ensure graduates that are ready for the specific job market, such as that of commerce. I would accept a conception of literacy being regarded in the plural form to denote the many literacy aspects, both technical and non-technical graduates, need to make a meaningful contribution to their professional setting.

The researcher's own understanding of literacy differs from the skills-related definition of decoding and encoding words, where the page or screen, or the setting, is the context. In this definition, context is seen as merely background. In my view, the ways in which people make sense of texts and the choices they make when they write are more than background. People both shape and are shaped by their social context. I accept that people who read and write apply their minds to the task, but one sees many threads beyond the individual and the print. When one speaks of literacy as a social practice, one sees that meaningful communication through print is intimately interwoven with the social context. The researcher sees literacy much like a tapestry, where literacy practices are one thread in a rich weave of multiple threads. Only when the thread is examined in relation to the entire tapestry can one see the pattern. The social context includes the social relationships and power relations among the readers and writers of texts, the previous experiences and mind-sets that people bring to a text, their purposes in engaging (or not) with the text, their

cultural attitudes, beliefs and values, the local and the wider social or institutional settings. All of these are closely intertwined with what we see as 'reading' and 'writing', as well as how and why people read and write. The same goes for language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as language usage, in social contexts. Furthermore, because one sees literacy as learned and practised in many social groups and cultures, when we speak of 'literacy', we recognise many 'literacies'. The understanding of literacy from an instrumental point of view or human capital ideology, which is often associated with a means to a defined end-employment alone, is erroneous. Literacy ought to be localised in various contexts which draw on the historical and the cultural. In the following sections, several conceptualisations of literacy will be identified and briefly discussed.

2.3.2 Models of literacy and literacies

2.3.2.1 Literacy as cognitive and intellectual skill

For centuries, the view prevailed that literacy was a simple, learned cognitive skill. One learned to read and write just as one learned to make baskets, kick a ball, kill a deer or build a fire. A mastered skill was quite obvious. It implied that literacy consists of technical skills that are learned independently from the social or cultural influences and that literacy learning is neutral and apolitical. It was recognised that those who had mastered a skill could use it to their advantage in terms of influence and prestige. However, this was considered a question of power relations, not one of literacy.

Cognitivists such as (Gee, 1992; Street, 1988; Vygotsky, 1986) believe that literacy is largely taught and learned as a collection of cognitive skills. For alphabetic languages, print is a code that represents phoneme/grapheme correspondence; therefore, learning to read and write begins with learning the code. Cognitive theorists, in addition, believe that stages of reading or writing development are necessary to guide teaching; the stages illuminate the competence that is optimal for specific purposes and they identify and explain the inadequacies exhibited by certain groups. Such cognitive theories of literacy development demonstrate the common features that are valued and continue to be emphasised by influential institutions and current policies. If theories in practice reflect the lenses through which individuals see the world (Tracey & Morrow, 2006), the cognitive lens implies that individuals who stray from the prescribed stages are deficient in their literacy skills. From a critical literacy theory position (Tracey & Morrow, 2006), however, one must question whether adherence to this view disadvantages students who stem from non-mainstream backgrounds, whose out-of-school literacy practices conflict with these stages of development. This being the case, the academic literacy practices discriminate against students from diverse backgrounds, blocking their success in literacy learning. An alternate school of thought is that the cognitive perspective of literacy development is indeed too limited in its understanding of how individuals learn to read and write; rather, that the roles of individuals' social and cultural environments must be considered. The main interest in this study was to establish how the newly employed graduates from Namibia's universities fitted into the working world, and how the ESP course they had attended at their tertiary institution could be seen as having prepared them for this new environment as far as workplace literacy was concerned.

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For at least four decades, there has been extensive debate in academic circles regarding the question of the relationship between Western civilisation, development and literacy. Theorists like Goody (1977) have argued that literacy is a primary determinant of technological advancement. In the strongest formulations of this viewpoint, literacy is seen as having a profound impact on the intellectual powers of individuals and societies. The individual who becomes literate undergoes a transformation not too different from that of the butterfly which is transformed from a 'crawling wormlike thing' to a flying birdlike thing.

2.3.2.2 A social theory of literacy: Practices and events

Another conceptualisation and burgeoning research, as well as scholarship, in the field of literacy studies is what has come to be known as 'literacy as a social practice' and 'event' which situate literacy within broader institutional contexts. This refers to literacy practice as that which occurs in the immediate setting of literacy events. Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic (2000) discuss literacy in terms of 'events' and 'practices' rather than 'skills.' The term 'practice' is understood to mean the cultural ways in which people utilise written language in their everyday lives. These are in the simplest sense "what people do with literacy" (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000, p. 180). However, Street (1993) argues that practices are not observable units of behaviour since they also involve values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships. Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic (2000) contend that these are internal to individuals while, at the same time, being social processes that connect people with one another. In a university or faculty context, a literacy event could thus be

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asking lecturers to identify a literacy practice that did not work effectively in their subject by using an agreed framework to make small incremental changes in order to improve and make it more meaningful for learning. Conversely, one group of students could be given the classroom task and be asked how it could be improved by using, for example, a cooperative learning model. As a result, this group will make their comments by understanding, describing and giving feedback to the larger group regarding the literacy practice.

On the other end, literacy events are activities where reading or writing have a role which usually involves a written text or texts central to the activity. For Barton, Hamilton and Ivanic (2000), literacy events "are observable episodes which arise from [literacy] practices and are shaped by them" (p. 185). Written texts and how they are produced and used are a crucial aspect of literacy events and these three components of practices; events and texts are drawn upon to provide the social view of literacy as "best understood as a set of social practices; these are observable in events which are mediated by written texts" (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000, p. 189). Therefore, we move away from a view of writing as an autonomous, individually acquired skill towards a view in which the creation of texts is considered a culturally-bound, dynamic, meaning-making practice. This is a view in which literacy is seen as a fundamentally social process rather than as a collection of cognitive skills to a sociocultural view that construes literacy as a collection of fundamentally social activities into which one is enculturated. In this sense, literacy practices and their meanings are always under the shaping influence of a particular context such as workplace; reading and writing both embody and transform particular ways of

thinking, acting and knowing within specific communities (Gee, 1992). Since discourse is perhaps the most conspicuous feature of school life (Cazden, 1988), particularly discourse in the service of promoting more abstract forms of thought, the notion of literacy as a set of social practices has important implications for learning in schools. First, it suggests that learning typically involves the 'apprenticeship' of individuals to more knowledgeable others, such as teachers or peers (Rogoff, 1990). Second, it considers the dialogic quality of the interactions that further students' literacy acquisition and use. That is to say, it takes seriously the idea that lecturers interact with students and students interact with lecturers and/or peers in ways that mutually influence one another. Finally, a view of literacy as social practice assumes that, as students begin to develop the communicative competency vital to their participation in various types of educative contexts, they are not simply 'acquiring' a skill, they are learning how to construct and articulate their identities.

Literacy events have four components: participants, settings, artefacts or materials and activities. These are the observational components. Underlying these may be a variety of influencing factors, such as goals, power and cultural tradition (Fagan, 2001). Whether a literacy event is successful does not depend solely on whether one can read or write but on the interplay of factors within the literacy event, that is, the literacy behaviours. If the intent of the person who initiated the literacy event has been attained, then the event is successful; if, on the other hand, the event does not lead to the attainment of the initiator's intent, then the initiator has not been able to accomplish what she/he has set out to do when using reading/writing as a medium. The focus of this study was to establish how

newly employed graduates from universities were prepared by the ESP courses offered by their institutions for the workplace literacies required at their places of employment, as well as whether or not the tertiary institutions were successful in accomplishing just that.

Scribner and Cole (1981) define a literacy practice as consisting of three components: technology, knowledge and skills. Literacy is seen as a set of socially organised practices, making use of symbol systems and technology for producing and disseminating knowledge. Technology is referred to as characteristics of the graphic symbol system, as well as material means of its presentation (Scribner & Cole, 1981). Hence, technological aspects of literacy determine the kind of skills associated with literacy. This suggests that, to understand a literacy practice in a particular context, a researcher needs to look into both the graphic symbol systems (e.g., verbal and numeric symbols, visual use) and also the materials on which these symbols are written on (paper, cloth, wooden board, etc.).

In the learning process, people need to test what they have acquired by passing it through an experiential filter. Rodriquez Illera (2004) has contended that literacy should be understood not as a 'state' which an individual has managed to reach, but instead as a 'process'. Rodriguez Illera (2004) believes that there is a need to rethink literacy in terms of 'literate practices', that literacy should be seen as "a process and not only as a state, and [emphasise] its multiple character and, above all, its social dimension" (pp. 58-59). Viewing literacy as a social process gives rise in the literature to much discussion about social and cultural practices upon which literacy may be predicated. Scribner and Cole (1981) instance that literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a given text but

rather the application of this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts. What was not known, however, was whether or not this was the way ESP courses were taught at universities in preparing the students for their various job assignments in the different workplaces in Namibia. This aspect was a focus point of this study.

2.3.3 Fragmentation of research about literacy

Part of the reason that educational institutions have persisted in the 'old wine in new bottles' technique may be due to the fact that research concerning literacy studies has been extremely fragmentary. Some researchers and practitioners adhere to 'multi-literacies', some remain advocates of the NLS, whilst some are attempting to define NLS under various different names. Some reject, or are unaware of, these categories altogether and continue to focus upon individual, cognitive definitions of literacy. This fragmentation about the understanding of 'literacy' is complicated by the involvement of governments and big business in the landscape (Belshaw, 2011). Given the "constantly changing practices through which people make traceable meanings'' (Gillen & Barton, 2009, p. 1), the changing technologies upon which they are based, and the fluid nature of 'Communities of Practice' (CoP) (Wenger, 1998) that often spring up within such discourses, it becomes difficult for researchers to devise universally-applicable frameworks. A community of practice, according to Wenger (1998, 2004), is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. This network of people engages in a process of collective learning and defines their way of doing things in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a clique of students defining their identity in school, a network

of surgeons exploring novel techniques are some examples of CoP. This arrangement can happen intentionally or as a result of members' incidental interactions. The CoP concept has far-reaching insights about workplace learning and productivity, and is seen as an essential component of the knowledge-based view of the firm. Learning is not a process of transmission of knowledge from one individual to another, but should rather be seen as a process in which knowledge is mutually co-constructed. Lankshear (2007) says that:

> Literacies can involve any kind of codification system that 'captures' language but, in order to do so, must be 'frozen' or 'captured' in ways that free them from their immediate context of production so that they are 'transportable'. (p. 3)

Such 'freezing' of dynamic and fluid discourses is necessary for the sake of encoding, but can mean that definitions, frameworks and models either age quickly or are so vague as to be meaningless. 'Freezing' literacy practices in order to put them into a framework, therefore, becomes problematic. Workplace literacy is an evolving concept with the changing times and spaces of workplaces. The training and personal development necessary to become 'workplace literate' will, therefore, also evolve. Whilst competency in a given area does not require a level of criticality and reflexive practice, the use of the term 'literacy' would suggest that criticality and reflexive practice are some of the elements needed in the present day workplace.

A return to the reading and writing framework of literacy clearly shows that while it may be possible to produce a workplace literacy model of the ways in which elements of workplace literacies fit together, they will not necessarily fit together in the same way for everyone. There is widespread confusion among university academics regarding the

nature and purpose of even generic skills in higher education. Employers and employees alike have varying understandings of generic skills and their importance in the workplace. Given that employment in this century will be vastly different from what has preceded, it seems to be time for employers and universities to reconceptualise the kinds of workplace literacy needs and abilities that are considered necessary for the new graduate. Input from employees themselves proves to be essential as well in the way they want to be trained for the job market.

For his part, Freire (1992), states that the above conceptualisation of teaching and learning can be seen quite plainly in a functional model of literacy. A functional literacy derives its construction of what people will use literacy for, as well as what people do with literacy now. Functionality commits students to a naïve objectivism that 'banks' the future as a version of the present (Freire, 1992). The various understandings of 'literacy', therefore, runs deeper than a fragmentation of research into new literacies: a fragmentation in approach, in mind sets and in ethos is evident. Even if 'criticality' is seen as a necessary part of new literacies, there remains disagreement even as to what this means in practice (Sanford & Madill, 2007, p. 288). Other theorists propose various 'literacies' as being the true umbrella term, the synthesising concept. Potter (2004, p. 33), for example, states that "reading literacy, visual literacy and computer literacy are not synonyms for media literacy; instead, they are merely components." What was not known, however, was whether or not this was the way in which the offered ESP courses were taught at Namibian universities to prepare students for their various job assignments in different workplaces in Namibia; this study aimed to establish just that.

2.4 Literacy as competence

In the last two decades, the term literacy has come to be commonly used as a statement or measure of competence, to do a given task or work in a given field. For example, people are said to be 'computer literate' or 'computer illiterate' depending on their ability to use a computer. Other areas of technical competence are treated in the same way. A similar use of the term is that of workplace literacy. In modern industry, more and more demands are made on workers to understand and manipulate symbols and abstract ideas related to their employment discipline in the form of reports, instructions, graphs and instrumentation. It seems that the literature is incredibly varied around 'competence' and 'competency' and the way these two terms are used and defined within the competence and professional development field. The use of terms can be crucial, as the various models for the development of a framework hinge upon specific definitions. McBer and company has worked in this field and has developed a model to assess competencies. The Fortune 500 companies are also using competency modelling as a tool to assess individuals by employers, peers and clients (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). This section intended to highlight different uses and definitions of the two concepts, in order to provide some insight into this area.

2.4.1 Defining competency and competence

Competency is one of the lingering issues regarding how employers perceive Namibian graduates. It is imperative to give a brief conceptual clarity of the concepts 'competence'

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and 'competency'. The number of definitions and descriptions of the two terms are myriad, and cover all sorts of variations impossible to cover in this study. Although they may sound similar, competence and competency are not necessarily synonymous. According to Verma, Paterson and Medves (2006), "competencies in education create an environment that fosters empowerment, accountability and performance evaluation, which is consistent and equitable. The acquisition of competencies can be through talent, experience, or training" (p. 109). Competence refers to a potential ability and/or a capability to function in a given situation. Competency focuses on one's actual performance in a situation. This means that competence is required before one can expect to achieve and/or demonstrate competency. Thus, competence makes one capable of fulfilling his/her job responsibilities. This study intended to establish whether the ESP courses offered at Namibian tertiary institutions fulfilled that expectation.

Rowe (1995, p. 12) suggests that "it is useful to use 'competence' to mean a skill and the standard of performance reached while 'competency' refers to the behaviour by which it is achieved." In other words, the one describes what people can do while the other focuses on how they do it. This distinction is supported by Hogg (2008) who opines that 'competency' is more precisely defined as the behaviours that employees must have, or must acquire, to input or bring into a situation in order to achieve high levels of performance, while 'competence' relates to a system of minimum standards or is demonstrated by performance and outputs. Rowe (1995) created an illustration which encapsulates the various descriptors:

Competence	⟶	Competency
Skill-based	⟵	Behaviour-based
Standard attained		Manner of behaviour
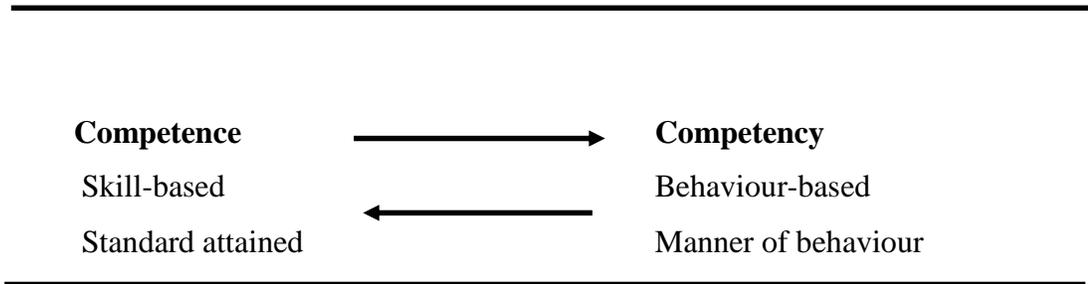
Figure 4: *The interface between competence and competency*

Note. Adapted from Rowe, 1995 (p. 13)

The illustration above neatly captures the distinction between the 'competence' descriptors of skills and standards and 'competency' descriptors of behaviour and style in which a standard can be achieved. In addition, Ellstrom (1997) uses the word 'qualification' as another interpretation of competence and argues that the notion of qualification may now be defined as competence required by the work task and/or implicitly or explicitly prescribed by the employer. It was, therefore, interesting to establish from Namibian employers on which side of the competence and competency model they stood in terms of assessing newly graduated employees. The purpose of an ESP course is to give the students both competence and competency. One of the aims of this study was to investigate whether this happened during the ESP courses offered at Namibian tertiary institutions or whether, and to what extent, one of the two was achieved at a higher rate than the other or nor, and with what outcome.

Male (2010) notes that the term generic competencies created considerable confusion in the research literature. For example, optimism and pessimism are considered attitudinal terms and thus are not listed in job descriptions (Hayward, 2002). Similarly, personal traits are also different from competencies. As a matter of fact, people bring their underlying physical and mental traits into the workplace and these traits include qualities, such as diligence, which is considered more inherent or learned early in life (Navahandi, 2006) and not at work. University education through courses, such as ESP, needs to be able to prepare graduates, not just with commercial fundamentals, but also for success and actual on-the-job skills. Essential for the skills set for any graduate includes capabilities in emotional intelligence. Goleman (1998) identified that emotional intelligence (EI) skills were declining in students and this was affecting their performance, which, in turn, affected their abilities to perform on the job as economists and accountants; it also affected their communication skills. This emphasises the need to integrate EI skills in modern education through courses, such as ESP. Improving such skills will help students to become better communicators, team workers and reflective and empathic practitioners of commerce. Emotions clearly play a major part in helping an individual to decipher and interact with the surrounding environment. This study aimed to establish to what extent this was accomplished by employing the skills acquired in the ESP courses offered to students before they joined the working world. Findings suggest that intelligence may be connected to as little as 4% of real-world success as it does not measure creativity or a person's unique potential (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997).

There is, likewise, a distinction between competencies and knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) meant for the workplace. According to Hsieh, Lin and Lee (2012, p. 29), knowledge refers to a body of information about the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject, acquired by a person through experience or education. Skills refer to the application of data or information with manual, verbal or mental proficiency. Knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA) are fundamental aspects of competencies but competencies are more behaviour-based rather than skill-based. Therefore, each competency requires several KSAs. While knowledge, skills and abilities may underlie competencies just as personal traits may underlie competencies, the KSAs, according to Kravetz (2008), are not the exact competencies. That is to say, demonstrating the KSAs does not automatically mean that one has a certain competency. Be that as it may, this study intended to establish whether the ESP courses on offer had provided graduating students with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to be productive in their specific commercial workplace.

2.4.2 Competency models

A competency model is a descriptive tool that identifies the competencies needed to operate in a specific role within a job, occupation, organisation or industry which a course, such as ESP, is supposed to give by design. Fogg (1999) states that a competency model is a behavioural job description that must be defined by each occupational function and each job. Depending on the work and organisational environment, a group of seven to nine total competencies are usually required in a particular job and depicted in a competency model (Shippman, Ash, Battists, Carr, Eyde, Hesketh, Kehoe, Pearlman & Sanchez,

2000). The Education and Training Administration (ETA) in the USA, for example, in cooperation with industry representatives, developed a generic framework depicting the competencies on nine tiers, with lower tiers serving as building blocks for the higher tiers (Personnel Decisions Research Institute and Aguirre International, 2005). The lower tiers describe foundational competencies with a broad application to many industries or occupations.

This foundational competencies group includes tiers one to three, which represent personal effectiveness, academic and workplace competencies. As one moves up the tiers, the competencies become more specific to an industry and an occupation. The second grouping is industry-related competencies and includes industry-wide, as well as industry-specific, technical competencies which are on tiers four and five. The third and final grouping on the ETA model is occupation-related competencies that subsume tiers six to nine which then include the occupation-specific knowledge competencies, occupation-specific technical competencies, occupation-specific requirements competencies, as well as management competencies. These elements of the competency models, developed by ETA and industries, are consistent with the literature that describes competency models. Rothwell (2002) explains that there are core competencies that are required of all workers. This would include knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), as well as soft skills or behaviours (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). The core competencies or skills are according to Rothwell (2002) similar across occupations and are required of many occupations as mentioned above.

Similarly, the European Union (EU) identifies eight competencies as the development of indicators which can be used to monitor and evaluate education and training progress across the European Union (Tu, 2006). These include language proficiency, time management, problem-solving, information seeking and applying, as well as the ability to learn by digital function (Personnel Decisions Research Institute and Aguirre International, 2005). A similar set of guidelines was proposed by the Department of Education Science and Training and the Australian National Training Authority in 2000. The above approaches regarding models to classify competencies, skills, knowledge and dispositions may help other countries to deconstruct what their employers mean when they find that young graduates lack employability skills.

2.4.3 Competencies necessary for workplace literacy

Spilka (2001, pp. 3-4) contends that to become "literate" in most workplace settings, professionals need to supplement basic reading and writing ability. In addition to that, Spilka (2001) mentions interacting with others in the workplace setting; planning how to produce a document that will fulfil its purposes; evaluating document drafts; using computer technology, as well as giving presentations, as some of the key competencies needed in the workplace. Spilka (2001), however, instances that developing these skills through courses, such as ESP, takes time. Research shows that some recent graduates from academic programmes require up to a full year or more in a new job before they are able to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to communicate effectively there, implying that it may require more than just taking a single subject, such as ESP, at university level but that the orientation or induction at any given workplace, once new employees are

recruited, could be vital. To establish whether or not this was done in Namibia or whether the expectation was that the ESP course, which they took while at university, alone could provide the newly employed graduates from universities with the necessary work place literacies was another aim of this study.

Wagner (2008), after speaking to representatives from the New World of work in the USA, discovered and identified what he called the Seven Survival "skills" (p. 12) of the twenty-first century as being: critical thinking and problem solving; collaboration across networks and leading by influence; agility and adaptability; initiative and entrepreneurialism; effective oral and written communication; accessing and analysing information; curiosity and imagination. The above examples show a glowing mismatch between how experts, on the one hand, and employers, on the other, view the perceived competencies at the workplace, and thus illustrates the need for a systematic unpacking of the components of graduate employability skills and what employers require of the modern graduate. The current study investigated whether it was assumed that this should be achieved through college or university designed courses, such as ESP.

2.5 Moving from academic literacy to workplace literacy

Until fairly recently, much tertiary education has concentrated more specifically on how to develop academic literacy as a key to academic success for tertiary students. It is important to think anew about literacy teaching and learning across a range of contexts, including that of universities. Universities have come to be particular, specialised institutions, with their own particular brand of learning and offering of curriculum

instruction. In the changing climate of institutions of higher education, language departments find themselves in a difficult position; programmes must demonstrate their relevance to the university's larger mission by teaching beyond verb conjugations or cultural generalities. One strategy for increasing relevance is to find ties between the instructional goals of language departments, the industry and those of the broader university community, and to instantiate programmatic change accordingly. The development of academic literacy, defined as the teaching textuality and genre in cultural contexts, is one such tie using courses like ESP. Indeed, as Swaffar and Arens (2005) convincingly argue, the development of academic literacy through the study of texts is the core matter of the humanities and the specific mission of foreign language (FL) or English as a second language (ESL) programmes.

However, the development of academic literacy in a FL or L2 is typically carried out in advanced undergraduate courses and often conflicts with the more programmatic focus of the introductory curriculum where linguistic development is the primary aim (Maxim, 2004; Byrnes, 2006). According to Kern (2003), multi-literacies instruction offers a way to narrow the long-standing pedagogical gap that has traditionally divided early levels of language teaching and what we do at advanced levels. That is, it offers a way to reconcile the teaching of "communication" with the teaching of "textual analysis" (p. 43). Within this framework, Kern (2000) defines literacy as:

> The use of socially, culturally-situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning through texts. It entails at least a tacit awareness of the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use and, ideally, the ability to reflect critically on those relationships. It draws on a wide range of cognitive abilities, on knowledge of written and spoken language, on knowledge of genres, and on cultural knowledge. (p. 16)

Sub-section 2.3.2 above discussed in some detail the notion of literacy and how it ought to be seen and practised in given contexts. Therefore, there are compelling reasons why tertiary institutions should move beyond merely providing academic literacy towards providing literacy for the workplace or with the workplace in mind. Moving from academic literacy to workplace literacy appears to be the direction today. One begins to argue that both academic places and workplaces, such as that of commerce/accounting firms, require a specific language variety. It is an issue of knowledge. It is about the ways in which these firms address reading, oral and writing communication tasks as rooted in their conceptions of knowledge and identity. Such knowledge is always embedded in specific job markets or educational contexts (such as universities) and the effect of learning that particular literacy will be dependent on those particular contexts. There is a need to understand whether our 'local literacies' (Barton, 1994; Baynham, 1995) are based on our local practices and understandings. Tertiary education ought to move beyond theoretical critiques and develop interventions in teaching, curriculum and how to measure literacy in both the formal and informal sectors. Workplace literacy ought to be a service offered for the purpose of improving the productivity of employees through the improvement of literacy competencies that are specific to the job, not the ability to read books, academic articles and newspapers with no apparent purpose. The goal of workplace literacy is to create compliant and efficient workers for the global economy. This study investigated whether or not this was the case in Namibia.

2.6 Drawing all threads together

This final section is intended to draw all threads together, review and synthesise all issues and concepts discussed earlier in this chapter. It will give my own perspectives and stand points on what is understood to be workplace literacy in the Namibian context. This conception allowed me to investigate issues of language workplace literacies, competencies, language transfer and transition, to establish how these theoretical concepts manifest in the day-to-day workplace. During the last decade, a good deal of research and opinion have extrapolated the concept literacy and workplace literacy regarding the level and type of competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes required. Section 2.3 above has extensively reviewed research in this area. Figure 5 below captures my own conceptualisation of literacy and workplace literacy.

Figure 5: *Conceptualisation of workplace literacies*

Note. Mungongi (2015). Created by the author using http://wordle.net with the size of the word indicating its frequency in the thesis

It appears that the majority of adult reading and writing are performed on workplace related material. The nature, difficulty and prevalence of these functional reading and writing tasks are particularly important to understand the listening, reading, speaking and writing demands encountered by graduates and their abilities to meet such demands. One can sidestep the issue of what skills comprise reading and writing and simply look at materials that people are able or unable to read and write. This, however, creates another problem of definition: Literacy means being able to read and write which materials? I argue here and suggest that the list of materials will always differ from person to person and situation to situation, and, therefore, offer a definition of literacy as the ability to respond competently to real-world listening, reading, spoken and written tasks. The reader and writer's literacy depends on the context of the situation, not on a specific achievement

level. Whilst adherents are clear as to what they are against (in this case a 'singular' or 'unitary' conception of literacy), it is not always clear what these adherents stand for. What constitutes a 'literacy'? What do 'literacies' have in common? Hannon (2000) attempts to bring some clarity by appealing to the notion of 'family resemblance'. His argument is that although we cannot define 'literacy' in a way that would satisfy every critic, we can nevertheless know what it means in practice. This fits in well with the pragmatic methodology and with my belief that one of the fundamentally important differences between considering 'literacy' and 'literacies' is that the latter foregrounds human agency in a way that the former does not.

Hannon (2000), however, does not position himself as either a 'unitary' or 'pluralist' thinker with respect to literacy. After suggesting that theorists prefer unitary or pluralist conceptions of literacy depending upon whether they focus on literacy as a skill (psychology) or as a social practice (sociology). Hannon (2000) questions why we need to choose between these two conceptions, continuing that "a full conception of literacy in education requires awareness of both" (Hannon, 2000, p. 38).

The notion of multi-literacies discussed in sub-section 2.3.2 above suffices. There is a seemingly wide agreement on the term workplace literacy, as an accepted form of new literacies. While literacy is still central to most notions of education, it is increasingly unclear what exactly we mean by that. This 'conceptual fuzziness' stems from the traditional (print) literacy through which we read and write – and also by what we mean by 'reading' and 'writing' in the first place. From the above overviews of the state of New

Literacies of different philosophical stances in different territories around the world, two things become clear. First, there is not one defined version of new literacies that is dominant everywhere around the world. The work done in the western world seems to be well-regarded in the English-speaking world, although this belief and thinking are always given a contextual twist. Secondly, new literacies seem to be less about pedagogy and educational outcomes and more about individual nations' internal social cohesion and external competition. Members of every culture and society have the world of everyday experience mediated by technology, traditions and cultural norms and expectations. This shapes what counts as being 'literate' within that society.

My further conceptualisation of literacy is that almost every living being, whether animal or human has found a way of communicating in real-time its understanding of the world through sounds and/or gestures. Language must be coded into symbols. These symbols have developed from pictorial cave paintings symbolising objects or simple ideas to sentences conveying meaning. These have subsequently evolved into the ability of humans to convey abstract concepts through an agreed and socially-negotiated written language. The person wishing to understand the information and meaning disseminated must be able to decode the symbols used. It is akin to giving someone a locked box: they must have the correct key in order to unlock it.

Literacy, then, at its most basic, includes the ability to decode symbols used for the purpose of disseminating information and meaning. But literacy has traditionally been seen as being more than 'ability to read and write'. That is to say, the individual must have

the means not only to decode but encode symbols for the purpose of disseminating information and meaning. In the physical sphere when dealing with printed or written documents, this is straightforward; deciding who is 'literate' or 'illiterate' is, therefore, relatively unproblematic. One way in which theorists appeal to a particular use of a communicative technology as a 'literacy' is by widening the definition of 'text'. In that case then, I argue that being able to manipulate workplace communicative tools competently can be regarded that the person concerned has some form of 'workplace literacies' in that domain. For example, the question can be asked whether the following informational diagram in Figure 6 below is 'text'?
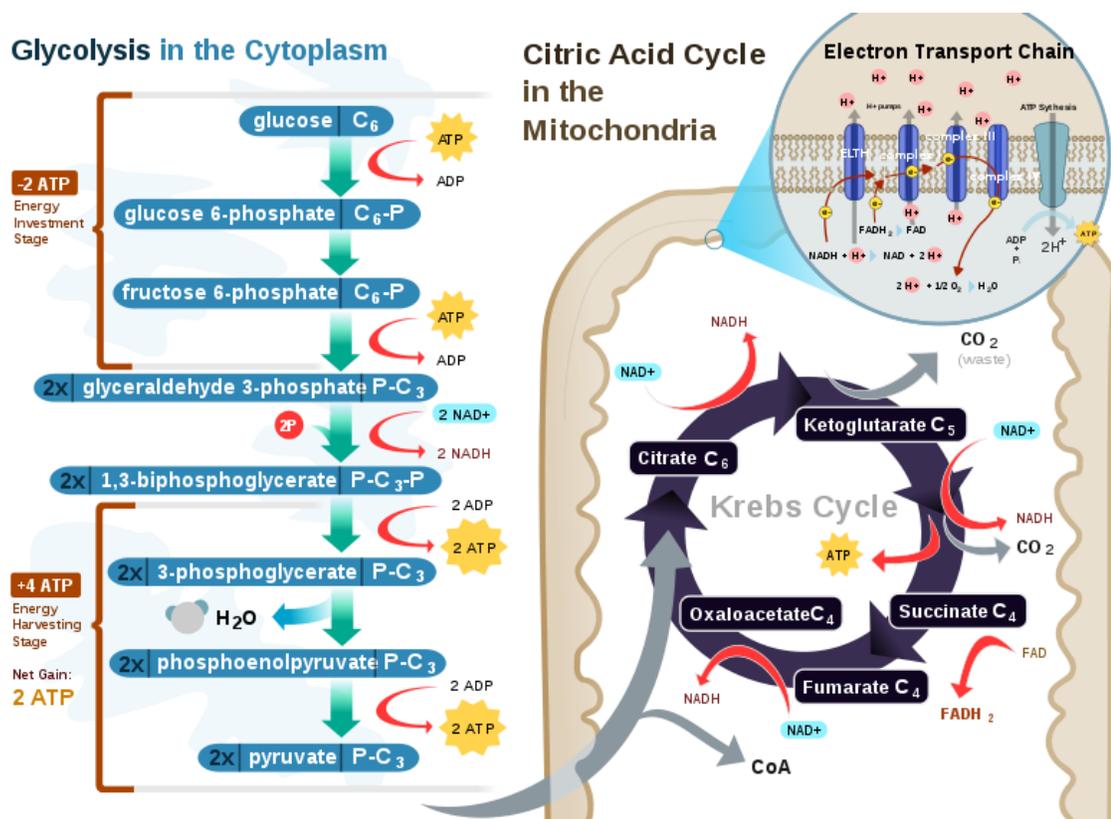
Figure 6: *Diagram from an article on cell respiration*
Note. Retrieved from http://commons.wikimedia.org

The diagram above (Figure 6) does, after all, require 'decoding' and interpreting. To the non-specialist who is without the tools, to do such decoding this diagram would be akin to a foreign language. The same, it could be argued, goes for paintings, maps and web pages. Many have attempted to be as inclusive as possible with the term 'text' giving, in effect, 'literacy' a metaphorical aspect.

The next quote by Lankshear and Knobel (2008a) boils 'literacy' down to reading something like:

> Whatever literacy is; it has something to do with reading. And reading is always reading something. Furthermore, if one has not understood [made meaning from] what one has read then one has not read it. So reading is always reading something with understanding. This something that one reads with understanding is always a text of a certain type which is read in a certain way. The text may be a comic book, a novel, a poem, a legal brief, a technical manual, a textbook in physics, a newspaper article, an essay in the social sciences or philosophy, a 'self-help' book, a recipe, and so forth, through many different types of text. Each of these different types of text requires somewhat different background knowledge and somewhat different skills. (p. 5)

If image-based 'texts' are included in definitions such as the one above, this leads to the possibility of using modifiers, such as 'visual literacy'. As almost anything can potentially be considered a 'text', this opens up a Pandora's Box called literacy. 'Literacies' thus becomes metaphorical if what is denoted is used to connote something else. This study explored the many 'texts' graduates were expected to read and write in specific ways in the commercial workplace context.

Defining literacy in relation to the tools used to encode and decode the symbols involved can be difficult. It should be ensured that literacy is not defined so broadly so as to exclude

almost any activity, but not so narrowly that it is almost impossibly prescriptive. 'Literacy'

ought to apply equally to instant, informal electronic communications and the creation of

formal, written, laboriously-created documents that have been handed down through

generations. That is to say, a balance needs to be found so that technologies for reading

and writing used in the past, as well as those that will be used in the future, for reading

and writing are included in the definitions of 'literacy'. My understanding of literacies

and/or specifically workplace literacies can be conceptualised through multilingual

contexts. Like other academics and practitioners who locate themselves within the

tradition of New Literacy Studies, I see literacies in the plural signalling a critique of the

social, historical skill/ability and understanding of reading and writing associated with

what Street (1984) called the 'autonomous' view of literacy (see Sub-section 2.3.1).

At the other extreme come conceptions of literacy as a critical activity, the ideological

aspect, also known as the social practice model. Literacy becomes "an active relationship

or a way of orienting to the social and cultural world" (Lankshear , 1999, p. 141). This

tension between the autonomous and the ideological comes because of an even more

fundamental dichotomy at the heart of literacy: either as a "tamer in the hands of rulers

and the church" or, on the other hand, as "one of the cornerstones of individual and social

emancipation" (Rantala & Suoranta, 2008, p. 95). Currently, it appears that in general

academic literacy curricula are largely premised on this view where learning is pre-

packaged and determined for students at tertiary institutions. The ideological view, on the

other hand, would claim that literacies (in a plural sense) are socially-negotiated and

culturally situated. Literacies emerge rather than being dictated, hence workplace

literacies. An aim of this study was to establish whether the ESP courses offered at tertiary institutions fulfilled that expectation.

I see literacy as more than a set of skills; it is a means of understanding one's place and purpose within a larger society and of negotiating a successful pathway through that social context. Literacy is not just *what* we think, but *how* we think. Different social situations require different literacy practices. Currently, it seems as if the workplace is, for most, the most important and culturally institutionalised site for literacy practice that students soon after university studies currently encounter. Literacies and/or workplace literacies are social practices: ways of reading and writing and using written texts that are bound up in social processes which locate individual action within social and cultural processes. For example, workplace literacies regarding the competencies of reading and writing depend on conventions. How people read and write is not universal, but governed by cultural and situational conventions; hence, the need for reading and writing conventions in the commercial sector should be considered. It should, however, not be forgotten that conventions evolve through use, and people modify them as needed for their own individual purposes. Graduates have to adapt their language use when they are in the unfamiliar contexts of work. Once appropriated, these conventions become resources for subsequent language use.

Secondly, workplace literacies involve interpretation. When employees write, they interpret the world (events, experiences, ideas, among others), and when they read they equally interpret the writer's intention in terms of their own conception of the world.

Thirdly, workplace literacy involves active thinking. Because words are always embedded in linguistic and situational contexts, reading and writing involve figuring out relationships between words, between larger units of meaning, and between texts and real or imagined words.

Fourthly, workplace literacies regarding reading and writing ought to be recursive as such recursion will allow employees to go back repeatedly to the texts they read and write. This can foster analysis and reflection about the processes of producing and interpreting meaning through language.

Fifth and lastly, workplace dynamics require non-verbal encoding and decoding of information. The value of explaining reading under the aegis of a theory of general cognition is compelling. Reading is a cognitive act, but there is nothing about reading that does not occur in other cognitive acts that do not involve reading. We perceive, recognise, interpret, comprehend, appreciate and remember information that is not in text form, as well as information that is in text form. Their differing characteristics develop into two separate mental systems or codes, one specialised for representing and processing language (the verbal code) and one for processing non-linguistic objects and events (the non-verbal code) (Sadoski & Paivio, 2004). The latter is frequently referred to as the imagery system or code because its functions include the generation, analysis and transformation of mental images (Sadoski & Paivio, 2004).

Because sensory systems are linked to motor response systems in perception (such as in eye movements, listening attitudes, active touch), these subsets have sensorimotor qualities (Sadoski & Paivio, 2004). We develop visual representations in the verbal code for language units we have seen, such as letters, words or phrases (as for example in 'baseball bat'). Conversely, we also develop visual representations in the nonverbal code for non-linguistic forms that we have seen, such as common objects or scenes (e.g., a wooden or aluminium baseball bat). Likewise, we develop auditory representations in the verbal code for speech units we have heard, such as phonemes and their combinations (e.g., the phoneme /b/, the rime /-at/, the word /bat/), and auditory representations in the nonverbal code for non-linguistic environmental sounds we have heard (e.g., the crack of a wooden bat hitting a ball or the clink of an aluminium bat) (Sadoski & Paivio, 2004). Of all the changes currently underway in the environment of meaning-making, one of the most significant challenges to the old literacy, is the increasing multimodality of meaning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Traditionally, literacy teaching has confined itself to the forms of written language.

Other modes, such as oral language (representing meaning to another and listening (representing meaning to oneself), visual representation of a still or moving image, graphs, vista, view, as well as a perspective representing meaning to another and to oneself respectively, are very important. It is in designing the curriculum that the competencies, skills, knowledge and abilities required in the workplace should be included – not incidentally but deliberately. Figure 7 below illustrates how such needs for specific and specified workplace literacies could be conceptualised.
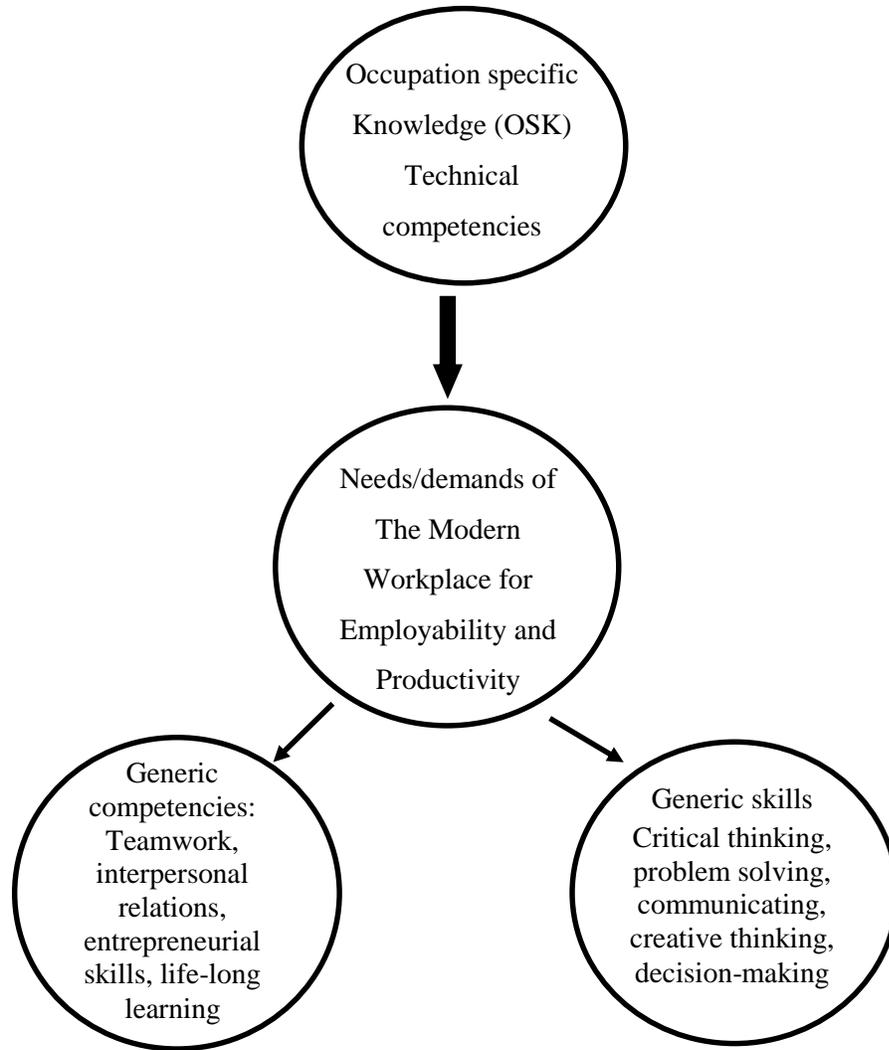
Figure 7: *Mapping the needs of the workplace*

Note. Mungongi (2016) Created by the author for the purpose of this study

These practices are partly observable in specific events, but also operate on a socio-cognitive level. These include the values, understandings and intentions people have, both individually and collectively, about what they and others do in the workplace. In this sense, the listening, speaking, reading and writing events and practices are required in the commercial sector. For example, reading and writing emails, company/institutional memos, telephone messages, work orders, purchase orders, business letters and personal

banking are some workplace literacies required in that sector. This study intended to establish whether the ESP courses offered at tertiary institutions provided some or most of these literacies.

However, it is much more than listening, speaking, reading and writing and hence the need to include the many non-verbal communication cues, so that literacy is also viewed beyond the print literacy that many are accustomed to. Focusing on the plurality of literacies means recognising the diversity of reading and writing practices and the different genres, styles and types of texts associated with various activities, domains or social identities.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, relevant and current seminal works, as well as research findings and the argumentation of prominent authors in the field of literacy conceptualisation, were presented and critiqued. The chapter provided a broader framework by engaging with issues of literacy and learning in general.

In the next chapter, I explore and review the nature and development of workplace literacies, competencies, language skills and ESP at a micro level.

CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF WORKPLACE LITERACIES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter commences with a review of the notion of workplace literacy/ies which is the core of this dissertation. It explores the many English communicative literacies and competencies found in the targeted commercial workplace, as well as in a multilingual, developing country, such as Namibia.

It, furthermore, explores research into ESP literacy practices, not as a subject matter, but as an aid to meet young graduates' needs. Finally, the issue of transition and the theory of transferability from institutions of higher learning to career, as well as course and syllabus design, will be explored.

3.2 Workplace literacy/ies

Workplace literacy/ies, as a concept must be situated within a broader theoretical framework of basic underlying assumptions and principles. Workplace literacy/ies or what I may call 'work and knowing', the ability to work and know, is a problematic concept in modern western societies (Weil, Koski & Mjelde, 2009). The new emphasis on knowledge-based work and learning stresses the importance of new skills and learning environments. Street (2013) conceptualises literacy in a village context that is seen not as functional skills; it rather approaches literacy as a set of social practices deeply associated with identity and social position. Workplace literacy can be distinguished from academic

and functional literacy in terms of the setting (context) in which these different literacies are most likely to be utilised. For instance, academic literacy is focused on literature in an academic setting, such as schools and universities. Functional literacy refers to the ability to apply new skills to problems that affect people's quality of life. Therefore, attempts to equate workplace literacy with functional literacy are erroneous in the sense that, although some functional skills are relevant to the workplace, these everyday tasks as defined by functional literacy exclude many job-specific competencies (i.e. skills, abilities and attributes).

According to Spilka (2001), workplace literacy typically serves a central, social purpose, namely, to help professionals in organisations accomplish the following: solve a problem, answer a question, make a decision, revise or create policy, perform a task and expand or modify their thinking. Workplace writing usually is not done for personal reasons, 'just for the heck of it,' or for sheer pleasure. Almost always, professionals in organisations write in response to a social need or problem. Successful workplace communication can be critical to an organisation's ability to fulfil its goals, overcome its constraints, and, in general, function smoothly and make progress towards its mission. Spilka (2001) further advances the following as examples of workplace literacy that involve the ability to create a wide spectrum of standard written documents: annual, research, recommendation and feasibility reports; proposals; manuals, tutorials and online help; specs, standards, summaries, descriptions and definitions; policy statements; sales letters, flyers, brochures, newsletters and other promotional material.

Despite Spilka's (2001) attempt to define workplace literacy, there exist different definitions of this concept. The published research on workplace literacy tends to approach issues from either an assumed position of ideological neutrality or an avowedly business or government perspective. More specifically, it rarely considers the very different interests and concerns of working people, and seldom includes their views or those of their unions. This study was an attempt to delve to the bottom of this controversy, at least in the Namibian situation, and to investigate the literacies and communicative practices and events in the identified commercial sectors. Knowing and working are a potent combination that gives rise to questions of work competence. The conundrum is not only about skills, but about what is worth knowing, as well as who decides the type and the social value of this knowledge.

For success in the workplace, students today should be skilled roundedly or be literate in several different areas of work. I will refer to these as workplace literacies. The definition of literacy is expanding to encompass more than just traditional texts (Street, 2013). Even the idea of text itself is continually transforming with the onslaught of new technologies. Of importance here, then, is how we can characterise the shift from observing literacy events to conceptualising literacy practices. A wealth of ethnographic studies on literacy by current researchers, such as (Mukherjee & Vasanta, 2003; Street, 2001, 2013), has emerged deploying these and other concepts in a variety of international contexts.

3.3 The content of ESL in the workplace

Apart from general definitions of literacy and, by extension, workplace literacy/ies, such as the ability to read and write or respond to (written) text in the workplace, many researchers are hesitant to specify the different skills, attributes and competencies or otherwise that constitute a definition of workplace literacy/ies. A third skill included in literacy definitions in the last few years is that of numeracy. A limiting factor in most of the research cited in Chapter 2 of this dissertation is the fact that most existing literature on the acquisition of literacy is based on studies of children. Limited attention has been given to the acquisition of literacy by adult learners, such as those to be employed at various workplaces, for instance the field of commerce. Research on workplace literacy seems to follow the same trend as that on literacy. Although the competencies included in most definitions currently could serve as a working guideline and definition of workplace literacies, an exact definition still has to be determined. In the search for such a definition of workplace literacy, the following collection of some basic skills needed in the workplace has been identified:

- Listening skills
- Reading skills
- Speaking skills
- Writing skills
- Numeracy skills
- Visual and non-verbal communication skills.

Although these skills are all important for effective functioning in the workplace, the practicality of placing them all in a definition of workplace literacy/ies is doubtful as the simultaneous, effective diagnosis of such a wide range of skills would be a complex, costly and time-consuming task. An analysis of the literature on skills gaps by Aring (2012) and the World Bank Group (2011) on workplace literacy reveals that the three most important skills which can be linked to a definition of workplace literacy are reading, writing and numeracy. However, young graduates' competencies and competences cannot be explained with reference to language skills alone, but will have to be examined in relation to theories of emotional intelligence (see Section 3.6 below), as well as workplace-related learning. In addition, workplace reading materials, for example, is not running prose. Grade-level definitions of literacy levels are particularly ineffective as readers' background knowledge increases, such as for commercial graduates who have attended university study. Nevertheless, what follows below are some of the contentious issues that have grappled researchers in an attempt to identify other skills and competencies deemed necessary for the workplace.

Fallows and Steven (2000) note that the current economic situation has rendered an academic degree with mere knowledge of an academic subject insufficient for the workplace. They propose that students should be taught skills that will enhance their employability in the workplace. They advocate the teaching of employability skills such as:

- Retrieval and handling of information
- Communication and presentation

- Planning and problem solving

- Social development and interaction

Vaatstra and De Vries (2007) concur, and indicate further that higher education should provide students with not only occupation-specific, but also generic, competencies to enable them to maintain their position in an ever-changing professional environment. The writers believe that acquisition of the latter competencies depends in part on the extent to which students have been stimulated during instruction. The authors, furthermore, rationalise that as graduates face the continuous changes that occur in the labour market, their generic competencies are less subject to changes (as these are used across a wide range of occupation and industrial situations) than occupation-specific or firm-specific competencies that are usually needed in specific jobs. It means, therefore, that the former are largely sustaining for the success of any working environment.

Similar stand points regarding preferred curricula content were expressed by Eraut (1994) (problem solving, analytic competence, working independently and in a team); Evers, Rush and Berdrow (1998) and Heijke, Meng and Ris (2003) (generic and reflective competencies); Karoly and Panis (2004) (on interpersonal, communication and interaction skills) and Abaidoo and Wachniak (2007) (technical competencies). A gap exists between theory taught at the universities and the practice in the work place. On that basis, Vaatstra and De Vries (2007) note that university graduates are often considered to be both unsuitable for and also unable to adapt to the modern workplace.

The situation described provoked me to ask critical questions of the faculties and schools of the targeted tertiary institutions, such as: Do universities prepare graduates with the necessary integrated view of business? Do they offer a multidisciplinary perspective? These are both critical for the success of students in modern business organisations today. Are they preparing graduates, who are ready for the new workplace, in other words, being process-oriented and having an integrated view of the commercial sector, or are students only provided with a functional, compartmentalised, orientation instruction?

The above argument is supported by Stone (2010) who argues that graduates who finish tertiary education with the full complement of skills and knowledge required for their designated professions are not 'work-ready' unless they also acquire interpersonal skills, as well as collaborative practice and team-working capabilities. Stone (2010) contends that these latter skills and competencies are essential to the workplace to the extent that, for example, health workers are unable to contribute to organisational culture in a positive way unless they too attain these capabilities. She provides supporting evidence to illustrate that these capabilities have been shown to improve health care in terms of patient safety, worker satisfaction and health service efficiency.

Higher education programmes need to prepare their graduates for the practical challenges they can expect to face upon entering the workforce. Venables and Tan (2009) note that students themselves view their further studies as part of a transition process from school to work; as a result, they are increasingly making pragmatic demands on the education institution for changes in the traditional curriculum to make it more relevant to future

employment. Lam (2010) indicates that the report on education reform in Hong Kong recommended that due to the impact of globalisation on higher education, the nation should reform education to develop the following skills needed by their citizens:

- a high level of language proficiency that would allow for effective communication of ideas;

- sharing of knowledge;

- IT skills;

- critical and lateral thinking skills;

- teamwork, as well as the

- capacity to pursue lifelong learning.

The diversity of curricula and professional mobility remains in the context of the global community. Research into these issues must trigger and influence thinking about how the local design of education may be restructured. In a knowledge-based economy skill development, creativity and problem solving skills can no longer be side-lined nor can they be taught or learnt incidentally. Tertiary and higher education curricula are poised mostly towards the teaching of these skills. Workers who possess well-defined skills and competencies are likely to be more functional, employable and productive. It is a combination of occupation-specific knowledge and skills, as well as the generic skills and competencies which represent the traits and abilities, that allow a worker to function effectively (Louis, 2011).

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become one such endeavour to try meeting students' work-related needs. ESP has been defined as a learner-centred approach to teaching English as a foreign/second language. It has become well-known in the English Language Teaching (ELT) circle, because linguists have moved towards a situation-based notion of language. ESP has followed the assumption that if the English language needs of a group of students can be accurately specified, then this identification can be used to determine the content of a language programme (Munby, 1978). Differences between ESP and ESL are glaring, especially when the needs of the workplace are taken into account. The most important difference lies in the learners and their purposes for learning English. ESP students are usually adults who already have some acquaintance with English and are learning the language in order to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions. An ESP programme is therefore, built on an assessment of purposes and needs, as well as the functions for which English is required. ESP concentrates more specifically on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures per se. It covers subjects varying from accounting or computer science to tourism and business management. The ESP focal point is that English is not taught as a subject separated from the students' real world (or wishes); instead, it is integrated into a subject matter area important to the learners. ESP diverges not only in the nature of the learner, but also in the aim of instruction. In fact, as a general rule, while in ESL all four language skills; listening, reading, speaking and writing, are stressed equally, in ESP it is a needs analysis that determines which language skills are most needed by the students, and the syllabus is designed accordingly. An ESP programme, might, for example, emphasise the development of reading skills in students who are preparing for graduate

work in business administration or it might promote the development of spoken skills in students who are studying English in order to become tourist guides. ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching. Such a combination is highly motivating because students are able to apply what they learn in their English classes to their main field of study, whether it be accounting, business management, economics, computer science or tourism.

Universities, it appears, have failed to prepare their students how to write various documents. It leaves one with questions such as: In what ways is writing in university preparation different from writing at work? Can universities, by whatever means, prepare students to write at work, and is that a realistic expectation? The literature on workplace literacy (Fallows & Steven, 2000; Spilka, 2001; Vaatstra & De Vries, 2007 & Stone 2010) seems to indicate that oral communication (speaking), listening, reading and writing skills, as well as some generic specific skills, are important aspects of the workplace and that business graduate employees require effective English language competencies in these domains if they are to be successful in their business careers. A preliminary definition of workplace literacy as constituting listening, reading, oral, writing, numeracy and non-verbal communication skills, as well as some generic skills, is, therefore, proposed. In order to substantiate this claim, separate interviews were conducted with participants in the identified organisations in the commercial sector, namely deans, HODs and lecturers of faculties, and a survey questionnaire was administered to the young graduates (employees). This study investigated the teaching and role of the ESP courses offered by

tertiary institutions in Namibia in preparing graduates for workplace literacy in the commercial industry.

3.4 An overview of the reading, writing and numeracy approaches

In the previous two sections, workplace literacies and the content of the ESL required in the workplace, regarding listening, reading, oral, writing and numeracy, as well as non-verbal communication, skills were identified as the component processes of workplace literacy. The following sub-sections give an overview of the reading, writing and numeracy skills.

3.4.1 An overview of three approaches to reading

Grabe (2009) points out that the starting point for the understanding of second language (L2) reading is an understanding of what has been learned from first language (L1) reading research, and that much of the literature of L2 reading instruction is based on applying what has been learned from L1 research. There is nothing wrong with this research evolution for (L2) reading. The only issue here seems to be the unique demand on L2 reading development, which learning to read with two language systems operating in the learner's mind. Central to his seminal work is a comprehensive examination of the complex cognitive processes that readers employ when they read. Grabe (2009) shows how critical implicit or explicit learning, attention, noticing and consciousness, as well as contextual and background knowledge, are to an understanding of the role of cognition in reading comprehension. A review of the research on reading delivers some basic trends.

Previous research conducted in the pre-seventies was mainly based on behaviourism, which regarded reading as a passive activity involving decoding tasks (Hudson, 2007). One of the aims of this study was to investigate how the ESP courses on offer at Namibian tertiary institutions schooled students in real-life workplace literacies, such as reading, to enhance professional communication and, eventually, productivity in the commercial industry. The development of models explaining the underlying component processes of reading during the eighties and nineties laid the foundations of reading research which are relevant to workplace literacy and are explained next.

3.4.1.1 The bottom-up approach

The bottom-up or linear interactive processing model of reading consists of a series of non-interactive processing stages (Grabe, 2009). This model assumes that each processing stage is dependent on the result of a lower processing stage. Information passes from sensory input to feature detectors, focusing first on letters and then on word recognition, for reading comprehension to occur (Grabe, 2009). Bottom-up models, however, do not fully explain the semantic knowledge and syntactic effects which are known to take place during the reading process. Research, such as that of Hudson (2007) and Grabe (2009), has found that knowledge of syntactical and lexical items contained in lower-order processing levels must be combined or employed at different times while reading. The bottom-up model was, therefore, found to be an inadequate description of the reading process.

3.4.1.2 The top-down approach

The second approach, the top-down approach, also known as the psycholinguistic guessing game, opposes the bottom-up approach as it views reading as a 'concept-driven' process based on predictions or hypotheses about the text rather than letter and word identification (Grabe, 2009). The meaning of text is derived through the use of higher level processes, such as consciously focusing on the reading task. Therefore, "attention, noticing and consciousness, inferencing, and context can help build better comprehension" (Grabe, 2009, p. 59), rather than the lower level processes concerning graphic display and knowledge of the sounds associated with graphemes (Grabe, 2009). Within this approach, Grabe (2009), furthermore postulates that the reader uses knowledge of the semantics of language, as well as schema, flow of discourse or text structure to form hypotheses about the content of a text, confirming or reforming these hypotheses while sampling through the text. Reading, therefore, is primarily based on higher order processes rather than on lower levels (Hudson, 2007; Grabe, 2009). These top-down models, however, are limited in that too much emphasis is placed on the higher order processes at the risk of neglecting the importance of the lower level processes (i.e. letter and word recognition) (Grabe, 2009). However, for workplace literacies practised in the commercial workplace, such as reading, this approach to teaching reading is important if students' competencies are to be enhanced by an ESP course.

3.4.1.3 The interactive approach

This third approach incorporates the bottom-up and top-down reading strategies. It advances beyond these approaches through emphasising the importance of interaction and feedback between the various processing levels. Grabe (2009) examines the role of higher-level mental processes, such as consciously focusing attention on the reading task and how the higher and lower cognitive processing levels interact for reading comprehension to occur. The term 'interactive' can be interpreted to refer to the relation between the reader and the text where the reader interacts with the text, in order to derive the meaning of the original writer. An aim of the current study was to investigate whether the ESP courses taught at Namibia's tertiary institutions enhanced students' competencies regarding the type of reading required in the workplace.

3.4.2 An overview of three approaches to writing

According to Hanford (2010), contexts offer a unique examination of writing as it is applied and used in academic and workplace settings, where social relationships, available tools and historical, cultural, temporal and physical location are all implicated in complex ways in the decisions people make as writers. School and work are worlds apart. Writing is acting and because of that it is highly contextualised. This study is both framed by my pedagogical and theoretical interests to understand the relationships between writing as it is elicited in the university and writing as it is generated in the workplace, and what adjustments, if any, university graduates need to make when they move into the workforce. This is not to imply that I regard all or even most university education as

preparation for the workplace; however, one of universities' objectives is to teach the students the general principles of problem solving skills and how to find the needed knowledge and transform it into useful information. As a result, a university graduate should be capable of learning any commerce demanded by the industry in the most agile and effective way. What was unknown, however, is whether or not this was the way the ESP is taught at Namibian universities as a way of preparing the students for their various job assignments in various workplaces in Namibia.

Most academics, I believe, are used to thinking of writing as a regular everyday activity that occupies both students and teachers. It is just as pervasive an activity in academia as it is in the world outside academia, and similarly treated as transparent; that is, it is regarded less as an activity in itself and more as a means through which activities are carried out. Students write to take notes from lectures and the books they read, to reflect, to record information, to carry out their research, and to record and organise their findings for presentation to professors or to their peers to demonstrate their learning. Students may also write otherwise: they may keep personal diaries, write poetry, fiction and plays; correspond formally and informally, including letters to newspapers, or on the internet.

When we then contrast writing in academia with writing at work, it appears at first glance that writing is just writing and ought to be unproblematic. But, as a perennial chorus of complaints from the business world (and some assenting voices from within the university as well) attests, such is not the case. The writing abilities of students graduating from universities are increasingly in question when they move into the workplace. For many

reasons, this study intended to establish whether or not the writing practices at the university did translate into effective writing in the work setting after students had gone through a preparatory course, such as ESP. Hyland (2003) focuses on three concepts: text, writer and reader, where text is seen predominantly from a discourse, analytic perspective.

Hyland (2003) draws attention to the interpersonal nature of writing and suggests that audience awareness presupposes awareness of the reader's expectations of style and structure. A range of writing approaches has been pulled to teach writing by ESP teachers. Over the last twenty-five years or so, product and process have dominated much of the teaching of writing that take place in the ESP classroom. In the last ten years, post process approaches have gained several advocates, such as Swales (1990) and Hyland (2003). These approaches are explained briefly below.

3.4.2.1 The product approach

Khansir (2012) asserts that the product approach to the teaching of writing emphasises mechanical aspects of writing, such as focusing on grammatical and syntactical structures and imitating models. This approach is primarily concerned with the correctness and form of the final product. In short, product-based approaches see writing as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language, and writing development as mostly the result of the imitation of input, in the form of texts provided by the teacher. I view product writing as mainly about linguistic knowledge, with attention paid to the proper use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices. What is not known, however, is whether or not

this was how ESP courses were taught at Namibian universities as a way of preparing the students for their various job assignments in various workplaces in Namibia.

3.4.2.2 The process approach

The 1960s, 1970s and 1980s witnessed a highly influential trend in L1 composition pedagogy and research. Zamel (1982) and Raimes (1985) were among the strongest voices calling for a process approach to writing. Process-oriented pedagogy is encouraged through practices, such as requiring multiple drafts, peer review and portfolio-based class assessment. The process approaches stress writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the 'publication' of a finished text. Hedge (2003) identifies four elements of the context that pre-writing activities should focus on: the audience, the generation of ideas, the organisation of the text and its purpose. Zamel (1982) claims that the composing processes of L1 writers can be suitable to ESL writers, but teacher-guided revision is the main focus of instruction in ESL classes. Process approaches, as they now are generally labelled, emphasise the individual writer as a creator of original ideas. It is believed that written discourse encodes these ideas, helping as a vehicle for exploring and conveying one's thoughts, as well as claiming one's individual voice, or authorial persona, as a writer. Process-oriented writing pedagogies focus particular attention on procedures for solving problems, discovering ideas, expressing them in writing and revising emergent texts, typically, in isolation from any cultural, educational or socio-political contexts in which writing may take place. Zamel (1982) also points out that writing is a process of discovering and making meaning and that the writing process is recursive, nonlinear and convoluted. The process approach

emphasises that writing itself is a developmental process that creates self-discovery and meaning. It is concerned with the process of how ideas are developed and formulated in writing. Khansir (2012) posits that the approach allows students the opportunity to write on paper what they have in their minds without worrying about form, grammar and correct spelling. What is not known, however, is whether or not this was how the ESP courses offered at Namibian tertiary institutions were to prepare students for their various job assignments in different workplaces, such as the commercial sector in Namibia.

3.4.2.3 The post-process/genre approach

The term post-process and now also referred to as 'genre approach' (Hyland, 2003) arose in composition studies during the early 1990s, and quickly became one of the significant keywords, shaping the development of an intellectual current in the field. Atkinson (2003) defines post-process as including everything that follows, generally speaking, the period of L2 writing instruction and research that focused primarily on writing as a cognitive or internal, multi-staged process. This approach, by far the major dynamic of learning, was through doing with the teacher taking a background role.

A genre-based approach considers writing as a social and cultural practice. The purpose of such writing involves the context where the writing occurs and the conventions of the target discourse community. In this sense, relevant genre knowledge needs to be taught explicitly in the language classroom. The genre approach to teaching writing, as Paltridge (2004) claims, emphasises the teaching of particular genres students need for later social, communicative success. The focus would be the language and discourse features of

particular texts and the context in which the text is used. The notion of genre is defined as "abstract, socially recognised ways of using language" (Hyland, 2003, p. 21) which are purposeful communicative activities employed by members of a particular discourse community. The genre approach puts the main emphasis on the reader and on the conventions which a piece of writing needs to follow in order to be successfully accepted by its readership. In this study it was questioned, however, whether or not this was how ESP courses were taught at Namibian universities as a way of preparing the students for their various job assignments in different workplaces, such as the commercial sector.

Some limitations can be found in the genre approach. Paltridge (2001) mentions that the genre approach combines both the knowledge of text, as well as the social and cultural dynamics of the students. As a result, specification of the domains becomes difficult to do. It is also suggested by Swales (2000) that a genre approach over-focuses on the reader while paying less attention to learner expression. However, genre theory, according to Hyland (2003), seeks to understand the ways in which individuals use language to orient themselves to, and interpret, particular communicative situations and, secondly, employ this knowledge for literacy education.

Sinor and Huston (2004) state that the post-process approach does not abandon the writing steps; in fact, working through the writing steps is a crucial component while instruction is centered on the social, political and contextual forces that surround writing. With the development of second language literacy research, writing in ESL settings has gained much attention. Specific questions have arisen: How can academics teach writing in an ESP course to enhance students' workplace literacies? Should academics focus on

the writing product, on the writing process or on the writing post-process? For many reasons, this study intended to establish whether the writing practices at Namibian universities did translate into effective writing in the work setting after students had attended a course, such as ESP.

3.4.2   An overview of numeracy

Numeracy involves an understanding of numerical data, statistics and graphs, and is also part of making decisions and reasoning. Numeracy skills are important in the modern workplace, irrespective of whether one is considered to be *'working with numbers'* or not. Having the competence for, and being confident in, working with numbers is a skill that can be used to one's advantage in a wide range of employment settings, for example, knowing how profitable a company is; understanding value for money when purchasing and ordering supplies; facilitating transactions; following a budget or calculating public finance. Being able to understand and analyse data in different formats is considered an essential skill in many organisations. Coben, Colwell, Macrae, Boaler, Brown and Rhodes (2003) argue that the term 'numeracy' was originally coined as the mathematical equivalent to 'literacy'. It remains "a deeply contested and notoriously slippery concept" (p. 9) and it remains the source of ongoing debate and discussion internationally. Numeracy ought to refer to a great deal more than basic number skills. It must encompass the application of a broad range of mathematical skills, at different levels, when applied to real world purposes such as in the community or in the workplace.

Therefore, to be numerate means to be competent, confident and comfortable with one's judgement and what a given numerical propositions means in a given context. Owing to globalisation and the introduction of technology, workplace numeracy demands appear to be growing. Not only has demand for numeracy skills, such as estimating, reading and interpreting graphs and tables increased, but its knowledge is imperative as numeracy is often executed alongside one or more other essential skill in the workplaces. Therefore, one of the areas of interest in this study was to establish the numeracy practices in the targeted commercial entities. Numeracy forms part of workplace literacy, and this study intended to establish whether or not numeracy is well covered in ESP courses offered at Namibian tertiary institutions to a level that the graduates, once in the working world, could employ the required, numeracy literacies of a given workplace, such as that of commerce.

3.5 Reading, writing and numeracy in the commercial sector

The introduction or use of a corporate language offers a common medium for all members of the organisation and offers easy access to official information channels, such as company reports and other communicative practices. Although a language serves as a symbol of organisational unity, its principle purpose is task-accomplishment. Banking and finance professionals, as the researcher's experience indicates, are among the groups with increasing demands for field-specific, ESP training of prospective employees, as the continuing globalisation of markets has pushed the need for enhanced English communication competencies to perform job-related functions. A needs analysis is generally considered the corner stone of any ESP course design (Dudley-Evans & St John,

1998), and a great deal of needs analysis has been conducted in various areas of ESP. Within the domain of English for Business Purposes (EBP), there is a need to conduct research on young graduates from Namibian universities to obtain from insiders, especially those who have just entered the workforce, the gaps between the English training provided by Namibian universities and the English skills required for work. Wu and Chin (2010) report on research they conducted which found that reading was the ability most required in the majority of financial service categories, although different skills may vary by category, where employees undertook 'careful' and 'expeditious' reading modes. On the one hand, they found that financial and legal documents generally required careful reading, as well as the skills associated with comprehending and verifying details. On the other hand, they asserted that with globalisation of markets, professionals in the financial service industry frequently needed to gather and analyse information from different written sources, such as research reports, financial product descriptions, finance-related websites and financial newspapers or magazines. The fulfilment of these functions requires expeditious reading skills, such as scanning (locating specific information) and search reading (i.e., retrieving information related to predetermined topics) (Wu & Chin, 2010). Unlike with reading, writing was found to be more concerned with written communication tasks, such as email messages, letters/faxes, proposals and reports that were carried out in English.

Technical writing programmes have been under severe attack and scrutiny from certain quarters for the communication deficiency of workers/employees. Employers expect entry-level employees to possess excellent communication skills in writing. This includes

visual communication (i.e. incorporating graphics in a paragraph of prose). Similarly, English listening and speaking skills are employed in tasks, such as business conversations, presentation skills, telephone calls and conveying messages. It is clear from the above study that, there is a need for young graduates employed in the commercial industry to acquire and learn different language skills, such as grammar, vocabulary and summary writing in an ESP course, the focus areas this study pursued.

3.6 Emotional intelligence and soft skills in the commercial sector

The view that formal knowledge may be only a part of what enables employees in many fields to perform successfully in their employment has gained currency to the extent that practical intelligences (including soft skills) have come to represent a new orthodoxy in the provision of tertiary education and industry. Soft skills, when viewed from theoretical perspectives, would include emotional intelligence (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2010). The Council for Industry and Higher Education (2010) asserts that, because of an excessive emphasis on technical skills, many students leave university without the soft skills that connect those job skills to employers and customers. It should be noted that emotional intelligence is not the opposite of intelligence. It has been stated that in industry, intelligence gets you hired, but emotional intelligence gets you promoted (Gibbs, 1995). For example, a manager at AT&T Bell Labs was asked to rank his top performing engineers. High IQ was not the deciding factor, but instead how the person performed regarding answering e-mails, how good they were at collaborating and networking with colleagues (rather than lone wolves), and their popularity with others

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(rather than socially awkward) in order to achieve the cooperation required to attain the goals (Gibbs, 1995). This example highlights the benefits of high emotional intelligence regarding communication skills, time management, teamwork, leadership skills and business acumen. Such important skills flow from emotional intelligence, like the skillful recognition of others' emotional reactions, and showing empathy to come across as genuine and warm, which will achieve greater cooperation from others, rather than being perceived as oblivious and boorish (Salovey & Meyer, 1998). Emotional intelligence and soft skills form part of workplace literacies and this study intended to establish whether or not emotional intelligence and soft skills as competencies were well covered to a level that the graduates, once in the working world could employ the emotional intelligence and soft skills literacies of a given workplace, such as that of commerce. Given the principles stated above, it becomes quite apparent that encouraging emotional intelligence abilities should be a component of student education. This becomes especially relevant given that the skills that employers value include, amongst others, a willingness to learn, flexibility, communication skills, teamwork and other forms of working with co-workers. Because such skills fall in the category of emotional intelligence, universities need to be aware of those demands that industry makes on graduates.

3.7 The debate regarding workplace literacies in a multilingual developing country

Language use in a multilingual context poses a very complicated dilemma. According to Spilka (2001), public literacy designates language that appears in the public sphere beyond organisational boundaries, and deals with issues of concern to the general public.

Examples are bumper stickers, newspapers, tax forms, petitions, web pages, community radio broadcasts, advertisements and political debates. Unlike public literacy, workplace literacy typically is rooted in specific work contexts, for example, an annual report that describes the past year's activity in a particular company, how a manual instructs users about the use of software that a company has just produced or how a proposal aims to fund a new corporate venture. The transition from tertiary-based literacy to workplace literacy can be challenging. The way people negotiate language relationships and develop proficiencies in diverse languages, makes one realise that traditional models of language acquisition and competence lack the capacity to explain contemporary experiences. Less known scholarship on how language relationships and learning work in non-western communities suggests that what we see around us now is not new. Such forms of multilingual contact and acquisition are characteristic of other multilingual communities from pre-colonial and/or pre-modern times (Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011). The assumptions about modern linguistics are based on reflecting homogeneity and mono-lingualism, and fail to take account of multilingual realities in diverse contexts and communities. According to Canagarajah and Wurr (2011), the search is on to develop more complex models that explain not only the ways in which non-western/multilingual communities acquire language competence, but also how best these multilingual communities could apply these language skills in various contexts.

For important reasons to be discussed below, modern linguistics has posited a model of monolingual communication as the norm for its theorisation. For example, Chomsky (1991) provides an illuminating insight on language acquisition and assumes linguistic

competence to be intuitive, monolingual and developing in a homogeneous community. As many have noted, this is an idealisation that does not exist in the majority of communities in the world, let alone in Africa. The question thus remains: How do people communicate in communities, such as workplaces, which are linguistically heterogeneous?

Indian linguist, Khubchandani (1997) provides insights into how heterogeneous communities communicate in South Asia, and is supported by other linguists from the region (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2004; Mohanty, 2006). Khubchandani (1997) argues that the Eastern orientation to community is different from those in the West. Community for South Asians is not based on shared language structures or culture as that in the West. For South Asians, community is based on shared space and, therefore, it can accommodate many language groups living in the same geographic space. Such communities assume diversity and contact. Language diversity is the norm and not the exception in non-western communities. In Africa, one may find significant structural similarities among African languages primarily within a group or family of related languages, that is languages within a common origin. I argue the same here that most African communities are based on a shared space. Therefore, it can accommodate many language groups living in the same geographical space or context. In such communities, people are always open to negotiating diverse languages in their everyday public lives. I argue further that such a scenario is equally possible in a multilingual workplace. In Namibia, English is supposedly the official language of communication in the workplace. Although people do not assume that they will meet others who speak their own language most of the time, this mind set

(assumption) prepares them for negotiating different languages as a fact of life (Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011). When they meet a person from another language group, they do not look for a common language that will facilitate their interaction. In most cases, such a search will be futile so they usually start the interaction in their own languages, but both parties retain their own preferred codes in the conversation. Such a practice makes us wonder how communication is possible when no common code is shared. It is because of the above issues of language that this study further intended to investigate whether or not the ESP courses offered by tertiary institutions in Namibia provided a possible speech code that could be shared in a multilingual workplace, such as that of commerce.

However, what enables people to communicate is not a shared grammar, but communicative practices and strategies that are used to negotiate their language differences. Furthermore, these strategies are not a form of knowledge or cognitive competence, but a form of resourcefulness that speakers employ in the unpredictable communicative situations they encounter. Khubchandani (1997) identifies two strategies, namely serendipity and synergy, and posits that "individuals in such societies acquire more synergy (i.e., putting forth one's own efforts) and serendipity (i.e., accepting the other on his/her own terms, being open to unexpectedness), and develop positive attitudes to variations in speech (to the extent of even appropriating deviations as the norm in the lingua franca), in the process of 'coming out' from their own language-codes to a neutral ground" (p. 94). What this means is that interlocutors are always open to codes that they are not familiar with in their conversations (serendipity). To achieve intelligibility and communication in this context of diversity, they aim to find a common ground between the codes and resources to achieve their interests (synergy). When these strategies are

adopted, even deviations can become norms. While these norms will work in that particular context, they may not work for another set of communicators. Norms have to be co-constructed in the local context, as befits their codes and purposes. In this sense, pre-constructed grammar will not help in multilingual contact situations. The speakers have to co-construct the grammar that will be operational in their interaction (Khubchandani, 1997). Grammar, therefore, is emergent in these contexts. In such heterogeneous communities, language acquisition also works differently. Since the languages one will be confronted with in any one situation cannot be predicted, interlocutors cannot go readily armed with the codes they need for interaction. Therefore, in such communities, language learning and language use work together. People learn the languages as they use them. They decode one another's grammar (i.e. they work out to understand meaning and what it implies into ordinary language) as they interact, make inferences about the other's language system and take these inferences into account as they formulate their own utterances.

Canagarajah and Wurr (2011) further argue that the objective of language learning is also different for multilinguals. They do not aim to master a language for all purposes and functions. They master the codes that are sufficient for the functions they want that language to perform. There is no need to develop complete or full proficiency in all the languages for the same purposes or the same language for all purposes (Canagarajah & Wurr, 2011). Multilinguals adopt different codes for different contexts and objectives. From this perspective, the objective of their acquisition is repertoire building rather than total competence in individual languages. Multilinguals prefer to develop a range of codes for a range of purposes. Therefore, multi-language acquisition involves learning how to

align one's language resources to one's needs and situations, rather than aiming to achieve a target-level of competence.

From the above perspective, we have to question some distinctions made in mainstream Linguistics and SLA that are overly influenced by monolingual orientations to communication. In order to understand second language acquisition and use in multilingual communities and in workplace contexts, one has to reconsider these binaries and move towards a paradigm shift, as Garcia (2009) contends, scholars are now open to the possibility of recursive language acquisition, where the language learned later shapes the competence of the earlier languages, and both languages mutually influence each other to move in new directions. Whether the ESP courses offered by tertiary institutions in Namibia provided graduates the language experiences they needed to thrive and be effective in a multilingual workplace, such as the commercial industry, needed to be investigated.

3.8 Research into English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Today, students are eager to know how their education will apply to their postgraduate careers. When they study a topic, they want to know how it may be relevant to their career choices. Likewise, when students study writing, they want to know how doing so will help them compete favourably for postgraduate jobs, and then perform well in those jobs. Specialised languages usually refer to the specific discourse used by professionals and specialists to communicate and transfer knowledge and information. These demands and the speed of technological advancements have resulted in the expansion of one aspect of

English Language Teaching (ELT), namely the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), the special discourse used in specific settings by people sharing common purposes. Within this approach, it is proposed that any ESP course should follow a strategy of predetermined objectives based on a needs analysis to determine what such students require and then specify as far as possible what exactly it is students have to learn in that language course. The definition of ESP as a conceptual term appeared in the literature only in the 1960s. In their seminal work, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explain that ESP should properly be seen not as any particular language product but as an approach to language teaching and learning which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning. Its main defining feature, therefore, is that the learners have specific objectives, or need to learn English for use in a specific context. Strevens (1988) defines English for Specific Purposes by making a distinction between its absolute and its variable characteristics. Strevens considers as absolute characteristics the following. In ESP the English language teaching is:

- Designed to meet specified needs of the learner;
- Related in content (i.e. themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
- Centred on the language appropriate for those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse and semantics;
- In contrast with General English.

Strevens (1988) identifies the variable characteristics of ESP as being:

- Restriction to the language skills to be learned;

- Use of no teaching methodology.

The absolute characteristics correspond to the identified needs of the learner, the topics under study and the content to be taught, contrasting with "general English that is commonly linked to syntax, lexis, discourse and semantics amongst others" (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1993, p. 116). These characteristics are the necessary features to identify such a process as being ESP. The variable characteristics are not a necessary condition, as they may or may not be part of the whole process in particular situations. They consist in, first, teaching ESP without following any existing methodology simply because it may not be appropriate in certain cases, and secondly, restricting teaching the skill or skills to be learned. Johns and Dudely-Evans (1993) further argue that among the characteristics enunciated by Strevens (1988), two important aspects of the absolute stream, namely needs assessment and discourse analysis, have particularly attracted the attention of researchers because of the primary importance and priority given to needs assessment and discourse analysis. Robinson (1989, 1991) and Johns (1991) have used needs assessments in order to identify and understand the complexity of the ways learners acquire and use language for specific tasks. Robinson (1989, p. 426) earlier stated that "… ESP first arose, and has continued to develop, in response to a need: the need of non-native speakers of the language to use it for some clearly defined practical purpose. As purpose changes, so must ESP." For Swales (1992), ESP is "the area of inquiry and practice in the development of language programmes for people who need a language to meet a predictable range of communicative needs" (p. 300). In discourse analysis, researchers have used and developed different approaches to know how syntax, semantics and lexis were introduced

and used in English for Science and Technology (EST), in authentic texts for either academic or occupational purposes.

Robinson (1991) on the other hand defines ESP on the basis of two criteria:

- ESP as being normally 'goal-oriented';

- ESP courses develop from a needs analysis which aims to specify what exactly it is that students have to do through the medium of English, and from a number of characteristics which explain that ESP courses are generally constrained by a limited period of time in which their objectives have to be achieved and taught to adults in homogenous classes in terms of the work or specialist studies.

Strevens's (1988) definition with reference to the course content may confirm the impression held by many teachers that ESP is always and necessarily related to the subject content. Robinson's (1991) definition with reference to the homogenous classes may also lead to the same conclusion. One has to admit, though, that much of ESP is based on the idea of a common-core of language and skills belonging to all academic disciplines or cutting across the whole business activity. For his part, Anthony (2011) disagrees with the notion that homogeneity or a narrow-angled approach is the only way to proceed in ESP. He advances a heterogeneity/wide-angled approach to ESP as a way to proceed due to the discipline variation and adapting to the requirements of working in the 'new knowledge economy' of the 21st century. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) offer a more modified definition and express their revised view regarding the essence of ESP from two

perspectives: absolute characteristics and variable characteristics. According to them the absolute characteristics are:

- ESP meets the learner's specific needs;

- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;

- ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse, and genres appropriate for these activities.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), furthermore, consider the following as variable characteristics:

- ESP may be related or designed for specific disciplines;

- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology;

- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners;

- ESP is generally designed for intermediate and advanced learners.

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) removed the absolute characteristic that 'ESP' is in contrast with 'General English' and added more variable characteristics. They assert that ESP is not necessarily related to a specific discipline and that it may likely be used with adult learners although it could be used with young adults in a secondary school setting as well. This study investigated whether the ESP courses offered by Namibia's universities fulfilled these expectations.

The literature on ESP discussed above demonstrates that since its early beginnings, ESP had two basic elements in focus and that was the language and learner. The focus on language considered the description of written scientific and technical English to be used in specific contexts. The focus on the learner dealt with the description of the learner's attitudes to learning that espouses that learners are seen to have different needs and interests which would have an important influence on their motivation to learn, therefore, on the effectiveness of their learning. This lent support to the development of courses in which relevance to learners' needs and interests is paramount. The way to achieve this is to take texts from the learner's specialist area.

The relevance of English courses to their learner's needs would improve the learner's motivation and, thereby, make learning better, faster and more efficient. As a result, this would also have an effect on the graduate's future workplace literacy. This study intended to establish whether the teaching of ESP courses at Namibian universities was foregrounding these aspects as suggested in the literature review above.

3.8.1 Types and controversies in English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

According to Gatehouse (2012), three types of ESP have been identified:

- English as a restricted language;
- English for Academic and Occupational Purposes;
- English with specific topics.

The language used by air traffic controllers or by waiters would be examples of English as a restricted language. The language used by air-traffic controllers and dining room waiters is strictly limited and is situationally determined. However, Gatehouse (2012) posits that knowing a restricted 'language' would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situations or in contexts outside the vocational environment. This study endeavoured to establish whether or not the ESP courses on offer provided, and considered, these aspects regarding a given 'restricted language' in the commercial industry.

The second type of ESP is English for Academic and Occupational Purposes (Gatehouse, 2012). In the 'Tree of ELT' (Hutchison & Waters, 1987), ESP is broken down into three main branches: 1) English for Science and Technology (EST); English for Business and Economics (EBE), and English for Social Studies (ESS). Each of these subject areas is further divided into two branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). An example of EOP for the EST branch is 'English for Technicians' whereas an example of EAP for the EST branch is 'English for Medical Studies', as well as 'Finance and Economics' (Gatehouse, 2012).

According to a recognised classification by Dudley-Evans and St. John (2002), ESP can

be divided as follows in Figure 8 below:

English for Specific Purposes

English for Academic Purposes   English for Occupational Purposes

English for   English for   English for   English for
(Academic)   (Academic)   (Academic)   Management/   English for professional
Science and   Medical   Legal   Finance   purposes
Technology   Purposes   Purposes   & Economics   English for Vocational
                                                                                     Purposes

                                                    English for   English for   Prevocational   Vocational
                                                    Medical   Business   English   English
                                                    Purposes   Purposes

Figure 8: *ESP classification by professional area*
Note. Dudley-Evans & St. John, 2002 (p. 6)

From the curriculum design perspective, it may be well founded to assign students of

different disciplines to study a specialisation of language as above. Dudley-Evans and St.

John's classification (2002) may be appropriate for academic teaching, but for workplace

communication some other classification may work better as it appears to lack certain

essential elements. The conception of different categories of ESP language study in the

context of the Finnish educational system matches the American view of Johns (1990)

better than that of Dudley-Evans and St John (2002), in that, language is taught mainly for

three purposes: academic, professional and vocational, as can be illustrated as a three-

category division of Figure 9 as follows:

Entry level

Wide angle ESP

General EAP

Academic orientation
(research purpose in
Academic disciplines)

Business

Technology

Discipline -specific → Law

Medicine

Other

ESP (English for Specific
Purposes)

Business

IT

Professional orientation
(practitioner purposes
For professional
Discourse communities
(LCPP)

Technology

Civil Eng

Mechanical Eng

Other

Law

Professional
Purpose in
Private
Language
Training

Profession-specific

Position-specific

Department-specific

Task-specific

Entry level

Vocational orientation
(craftsmanship and mas-
tery in occupational contexts

Field-specific

IT

Mech. Eng

Building

Figure 9: *Orientations of Language and Communication for Professional Purposes within ESP*

Note. Adapted from Huhta, 2010 (p. 17)

Figure 9 above illustrates the orientations of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) as they appear in the Finnish context of public and private language education and training. The academic orientation of language learning for academic purposes is mainly covered by university language centres and individual university departments. The professional orientation is implemented by private language service providers, by universities of applied sciences to a great extent, and partly also by science universities.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) do note that there is not a clear-cut distinction between EAP and EOP: "… people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to a job" (p. 16). Perhaps this explains Carter's (1983) rationale for categorising EAP and EOP under the same type of ESP. It appears that Carter is implying that the end purpose of both EAP and EOP are one and the same: employment. However, despite the end purpose being identical, the means taken to achieve the end are very different indeed. The researcher contends that EAP and EOP are different in terms of focus as EAP refers to the English needed for academic study, and EOP is the English needed for work. Cummins's (1979) notions of cognitive academic proficiency versus basic interpersonal communication skills further illustrate their difference. According to Cummins' (1979) own exposition, while BICS is context embedded like EOP, it is generally social language, while EOP would have some specialised dimension which may be cognitively demanding depending on the occupational context.

The third and final type of ESP is English with specific topics. Carter notes that it is only here where emphasis shifts from purpose to topic. This type of ESP is uniquely concerned with anticipated future English needs of, for example, scientists requiring English for postgraduate reading studies, attending conferences or working in foreign institutions. However, some experts in the field, like Gatehouse (2012), have argued that this is not a separate type of ESP. Rather it is an integral component of ESP courses or programmes which focus on situational language. It was interesting to establish how ESP courses at Namibia's tertiary institutions were structured and geared towards that aim for effective and productive functioning in the commercial sector.

It is undeniably a fact that ESP has gained a particular status. However, researchers and ESP practitioners are aware of some considerable effort that must still be made. Critics of ESP, such as (Auerbach, 2002; Pennycook, 1997), enounce its shortcomings and approach to teaching English language, stating that it teaches learners enough English to survive in certain narrowly defined venues but not enough to thrive in the world at large. A common litany of complaints includes the observation that texts used in ESP pedagogy are too far removed from the real-life contexts that learners aim for (Auerbach, 2002). Another common complaint is that many ESP instructors would not engage in the type of specialised language use into which they attempt to inculcate learners. Hand in hand with the latter criticism comes the view that ESP has a strong bint toward accommodationism or vulgar pragmatism (Pennycook, 1997) because it helps learners fit into, rather than contest, existing socioeconomic and political structures, no matter how inequitable their power distribution may be. Secondly, when one compares the theoretical work and the

empirical development of ESP, it would seem that there is a gap which separates them. The main reason one would argue is because more emphasis has been put on applied linguistics (Barber, 1962), on courses and materials design (Swales, 1971). As a result, one would argue that that is the reason why its theoretical work lags behind. In addition, there are still controversies within ESP related to the content to be taught, the skills to be focused on and the kind of methodology to be developed. To this end, it is important to explore the need for workplace literacy, as was done in the current study.

The common-core or 'wide angle approach' propounded by (Widdowson, 1983) as opposed to subject-specific or 'narrow angle' which has its own advocates (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1980; Swales, 1990) who consider that the common-core approach has shown its limits. Methodology remains a crucial pre-occupation. How and to what extent this methodology can be developed when it is related to ESP is still contentious. Various teaching situations impose ways of using not only one methodology but also specialised methodologies. Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) have argued for a methodology that is specialised and uniquely designed for adult learners either at tertiary level or in a professional work environment or for learners at secondary school level (Anthony, 1998). As a result of all these disagreements, one observes to what extent Dudley and St. Johns (1998) went to scale up and down on Strevens's (1988) original versions of four 'absolute characteristics' and two 'variable characteristics' to three 'absolute characteristics' and five 'variable characteristics' respectively.

Notwithstanding, it is evident that ESP has established itself not only as an important and distinctive branch of English Language Teaching (ELT), but has also incorporated most of the work on discourse and genre analysis, as well as corpus linguistics. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) claim that the teaching of ESP has generally been seen as a separate activity within ELT, partly because it has developed its own methodology, and partly because it rests on disciplines other than applied linguistics, particularly second language teaching. This openness to other disciplines, however, should not lead us to forget that ESP is an essential component of ELT, retaining its emphasis on practical outcomes of needs analysis, genre analysis and preparing students to communicate effectively. The challenge seems to be on tertiary institutions to embed job-specific ESP training courses in their various university disciplines with a specific purpose in mind for the world of work.

The emergence of an ever-growing need for a 'lingua franca' of science, technology, education and business has led to the worldwide demand for ESP within the realm of the ELT curriculum. It is evident that ESP has developed in diverse directions and has become increasingly international in scope in terms of communication in different academic and professional fields. ESP by definition is one approach that attempts to give learners access to the language they want and need to accomplish their own academic or occupational goals. Whether or not ESP is sensitive to learners' needs and successful at meeting these as they should be was another concern that this study explored.

3.8.2 The BICS and CALP intersecting continua

Cummins (1979) identifies two parts of second language proficiency as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) in order to draw educators' attention to the timelines and challenges that bilinguals or second language learners encounter as they attempt to catch up to their peers in academic aspects of the language of instruction (Cummins, 1979). BICS, as the name suggests, refers to the part of language used in daily 'here and now' situations, also described as social language. It offers many cues to the listener and is context-embedded. BICS is said to occur when there are contextual supports and props for language delivery. For CALP, the language is said to occur in context-reduced, academic situations which requires a much greater vocabulary and a more formalised, consistent grammar. Research on BICS and CALP in various discipline areas is sketchy at educational institutions in Namibia. Therefore, there was a need to establish whether the ESP courses on offer at tertiary institutions provided BICS and CALP elements to graduates.

Cummins (1979) advocates the idea that BICS and CALP are affected by context and cognitive load. This has been elaborated into two intersecting continua that show the different levels of cognitive demands, on one hand, and contextual help, on the other, that are associated with specific linguistic activities. Figure 10 below shows these continua in a quadrant formation.

Figure 10: *The BICS and CALP conceptualisation*
Note. Baker, 2006 (p. 177)

Cummins' framework is based on two intersecting continua or dimensions (Baker, 2006). According to Baker (2006), Cummins identified four quadrants namely, A, B, C and D (see Figure 10). BICS fall within the quadrant A skills, e.g. cognitively undemanding and context-embedded, and can be developed outside the classroom. On the other hand, the CALP skill falls within the quadrant D skills and comprises, thus, cognitively demanding and context-reduced, communication tasks. Courses meant for workplace training falls within quadrant D. The BICS quadrant includes aspects of language, such as basic vocabulary and pronunciation, skills that are readily apparent during conversations between two or more people. Cummins (1980) himself used a familiar term 'oral fluency' as being a specific component of BICS. Observing speakers' non-verbal behaviour (gestures, facial expressions and eye actions), observing others' reactions, using voice cues, such as phrasing, intonations and stress, as well as asking for statements to be repeated, seem simple language cues but are, in fact, required from a graduate at the workplace. Often this type of interpersonal communication depends on the context in

which the conversation takes place and requires careful use of its communication as well, because this interpersonal communication occurs in a meaningful social context. These conversational cues/oral skills are not cognitively demanding. The language required is not as specialised as it is in ESP but still a necessary tool to survive in workplace contexts.

On the other hand, the CALP D quadrant is equally relevant for graduates in the sense that it refers to advanced language skills, such as analysing, synthesising and evaluating a trove of material that graduates need to process and make meaning of the language that exists independent of any non-verbal or situational clues; these are the language skills required for meaningful engagement in most academic tasks. The ESP workplace literacy-related skills, in my view, can be seen as equivalent to CALP, which are cognitively demanding in their execution and context-reduced. Less face-to-face interaction and support from lecturers would result in quadrant D which means the content would be more context-reduced and thus cognitively demanding for graduates. The academic language of the D quadrant (CALP) is more specific, technical and must be taught in a meaningful way. A D quadrant task is possibly the most difficult for students. This is perhaps where ESP materials need to be taught and supported with relevant contexts. More often than not, cultural and linguistic knowledge is needed to comprehend fully. The researcher argues here that Cummins' CALP is more than a simple developmental extension of BICS. For CALP is not simply language, but the intersection of thought and language. The following typology in Figure 11 below conceptualises the ideal possible routes:
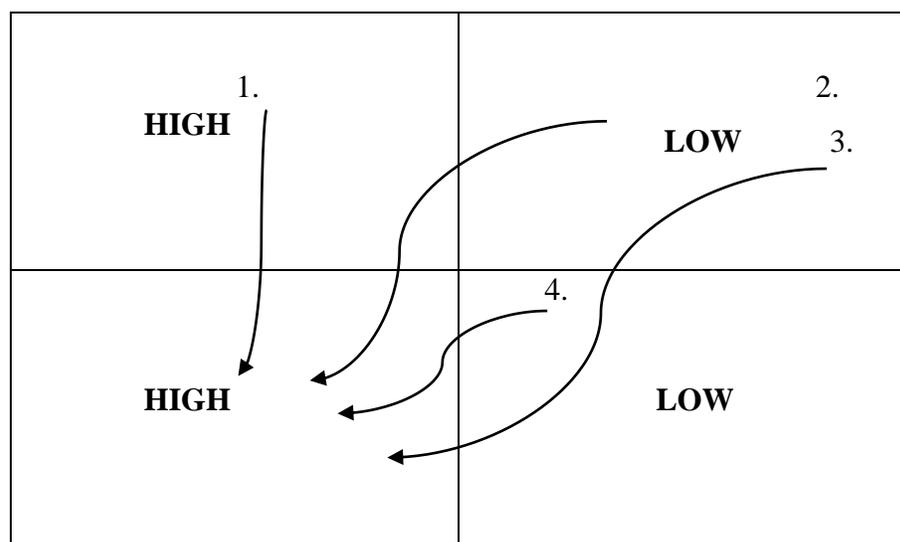
Figure 11: *High BICS and High CALP*
Note. Mungongi (2016)

In line with this model, the ideal situation is to have high BICS and high CALP. To move towards, and achieve, that destination, students need to be provided with different tasks from cognitively undemanding to cognitively demanding in which to engage, as well as to move from context-embedded to context-reduced tasks. It has been found in practice that in some cases, making tasks or instructions more context-embedded also made them somewhat less cognitively demanding. Teachers' awareness of the possible difficulty of a given task can help them well discern the appropriateness of the tasks for their L2 learners.

Language skills integration involves linking the five language skills of listening, reading, speaking, writing and language usage with the intent of emphasising real, meaningful communication. As a result, a prevalent form of ESL skills integration at tertiary level is content-based ESL (CB-ESL). In CB-ESL, the primary goal is communicative

competence in the target language, and an associated aim is content knowledge, such as mathematics, sociology, or science (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Therefore, content-based, integrated-skills, academic instructions should occur while ESL students are mastering basic, social language skills. Simply put, tertiary teaching should recognise the BICS and the CALP distinctions to improve their practice.

Educators and psychologists have believed, and continue to believe, that with conversational fluency, all difficulties with English can be overcome. Cummins (1980), however, determines that in order to gain grade norms in academic aspects of English a further five to seven years of intervention is required. Given that programmes typically run for 12 years for all students, this means that ESL students must receive one and a half years of content into every 1 year at university. Collier (1987), who analysed over 1,000 student records in the United States, confirms this trajectory, and makes the further point that only through very high quality enrichment programmes can an effective rate of 15 months of learning in 10 months take place. Cummings' theorised dichotomies have not gone without some criticism, notably from Edelsky, Hudelson, Altwerger, Flores, Barkin and Jilbert (1983) and Wiley (1996) who state that the conversational/academic language distinction reflects an autonomous perspective on language that ignores its location in social practices and power relations. According to Edelsky et al. (1983), CALP or academic language proficiency represents little more than 'test-wiseness' as it is an artefact of the inappropriate way in which it has been measured. The notion of CALP promotes a 'deficit theory' insofar as it attributes the academic failure of bilingual/minority students to low cognitive/academic proficiency rather than to

inappropriate schooling (Edelsky, 1990; Edelsky et al., 1983; Martin-Jones & Romaine, 1986). In response to these scholars, Cummins and Swain (1983) and Cummins (2008) point to the elaborated socio-political framework within which the BICS/CALP distinction was placed (Cummins, 1986, 1996) where underachievement among subordinated students was attributed to coercive relations of power operating in the society at large and reflected in schooling practices. He also invoked the work of Biber (1986) and Corson (1995) as evidence of the linguistic reality of the distinction. Corson highlighted the enormous lexical differences between typical conversational interactions in English as compared to academic or literacy-related uses of English. Similarly, Biber's analysis of more than one million words of English speech and written text revealed underlying dimensions very consistent with the distinction between conversational and academic aspects of language proficiency. Cummins (1996) also points out that the construct of academic language proficiency does not in any way depend on test scores as support for either its construct validity or relevance to education, as illustrated by the analyses of Corson (1995) and Biber (1986).

Having weighted Cummins' literature, the researcher is of the opinion that there are three abilities necessary for successful communication in a targeted professional setting. The first is the ability to use the language of everyday informal talk to communicate effectively, regardless of occupational context (BICS). Examples of this include chatting over coffee with a colleague or responding to an informal email message. The second is the ability to use a more generalised set of academic skills, such as conducting research and responding to memoranda (CALP). The third ability required in order to communicate

successfully in an occupational setting is the ability to use the particular jargon characteristic of that specific occupational context. The BICS/CALP distinction was not proposed as an overall theory of language proficiency (Cummins, 2008) but rather as a very specific conceptual distinction that has important implications for policy and practice.

3.8.3 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Much has been said about Cummins (1980; 1996) who theorises that there are two kinds of English proficiency that ESL students must learn (see Sub-section 3.8.2 above). It is critical for ESL lecturers to move beyond the functional English syllabus and to start providing a content-rich, high standards curriculum that prepares ESL students to become academically successful in content learning. One method to do that is to integrate subject matter and language development through content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Ball (2009) identifies five types of CLIL programmes: total immersion, partial immersion, subject courses, language classes based on thematic units and language classes with greater use of content. For him, any kind of content and language combined education is CLIL. According to Jarvinen (2008), there has been a growth in the number of studies on the outcomes of CLIL programmes in primary and secondary schools, though more research is still needed at the tertiary level. While CLIL functions as a bottom-up approach at the primary and secondary school levels, at the tertiary level it typically represents a top-down approach which requires an institutional initiative dictated by the strategic need for country-specific or geographical-specific needs. It was necessary for this study to establish whether a course such as ESP provided such language-rich workplace literacies.

Furthermore, such initiatives could enhance the employability and productivity of students in the regions and countries of Africa through courses, such as ESP.

3.9 Transition from university to career

The transition from university to the workplace is not always a smooth one. Examples of difficulties with the transition include discrepancies between what employers, on the one hand, and students, on the other, view as desired employability skills. For many students, the time leading up to university graduation and the start of a first job is often chaotic and stressful. Concerns have been raised by employers regarding the readiness of graduates entering the workforce and the undergraduate programmes that support this transition and develop critical and communicative competencies using the literacy for specific purposes (Angula, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2011a, 2011b; Dentlinger, 2006; Hernandez-March, Martin del Peso & Leguey, 2009; Ihuhua, 2011; Kavanagh & Drennan, 2008; Links, 2010; Shipanga, 2012). Hodges and Burchell (2003) state that, in this global competitive marketplace, organisations are seeking graduates that not only have the necessary technical skills for the role but also the soft skills to communicate, interact and empathise effectively with client needs. Though it is not the direct role of higher education to ensure graduates a job, institutions can take steps to promote the likelihood that their graduates will gain what may be deemed as appropriate employment (Holmes, 2013). The meaning of transition has varied with the context in which the term has been used. At the moment 'transition' as a notion as opposed to 'transfer', is gaining momentum and importance in the sense that the student does not merely transfer knowledge from one domain to the next, but actually 'transitions'. In other words, he or she goes through a process of change.

This study researched whether or not the ESP courses offered at various institutions of higher learning in Namibia did prepare the graduates from these institutions for the literacies needed at various workplaces.

Hager and Hodkinson (2009, p. 619) stress that "the 'common sense' notions of transfer have increasingly been discarded even in the learning literature." Transition is the way people respond to change over time. People undergo transition when they need to adapt to new situations or circumstances in order to incorporate the change event into their lives.

Transition is a concept that is important to language and workplace literacy. Research on student transition, attrition and performance in various discipline areas is sketchy at educational institutions in Namibia. Therefore, there was a need to establish what measures and support in courses, such as ESP, tertiary institutions in Namibia supplied to young graduates prior to and after the transition from graduation to employment.

3.10 Theory of transferability

3.10.1 Characteristics used to describe transfer

According to Ottoson and Hawe (2009, p. 11), the literature regarding learning transfer "spans multiple disciplines, fields, professions and contexts." Transfer looks different, depending on who is investigating it. A review of literature on transfer indicates the many ways it is viewed and qualified. It is clear from the literature (Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Huang, 2009; Child, 2004; Keiler, 2007) that the definitions are not mutually exclusive as they may play out differently for different people in the same situation or context.

According to Cameron, Hipkins, Lander and Whatman (2011), there is a need to be "mindful of the different starting points of individuals when judging the extent to which they face a transfer challenge with their learning" (p. 11). While the notion of transfer appears straightforward and simple, it is a complex concept to investigate, measure and demonstrate. Whether or not the teaching of a course like ESP was well tied to real world applications, such as equipping students with various workplace literacies, was another concern of this study.

Blume, Ford, Baldwin and Huang (2009) describe a generalisation gradient with transfer tasks that are the same or very close to the training tasks being more likely to be transferred (that is, 'near transfer'). When the content or context is different, or the new task is given much later than the training task(s), 'far transfer' is needed and is more difficult to achieve. The example they give is "applying principles of electricity from training to troubleshooting complex mechanical problems under extreme time pressures" (Blume et al., 2009, p. 41). The clear implication for research is that the nature of the transfer task and contexts need to be described carefully for transfer to happen.

Positive transfer is most likely to occur when the learner recognises common features among concepts, principles or skills, consciously linking the information in memory and thus recognising the value of using what was learned in one situation in that of another. There are overlaps with the example above and with Keiler's (2007) idea of 'lateral transfer'(using task knowledge in a different context, such as recognising that calculation of area can be used to decide how much carpet is needed to carpet a room). Examples in

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literacy and language contexts comprise, among others, the following: whether reading has been taught previously by using a very decontextualised, phonics approach, with emphasis on accuracy of articulation rather than comprehension of the message, this approach could interfere with understanding strategies for comprehension that require inference and synthesis.

Near transfer in a literacy context occurs when students are able to take what has been learnt in their tertiary language programme and use it in their work. For example, automotive engineers may learn how to write a limited bank of words that they need to use to list the parts they have used on a job. If they are able to do this accurately in their work, this would be an example of near transfer. Another example of near transfer for fulltime students at a tertiary institution would be a test in the language class at the end of the term which is a near temporal context, a similarly functional context, as well as similar in social and physical contexts. Far transfer may occur if they are later able to use new supplier manuals for a car they had not previously worked on to locate parts and enter these names on their job sheet. Again, for students of commerce, a far transfer scenario might be conversational performance in a work context, like a financial firm and bank a year later. Figure 12 below illustrates near and far transfers:
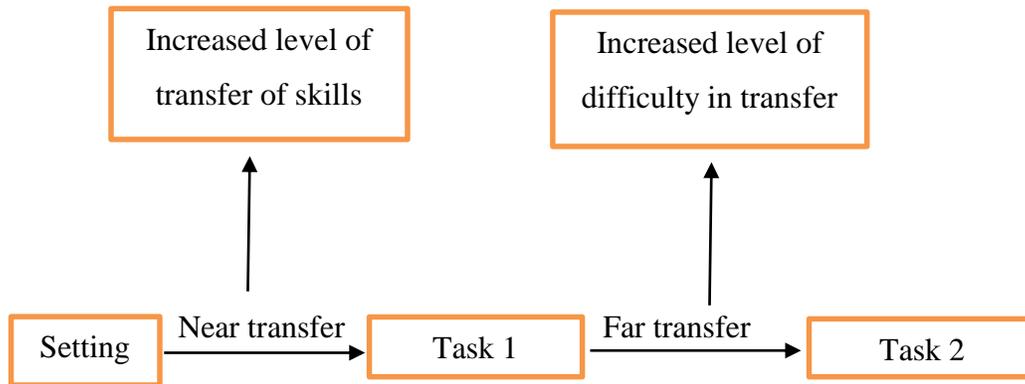
Figure 12: *Near and Far transfer of learning*
Note. Mungongi (2016)

3.10.2 Transfer from one context to another

The literature on workplace literacy indicates that listening, speaking, reading and writing are important aspects of communication in the commercial industry and that business graduate employees require effective English communicative skills in these domains if they are to be successful in their business careers. They need skills regarding how to analyse a trove of documents/texts at their disposal, to fill out forms properly, to express their opinions in writing and to be fluent in numeracy.

Mason (1992) and Billet (2001) indicate that in the early 1990s tertiary education in some countries typically contained curricular materials that were far less attuned to the interests of employers in the workplace. I am also of the opinion that in addition to that, at present, to some degree the scope of education at universities in Namibia is highly academic (Angula, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2011a, 2011b; Dentlinger, 2006; Links, 2010; Namwandi,

2013), as strong emphasis is placed on scholastic outcomes in the academic achievement of graduates. Graduates' grasp and transference of knowledge from university to the workplace faces the challenge articulated by Vygotsky (1979, 1986) (see Section 2.2) regarding school concepts that are abstract and fundamentally different from the realities of life experience in the workplace context.

To some extent it can be argued that at present, the inclination of the tertiary curricula in Namibia are geared towards preserving traditional and academic values, excluding learning for the workplace. Furthermore, it perpetuates for that matter a Western-centric, academic tradition. This probably explains why graduate employees in Namibia are greatly handicapped in applying classroom learning from tertiary institutions to their workplaces for effective work performance. Part of this research was geared towards establishing whether or not the teaching of a course like ESP was well tied to real world applications, such as equipping students with various, workplace literacies.

'Vocationalism' is generally regarded with suspicion by universities and not seen as part of their mandate; it thus calls for a more extensive reappraisal of tertiary education. This research project also aimed at establishing what needed to be seen as the mandate of tertiary institutions. The issue of transfer of language learning skills from the classroom to work settings, where it can be applied by young graduates and supervisors, has intrigued cognitive and educational psychologists alike throughout the 20th century. Most definitions of the transfer of learning have in common the notion that transfer involves 'carrying' learning from one context into another. Haskell (2001) defines transfer of

learning as the use of past learning when learning something new and the application of that learning to both similar and new situations. Ellis (1965) defines transfer of learning as "that experience or performance on one task influences performance on some subsequent tasks" (Ellis, 1965, p. 1). This is supported by Hager and Hodkinson (2009) who recommend abandoning the transfer metaphor altogether because transfer aligns with outdated and discredited views of learning as acquisition rather than experience, in the sense that it is people who move from context to context, not what is learnt.

Hager and Hodkinson (2009, p. 619), however, stress that "'common sense' notions of transfer have increasingly been discarded even in the learning literature." Until recently, sociocultural theorists tended to see the situated nature of learning as a barrier to transfer (Taylor, Evans & Mohamed, 2008). Illustrating their thinking, Hager and Hodkinson (2009, p. 619) quote the well-known, socio-cultural theorist, Jean Lave, who once wrote (Lave, 1996) that the concept of transfer is "an extraordinarily narrow and barren account of how knowledgeable persons make their way among multiple interrelated settings."

Taylor, Ayala and Pinsent-Johnson (2009) make an important contribution to the debate by spelling out the implications of recent transfer research in the school sector for resolving this dilemma. In relation to their question about teaching strategies used to transfer learning, the researchers conclude and surmise that the instructor is central to learning transfer because he or she is "the chief architect for connecting the design and delivery of classroom learning to the workplace or work-practice setting" (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 8). In their study, it was found that learners and instructors figured out the way

that trainees learnt best and presented information in a variety of ways to enhance the potential for transfer. This could be described as making meaningful connections between trainee, instructor, content and methods. Engle (2006) provides a persuasive counter-argument to the commonly held notion that transfer and situativity are incommensurable, and argues that contexts can be socially framed to create intercontextuality. The idea of intercontextuality draws attention to the teacher's role in framing both the context of the learning and the potential transfer context so that the learner is supported in seeing the links between them. It is not left up to the learner to see the potential connections or not. This is the theoretical basis of what Vygotsky (1978) argued and put forward as scaffolding (see Section 2.2). Vygotsky (1978) views interaction with peers and knowledgeable others as an effective way of developing skills and strategies. He suggests that teachers use cooperative learning exercises. The current study investigated whether or not the use of a second language in an ESP course was an impediment to graduates employed in the commercial industry.

3.11 Course and syllabus design

Course and syllabus design is a major component of any envisaged training programme. Although there may be considerable controversy regarding the correct principles of course and syllabus design, there is much less disagreement about both the importance of course design considerations in ESP enterprises and the need to establish some sort of principled basis from which to proceed. ESP emerged as an approach to English language teaching, and in the 1960s became immensely useful for teaching English to students of science and technology, as well as business and management, who were pursuing higher studies at

universities. It concerns the register not only on the lexical level as earlier thought, but also the morpho-syntactic choices, as well as textual and pragmatic organisation (Halliday, 1978). In the current study it needed to be established whether or not the ESP courses on offer fulfilled this expectation.

For an English for Business (BE) teacher, language teaching competency includes English knowledge (grammar, lexis, syntax, rhetoric, style, among others). Besides, she or he must have a high level of language competence and the knowledge of recent methodologies for the teaching of English as a foreign or second language. It has generally been thought in the ESP scenario that the teacher does not require specialised academic knowledge of the learners' major subject of study. This is because it focuses on developing language and study skills and not on the academic subject itself; however, it will be more result-oriented if teachers of ESP also gather the necessary information about the subject areas of ESP learners.

According to Munby (1978, p. vi), it is arguable that the "most crucial problem at present facing language syllabus designers, and ultimately materials producers, in the field of language for specific purposes, is how to specify validly the target communicative competence". At the heart of the problem is the common mistake designers make by starting with the text instead of starting with the learner for whom the syllabus is meant. Furthermore, there is a lack of a rigorous system for documents that are a pre-requisite to the appropriate specification of what is to be taught. It is my position that the mainstream of language teaching has been more concerned with methodology, with the *how* rather

than *what* to teach. The issues of needs, specificity and relevance of courses for learners have been dealt with extensively by scholars, such as Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Popescu (2010) and Gatehouse (2012). Knowing more about the learner's motivation for learning English and, more specifically, his or her immediate and future needs will make teaching more effective. The more learners are consulted and involved in the decision-making as to what they should be learning, the more active and motivated and the better they learn.

Along the same line of argument, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 53) state that "what distinguishes ESP from General English is not the existence of a need as such but rather an awareness of the need." St. John (1996, p. 6) states that "needs analysis is about understanding learners and also about understanding the communication events which the learners will participate in …[we] have established considerable consensus on the importance of spoken language for those using English in business settings". St. John then outlines the following core business communication skills:

- Listening/speaking: telephoning, socialising, giving presentations, taking part in meetings.
- Reading/writing: corresponding, report writing.

Difficulties arise when there is a disconnect between the teacher and the target audience in terms of needs analysis. To this day, this assumption is generally adhered to by most ESP practitioners when they design or mount a wide variety of ESP courses, such as English for civil servants, for policemen, for business and/or for medical doctors. Apart from the focus and target of needs analysis, skills and learners, ESP courses are often

discussed in terms of 'wide-angled' and 'narrow-angled' designs (Tsou, 2009). The term 'wide' refers to courses for learners targeting a broader range of work, professional or academic environment, while the term 'narrow' pertains to courses for learners targeting one particular workplace, professional or academic field (Basturmen, 2010). An example of a wide-angled ESP course is English for engineering studies, designed for all engineering students who belong to the same college or university. Programmes that adopt the narrow-angled approach, by contrast, consider students of an academic department within a college or university, such as chemical, mechanical or civil engineering as a group. For this study, English for graduates in the commercial fields of banking and finance could be regarded as narrow-angled (i.e., it would have a well-defined context and focus on detail). The English for academic purposes, for communication and study skills as well as for general purposes at our current tertiary institutions can be regarded as wide-angled, because these modules are not highly specific in terms of their content meant for students.

Most of these programmes are based on generalised skills and a process approach. This study envisaged to propose a narrow-context, ESP course design by combining the modules of employable skills with an ESP approach to achieve the purpose of the practical use of English for Commercial Purposes speciality. Thus, it aimed to include perceptions by employers, as well as employees, about what competencies and dispositions are regarded as essential to be acquired during their university training, on the one hand, and graduates' views of the type of training they have undergone at university, on the other, to confront the ambiguities of practice successfully.

One of the techniques used in designing an ESP course is to obtain information through an ethnographic approach, making use of observing and interviewing the targeted learners to derive at a need. Hutchinson and Waters (1989) contend that there are three factors affecting ESP course design: Language descriptions, learning theories and needs analysis. The interdependence of these factors in the course design process is very important. The course design must bring the learner into play at all stages of the design process. See Figure 13 below of a simplified framework of an ESP course design.
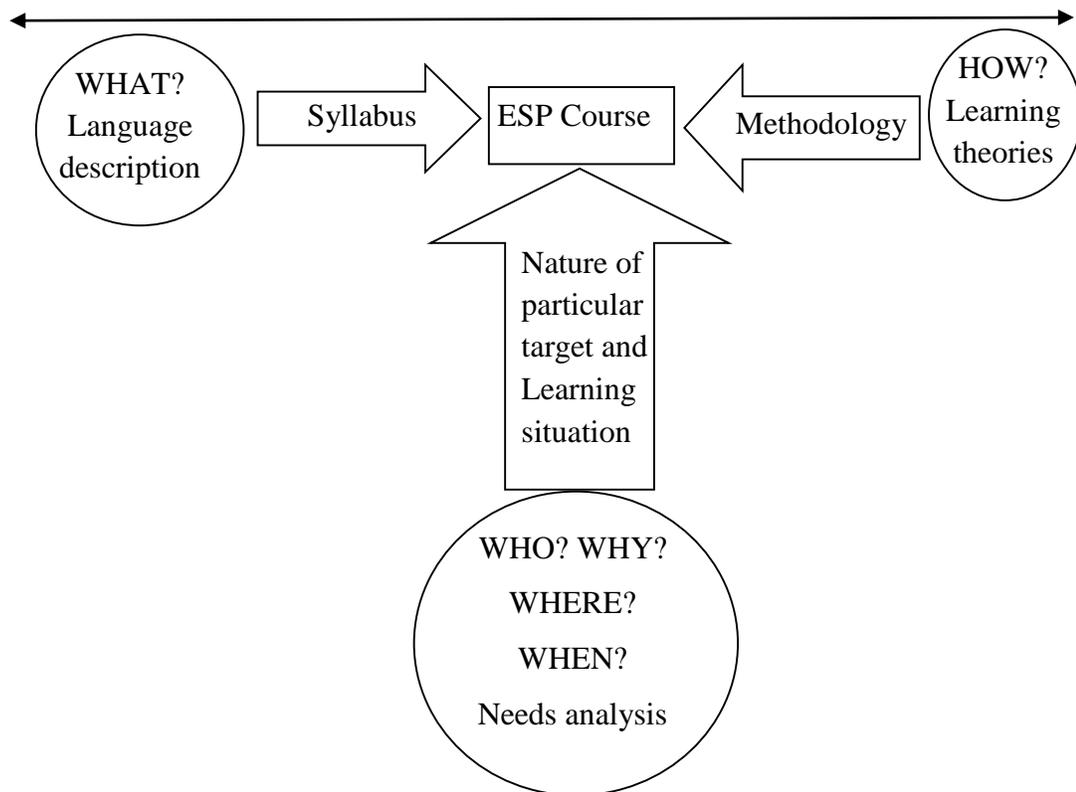
Figure 13: *Factors affecting ESP course design*
Note. Mungongi (2016)

The task of the ESP developer is to ensure that all three of these abilities are integrated into the syllabus. This requires an incredible amount of research. By its very nature, ESP requires comprehensive needs analysis and because the learning-centred syllabus is not static, in most cases it is difficult to find a perfect balance of the abilities discussed above for any particular group of learners.

3.12 Curricula of tertiary education for the workplace

This study was conducted at a time when two major issues were being discussed: the role and relevance of tertiary education and the needs of the workplace. Both issues have come into sharp focus because they have a significant impact on people and the country. One of the goals of tertiary education is to prepare individuals for the workplace by equipping them with not only occupation-specific knowledge, but also with generic skills and competencies that are relevant for functioning in any workplace. It was hypothesised, therefore, that individuals who have attained tertiary education would be equipped with these generic skills and competencies, and that these would be demonstrated in the workplace. Roberts (2003) has attempted to define tertiary education to be the third stage of education which builds on secondary education. Tertiary education, according to Roberts (2003), is seen as voluntary in nature, androgogical and student-centred in orientation; catering to the intellectual, social and occupational needs of young and older adult learners, while preparing them to function as productive and adaptive citizens in a global environment. The United Nations 'Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014) has come and gone. It is, therefore, the most pertinent time to revisit issues relevant to tertiary and higher education. The World Bank Group (2011)

has identified the seven most promising directions for the development and evolution of tertiary education. Of that list, the third is improving the quality and relevance of tertiary education. This relevance may best be measured by its ability to equip workers adequately with workplace literacies. While addressing an education conference organised by the Faculty of Education of the University of Namibia, the then Minister of Education, David Namwandi, was at pains to state that there is a need to establish closer ties in the school curriculum to the needs of the workplace (Namwandi, 2013). Fallows and Steven (2000) support this idea and note that the current global economic situation has rendered an academic degree with mere knowledge of an academic subject insufficient for the workplace. This study set out to establish whether or not the curriculum for ESP as offered by tertiary institutions in Namibia was related to the social languages in work places.

Gannaway (2010) reviewed the present status of the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Australia. The author notes that although this degree has been the longest established degree programme in the Australian Higher Education system, its relevance and value to contemporary Australian society and economy are frequently called into question by students, prospective employers and university administration. A similar criticism was reported by Seethamaraju (2008). Whether or not this could echo the current situation prevalent in Namibia, where employers would constantly argue that tertiary institutions must take stock of the kind of curricula offerings relevant to the workplace is an issue which needed research and hence this study.

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Gannaway (2010) notes that, unlike a medical or education graduate, an arts graduate has no direct link to a particular career. It all appears that a gap exists between theory taught at the universities and the practice in the work place. This study intended to establish whether or not that was the case. The situation described above provoked me to ask critical questions of the commercial/accounting faculties, such as: Do universities, through their offered ESP courses, prepare graduates with the necessary integrated view of business? Does the ESP course taken by these students offer a multi-disciplinary perspective that would make them communicate effectively once in the world of work? The answers to these questions are critical for the success of students in modern business organisations today.

Numerous empirical studies regarding entry-level employee competencies from the perspective of employers have been conducted in both industrialised and developing nations (Mustapha, 1999; Connor & Hirsh, 2008; Council for Industry and Higher Education, 2008). The results found that the majority of the employers indicated that the present educational approach was not sufficient to train students effectively for the changing demands of the workplace. The results of the studies also indicate that employers preferred certain types of entry-level competencies for the prospective employees. The current study investigated workplace literacy for young graduates employed in the commercial sector. It was to establish what students take with them into their first jobs, and identify potential language for specific purposes curricula gaps in their commercial studies assumed to have been offered through the ESP courses offered to them.

3.13 The need for work-related learning, internships and induction

According to Laughton (2012), many institutions and universities are offering work-related learning (WRL) as a substitute for work-based learning (WBL), when the latter is difficult to provide for in terms of curriculum match, resources available and logistical necessities. Laughton (2012, p. 37) defines work-related learning as "learning which results in knowledge, skill or attribute development derived from engaging with tasks, processes and environments similar to those that occur in specific organisational and vocational contexts." The aim of WRL is to help to prepare students for employment in an organisational context by equipping them with the relevant knowledge, skills and attributes that can be used and applied in situ. Furthermore, WRL pedagogy has attempted to simulate, replicate or mimic workplace situations or problems.

Academic internships represent a first step towards the tasks performed by professionals. At the same time, they allow students to apply and supplement the knowledge acquired from their academic training (Pacios, 2013). Whether or not the ESP courses on offer made provision for internships needed was investigated in this study. Students can become aware of the continuous changes in their professional environment, which helps avoid the gaps between their training and their future professional responsibilities as identified by scholars, such as Westbrock and Fabian (2010). Academic internships have become extremely relevant and even imperative in today's globalised and highly competitive working environment. Pacios (2013) identifies information centres (libraries, archives and documentation centres established by faculties and universities in general) as places where prospective young graduates could do their internships. It was important for this study to

establish whether the demands for a workplace and the effectiveness of a given course, such as ESP, in preparing graduates in workplace literacies for effective communication and quality production was meeting these expectations.

The term 'induction' is generally used in a workplace context, and is considered to be an important aspect of personnel management. It is a process where employees adjust or acclimatise to their jobs and working environment. It helps new employees gain awareness of what the organisation, company or institution expects from them and so guides and helps them find their place in it. Induction is mainly given to add up to short falls graduates might bring with to the workplace, such as that of commerce, after they have undergone training in an ESP course.

A good induction programme helps to speed up the socialisation of new employees and encourages them to make positive contributions to the organisation. Franz (2008) postulates that it is well documented that the workplace enables students to experience multiple roles and perspectives, work collaboratively and reflectively, apply theory in real situations, and begin to learn the discourse of the commerce profession. It is my view that the workplace encourages a behavioural and self-awareness form of learning while the cognitive form is perhaps left to the university environment.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter dealt and engaged with relevant theories and concepts of workplace literacies, competencies, language skills in ESL, ESP, transition and the theories of transferability, as well as course and syllabus design at a micro level. It unpacked the relationship between literacy and learning (developing new knowledge), the competencies and skills that form part of literacy and second language literacies. It, furthermore, covered the interconnectedness of the very many variables in a linguistically diverse community where skills required in the workplace cover considerably more than basic or even advanced academic reading and writing skills.

The discussion shows that a narrow understanding of literacy is not helpful in reflecting on the curriculum content of ESP at tertiary level, and particularly in considering how workplace literacy relates to academic literacy. While this chapter dealt with the nature and development of workplace literacies, the next chapter deals with the decisions regarding the methods and research design employed to gather empirical data.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This study investigated the role of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and its relevance to workplace literacy for graduates employed in the Namibian commercial sector in Windhoek. It presents and expounds the research approach and design, as well as the philosophy that inspired and guided the study. It reflects on the research methodology, together with the analytical process, I used in the larger study.

Firstly, the theoretical perspectives and literature that informed the choice of a mixed research design are presented, followed by an historical review of the development of mixed methods. Next, I describe multiple research methods and advance reasons for that choice as an approach to, and analytical framework for, this study. This discussion is followed by an introduction of the research instruments that I developed and utilised in the pursuit of research data. Finally, it presents an explanation of how data generation/collection and development proceeded in the field, as well as the methods of data analysis and how credibility, confirmability, reliability and validity issues were ensured during the research process.

4.2 Research method

Research methodology refers to the principles and philosophy on which researchers base procedures and strategies followed in their studies, as well as the assumptions that they

hold about the nature of the research carried out (Creswell, 2013). A research methodology is more than merely a method as it consists of the ideas underlying data development and analysis. A research method, on the other hand, would merely refer to the techniques and procedures adopted by the researcher to collect and analyse data (King & Horrocks, 2010).

King and Horrocks (2010) define research methodology as "a process where the design of the research and choice of particular methods, and their justification in relation to the research project, are made evident" (p. 6). Myers (2009) sees research method as a strategy of enquiry, which moves from the underlying assumptions to research design and data collection.

A research method, therefore, deals with the rules, values and priorities given to social conditions and individual action. It is the methodology that defines what is perceived as legitimate knowledge and how that knowledge is obtained and ordered in a study (Guba, 1990). These notions about research method were very pertinent to understand the trajectory of teaching language for communicative purposes through a course, such as ESP, for graduates to be employed in a commercial workplace.

Research methodology is coherent with the research paradigm when the techniques used in sampling, data development and interpretation, as well as the context of the study, 'fit' within the logic of the paradigm and also with the purpose of the research (Durrheim, 2006). There are several research methodologies associated with the interpretive

paradigm, each of which has its own underlying philosophies, practices and methods of interpretation. These include: phenomenology, ethnography, case study and grounded theory. The nature of this study was best suited to a case study that investigated a phenomenon as the research design. It investigated workplace literacy for young graduates employed in the commercial sector and investigated what students take with them into their first jobs, as well as identify the potential gaps of language for specific purposes curricula assumed to have been offered in the ESP course during their commercial studies.

4.3 Research philosophy

The question most pertinent for this section is what constitutes both a suitable research design and platform for action. A research philosophy can be defined as a belief about the way in which data regarding a phenomenon should be gathered, analysed and used. Without a perspective on the nature of knowledge and the social reality in which the two are fervently viewed, it would be impossible to consider what might count as relevant knowledge in the research process.

This study was guided by a philosophical world view underpinned by a common set of beliefs that realities are "socially constructed" (Mertens, 2005, p. 12), that is, we construct our own understanding from an event. This understanding is subjective and hence varies from person to person (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, these constructions are alterable as they are open to new interpretations as information and sophistication of understanding improves (Guba & Lincoln, 2004). This study aimed to understand from graduates how those ESP and ESP related courses they took as part of their degree

curricula had prepared them for their employment environment, focusing mainly on communicative skills or competencies. According to Guba and Lincoln (2004), knowledge is created through interaction between the researcher and participants. The researchers' goal is to understand the multiple social constructions that the participants hold, thus research "must employ empathic understanding of those being studied" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. 705). This study espoused these views, which were also consistent with the views associated with the constructivist research paradigm. Thus, my worldview for this research was constructivist.

In line with my constructivist worldview, I adopted a mixed methods approach with the perception that a more complete picture of human behaviour and experience can be constructed by employing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. This study investigated whether or not those ESP courses offered at the three institutions of higher learning in Namibia prepared graduates in the field of commerce for the particular literacies needed at their workplaces.

Two major research philosophies or assumptions have been identified in the Western tradition of science, namely positivist (sometimes called scientific) and interpretivist (also known as anti-positivist) (Galliers, 1991). In the social sciences the fundamental philosophical systems that distinguish approaches to research are referred to as research paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Research paradigms are thus defined as sets of basic beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be studied. These provide a framework for the entire research process (Creswell, 1998, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Each of these paradigms can be characterised by the way their proponents respond to the three basic assumptions/questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Of major importance is the issue of what counts as knowledge, and social scientists are often preoccupied with attempting to formulate sufficient criteria for evaluating knowledge statements – what is it that we can claim to know (King & Horrocks, 2010). King and Horrocks (2010, p. 8) offer a concise definition of epistemology as "the philosophical theory of knowledge." According to Galliers (1991), the term epistemology (what is known to be true) as opposed to doxology (what is believed to be true) encompasses the various philosophies of research approach. Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature and form of reality and determine what constitute 'legitimate' researchable questions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; King & Horrocks, 2010). Put more simply, a realist ontology subscribes to the view that the real world is out there and exists independently from us (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; King & Horrocks, 2010), as well as the place of the axiological tenant (the place of values in research). Our understandings and experiences are relative to our specific cultural and social frames of reference, being open to a range of interpretations (King & Horrocks, 2010). I wanted to understand graduates' perspectives and measure their levels of literacy for the workplace demands after having attended an ESP course at a tertiary institution as part of their graduate studies. To understand the truth and views regarding their training, I administered a questionnaire. Furthermore, I made use of a semi-structured interview to establish from employers the extent to which their expectations had been met.

Finally, methodological assumptions deal with the procedures researchers use to investigate what they believe can be known, and the rationales behind these procedures (Babbie, 2004; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). To this end, a mixed methods approach was adopted to establish what could be known about how the newly employed graduates from universities fitted into the working world, with reference to those workplace literacies which the ESP courses they attended at one of the three tertiary institutions sampled for this study were believed to have prepared them for their new employment environment. Therefore, each paradigm contains a set of assumptions that are coherently related in a unique way, and which have practical implications for the conduct, interpretation and utilisation of research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemological assumptions thus deal with the nature of knowledge and what counts as knowledge. It is concerned with questions about the nature of the relationship between the inquirer/knower and the known. Therefore, epistemology, how we know what we know, is a means of establishing what counts as knowledge, and is central in any methodological approach. It defines how knowledge can be produced and argued for, including the criteria by which knowledge is possible, what kind of scientific knowledge is available and what the limits are for that knowledge (Erikksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Whether or not the teaching of courses like the ESP for graduate students in the field of commerce was well tied to real world applications, such as equipping students with various workplace literacies, was investigated in this study.

4.3.1 Positivism

Historically, the earliest research paradigm to be used was positivism. Following the critique against positivism as being inadequate to inform human experiences and social phenomena (Lather, 1991; Connole, 1993), several competing post-positivist paradigms have emerged; these include interpretivism, structuralism and post-structuralism (Guba, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Figure 14 below presents the ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives of three of these paradigms (see Section 4.3 above) for details on these assumptions. Logical positivism, post-positivism and interpretivism are examples of paradigms which may be considered on a continuum.

Figure 14: *Paradigm continuum*
Note. Mungongi (2016)

Anchoring one end is logical positivism, introduced by French philosopher, August Comte, (Yu, 2006) which holds that truth is presented by measurable, naturally occurring phenomena. It asserts that measurement is proof of existence; therefore, if a phenomenon cannot be measured, then it does not exist (Bernard, 2011). Furthermore, logical positivism argues that all naturally occurring phenomena can be broken down into measurable moments, which when considered together, form the whole of the single phenomenon of interest and thus reproduce 'truth'. Logical positivist researchers use deductive reasoning to generate theory from which specific hypotheses evolve and are

tested. Inferences from experiments are then employed in theory construction and the development of natural laws (Manion & Morrison, 2007; Yu, 2006). We may learn that a specific theory does not fit the facts well, and thus the theory must be revised to predict reality better. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 9) claim that "Comte's position was to lead to a general doctrine of positivism which held that all genuine knowledge is based on the sense of experience and can be advanced only by means of observation and experiment." Positivism maintains that the scientist is the neutral and unbiased observer of an objective reality and the notion of discovering something in an external reality. As such, positivists separate themselves from the world they study (see Table 1 below), while researchers within other paradigms acknowledge that they have to participate in the real world to understand and express its emergent properties and features better (Healy & Perry, 2000) (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: *Positivist, interpretive, critical theory and poststructuralist paradigms*

	Ontological	Epistemology	Methodology
Positivist	-Stable external reality -Law-like	-Objective -Detached observer	-Experimental -Quantitative -Hypothesis testing
Interpretive	-Internal reality of subjective experience -Multiple realities	-Emphatic -Observer intersubjectivity	-Interactional -Interpretant -Qualitative
Critical theory	-Reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic and gender values	-Transactional/subjectivist -Value-mediated findings -Emancipatory	-Dialogical/dialectical -Transformative -Participative
Poststructuralist	-There is no reality of real world accessible to us beyond language. -Reality is constituted in and through language as discourse	-Interactive -Subjective	-Dialogical/dialectical -Transformative -Deconstructive

Note. Connoln (1993); Guba (1990); Guba and Lincoln (1998); Lincoln and Guba (2000) Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999).

Notwithstanding the perceived drawbacks regarding positivism, I am of the opinion that its view of objectivity has contributed tremendously to the field of research. In this thesis, I took the middle position between objectivism and subjectivism to investigate the role of those ESP courses offered by Namibian tertiary institutions to young graduates employed in the commercial sector in Windhoek. On the one hand, I recognise the existence and importance of the natural or physical world, as well as, on the other, the emergence of the social and psychological. With regards to the phenomenon investigated in this study, namely, workplace literacy, I concentrated primarily on investigating the workplace literacies and the perceived competence or incompetence of young Namibian graduates

coming from the country's tertiary institutions who were employed in the commercial sector in Windhoek. A quantitative research design, employing a survey questionnaire, was utilised as one arm of the research.

4.3.2 Interpretivism

The broad or 'dominant' theoretical and philosophical framework of this study was based on qualitative research. Part of the focus thus was to uncover the social world and views of employers and tertiary institution representatives regarding the issue of English language literacies and competencies necessary for young graduates in the workplace. Therefore, the way in which respondents offered detailed accounts of the workplace literacies and competencies and processes or relationships under investigation was at the core of interpretative research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) use the mixed methods research design as a concept to denote multiple variants based on the emphasis and purpose that are placed on the qualitative and the constructivist-interpretive, mental models (see Table 1 above). Qualitative research is naturalistic, holistic and inductive (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). It believes that human behaviour is best studied within the social, linguistic and historical features which give it shape. Thus, qualitative research allows the study of phenomena as they unfold in real life situations without manipulation (Kelly, 1999). These characteristics of qualitative research were important for this study, since they made it possible for the researcher to enter into the lives of both the graduates, employers and representatives of the tertiary institutions and uncover what they regarded as workplace literacy competencies. It thus made it possible for their voices to be heard.

As such, an interpretive perspective is based on the idea that qualitative research efforts should be concerned with revealing multiple realities as opposed to searching for one objective reality. In Denzin's words, "Objective reality will never be captured. In depth understanding, the use of multiple validities, not a single validity, a commitment to dialogue is sought in any interpretive study" (Denzin, 2010, p. 271). With interpretivism, it is hard to ignore the observer, as well as the issues around truth and accuracy. There are always tensions there, because truth can be local, relative, historically based, situational and contextual. It builds its premises on inductive, rather than deductive reasoning. The strong correlation between the observer and the data is markedly different from that in quantitative research, where the researcher is strictly outside of the phenomenon being investigated. While the above may appear to make obvious comments regarding the benefits of interpretative research, it must be stated with a degree of caution (King & Horrocks, 2010; Schwandt, 1994). King and Horrocks (2010, p. 11) contend that in research it is all too easy to adopt such simplistic and seemingly rational viewpoints. They stress that interpretivism perceives experience and understanding as only seldom straightforward; people participate in indiscriminate life worlds, often attaching different interpretations and meanings to similar 'facts' and events.

Based on such observations, Lather (1991) and Le Grange (2000) argue that the term 'qualitative' for its part alone is inadequate for describing contemporary social science research. This means that no single one of the so-called 'approaches' and views regarding research can possibly give the whole picture. Thus, it was imperative to locate and consider the specific philosophical systems that informed this study; this discovery

resulted in a mixed methods approach that investigated whether or not the ESP courses on offer for graduates in the field of commerce at the three tertiary institutions of learning in Namibia were well tied to real world applications, such as equipping students with various workplace literacies required in their future places of employment.

4.3.3 Mixed methods research

Although mixed methods research has existed for several decades, it has just been within the last few decades that this method has gained visibility (Castro, Kellison, Boyd, & Kopak, 2010). It has been championed by authoritative writers, such as John Creswell, Jennifer Greene, Abbas Tashakkori, Burke Johnson, Anthony Onwuegbuzie, Charles Teddlie, Alan Bryman and Vicky Plano Clark. It has emerged in the last two decades as a research movement with a recognised name and distinct identity. It has evolved to the point where it is "increasingly articulated, attached to research practice and recognised as the third major research approach or research paradigm" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p. 112). 'Mixed methods' is a term increasingly used in social science to describe "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17). A mixed methods approach was adopted for this study to investigate the role of ESP courses in enhancing workplace literacies for graduates employed in the commercial sector. The development of mixed methods as a concept propelled a study by Johnson et al. (2007), who sought to formalise a definition by synthesising the perspectives from 31 'leaders' in the field. They concluded that:

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or a team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., the use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (p. 123)

This research methodology is argued to be intellectual and practical, as it is likely to take advantage of overcoming the weaknesses in singular methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004), and to provide the most informative, complete, balanced and useful research results (Johnson et al., 2007). The above definition is, in essence, almost identical to that given in the *Handbook of Mixed Methods Research* (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007):

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. (p. 5)

Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010) define the methodology of mixed methods as:

The broad inquiry logic that guides the selection of specific methods and that is informed by conceptual positions common to mixed methods practitioners (e.g., the rejection of "either-or" choices at all levels of the research process). For us, this definition of methodology distinguishes the MMR approach to conducting research from that practiced in either the QUAN or QUAL approach. (p. 5)

It is also important to note of what Leech, Dellinger, Brannagan and Tanaka (2010) make of the difference between mixed methods and multiple methods when they contend that mixed methodologies refer to approaches in which quantitative and qualitative research techniques are integrated into a single study, whereas multiple methodology refers to

approaches in which more than one research method or data collection and analysis technique is used to address research questions.

The central element of each definition is that mixed methods is the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches on one or more of the levels of epistemology, methodology and methods in a specific research study. This rests on the logic that methods, methodologies and paradigms are strongly linked. Pragmatism was suggested as the philosophical assumption by many social scientists, such as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) and Morgan (2007), for mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches. Morgan (2007, p. 73) argues that "the great strength of this pragmatic approach to social science research methodology is its emphasis on the connection between epistemological concerns about the nature of the knowledge that we produce and technical concerns about the methods that we use to generate that knowledge."

Apart from pragmatism that has been most commonly associated with mixed methods research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), there are some other views regarding the philosophical foundation for mixed methods research that emerge from the literature (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Greene and Caracelli (2003) hold that a 'dialectical' perspective, which states that there may be no one best paradigm that fits mixed methods research, and that researchers can use multiple paradigms in their mixed methods study. Mertens (2008) suggests that the transformative-emancipatory perspective offers a philosophical foundation for mixed methods research.

Despite the debate in social science about which paradigms fit mixed methods research best, it is no doubt that in the last two decades, mixed-methods research has been applied widely in many fields of social science, such as sociology, education, evaluation and health science (Bryman, 2005; Creswell, 2009; Molina-Azorín, 2011). Nowadays, mixed methods research has become the third paradigm in social science research, as a natural complement to traditional qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

4.3.4 The qualitative-quantitative debate: A methodological consideration

Commenting on the qualitative research tradition, Merriam (2009, p. 13) opines that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world." Perhaps in response to these issues or stemming from personal epistemologies, some single method theorists appeared unconvinced that different data types could benefit one another or that methods other than their own could provide a coherent version of reality. A growing division developed between camps involved in different perspectives of objectivity and subjectivity in research. Bradley and Schaefer (1998, p. 108) postulate that survey-based researchers spend time arguing that "measurement enables us to transcend our subjectivity" in a way that open-ended data analyses do not. While others like Gergen and Gergen (2000, pp. 26-27) state that "qualitative methods are more faithful to the social world than quantitative ones" as they allow for data to emerge more freely from contexts. Maxwell and Loomis (2003, p. 342) see the two research approaches as "two fundamentally different ways of thinking about

explanation." A research design depends on the cool, rational assessment of alternatives (Silverman, 2013). He posits that "methods cannot be always 'right' or 'wrong', only more or less appropriate" (Silverman, 2013, p. 6).

The terms, quantitative and qualitative, are taken to describe these perspectives and thus are fixed onto research paradigms, and continue to be taught as social science facts to new researchers. Allegiance to one of these is still often exhibited by university faculties, journals and funding bodies, thus 'institutionalising' the divide (Greene & Preston, 2005). However, some commentaries, such as Cameron's (2009), contend that the struggle for primacy of one paradigm over others is irrelevant as each paradigm is an alternate offering with its own merits. The researcher believes that one could not understand the world of graduates, employers and academics if one did not look at the whole world from different angles. The world is a complex place. Knowledge about information provided is not enough to help one understand what is really going on regarding the competency demands of employers and the actual competency offer of tertiary institutions through courses, such as ESP, with the aim to provide English language workplace literacies and competencies for graduates employed to work in the commercial industry. If one wants to understand that phenomenon, then surely, one has to study it in its entire context by employing the appropriate design and methods to acquire more information for more understanding.

Recent meta-analyses about mixed method studies (Bryman, 2005) have shown that quantitative and qualitative methods are often combined in ways which lead to unrelated research results. It has often been emphasised that quantitative and qualitative methods

should be combined to use their "complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses" (Johnson & Turner, 2003, p. 299). There is no single research approach that can discover the absolute truth, as each approach provides only partial depictions of reality. Therefore, it was better to explore the role of tertiary, ESP courses to enhance workplace literacies and competencies by means of multiple ways to measure and compare between cases (Seale, 2004).

There are a number of strengths in utilising a quantitative research design as it is useful in collecting structured and broader information in the form of numerical data. The design, furthermore, allows researchers to feel confident about the representativeness of a sample for broader inferences by using a statistical sampling procedure (Horvath & Kokoszka, 2012; Silverman, 2005). From these strengths, surveys continue to be widely utilised and experiments are widely viewed as the 'gold standard' for doing research (Howe, 2009). However, information gathered from quantitative research is broad rather than deep. Furthermore, information gathered by using quantitative methods does not explain why things happen. It is unlikely to reveal the depth of views or experiences of cases by employing questionnaires alone (Clough & Nutbrown, 2012), hence the researcher's choice to complement this approach with a qualitative one. Individuals' "values and attitudes cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire" (Byrne, 2004). Using a purely quantitative approach could not provide the researcher with in-depth data regarding what participants regard as being the role of an ESP course, as well as the workplace literacies and competencies required in the commercial sector, which this study intended to establish.

To investigate how the ESP course graduates attended was preparation for the working world, mainly in communicative skills or competencies, a survey questionnaire was employed as part of the quantitative design of the mixed method. The researcher could not pre-specify entirely the strategy of the research, and went along as the research process emerged. A fixed design strategy was not practical and could not help to explore all the different aspects of the problem through a questionnaire alone.

For its part, a qualitative research approach provides an opportunity for researchers to search for more in-depth understanding about variables and explanations as to why things happen (King & Horrocks, 2010). A qualitative approach is flexible and allows researchers to obtain more information by asking questions for clarification through face-to-face interviews. Questions can develop and be modified in the field. Researchers may set topics that must be covered, though the exact order in which questions are asked and the wording of questions can vary (Bloch, 2004). During the researcher-interviewee interactions, many messages are transmitted without words, through non-verbal communication. I elucidated the types of non-verbal behaviours by interviewees with me to determine which cues were perceived most frequently as they related about their views on the relevance of the ESP course to prepare them for the workplace.

I observed the most frequent features, such as tone of voice, raised eyebrows/eye contact, touch, interpersonal distance, gestures, posture and facial expressions. Non-verbal communication is an important factor by which interviewees describe and evaluate their interactions spontaneously during interviews. The researcher may start with an open,

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natural discussion and end up with interviewing for clarification regarding the role and relevance of the ESP course as preparation for graduates in the commercial sector.

Qualitative interviews give an opportunity to the researcher to encourage the respondent to speak, to probe for more information and clarify meaning, and observe non-verbal behaviour to assess the validity of the respondent's answer (Seale, 2004). Utilising qualitative interviews could reveal some information regarding the ESP courses and work-related literacies that this study intended to establish and which the researcher did not ask in the questionnaire.

It is evident that some people are not used to expressing their feelings. They may have very real and deep feelings on a topic but are unable to verbalise these adequately. Purely listening to and analysing verbal responses, therefore, is to take account of only one aspect of the data. Employing interviews as a data collection instrument enabled me to establish whether or not the taught content in the academic courses of most of the tertiary institutions related to actual workplace literacies, as well as how prepared the students were, as far as workplace literacy was concerned, after completing the ESP course at their tertiary institution.

4.3.5 Justifying employing a mixed methods design

The design chosen for this research was mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) which was applied to investigate the ESP courses on offer at the three tertiary institutions in Namibia and their relevance to the workplace literacy training of young graduates employed in the commercial sector. The research further envisaged to

interrogate the issue of workplace literacies sought after by employers in the commercial sector industry in Namibia, as well as the views of university lecturers.

This study saw the need for a paradigm that would be sufficiently flexible, permeable and multi-layered to reflect the reality of the research project in question. Firstly, it has the ability to allow the answering of research questions that other approaches do not have; a mixed methods research design enables the simultaneous answering of confirmatory and exploratory questions. Secondly, it provides stronger inferences through depth and breadth when investigating complex social phenomena. Thirdly, it provides the opportunity, through divergent findings, for an expression of differing viewpoints. Bryman (2004) puts forward a number of arguments for what he terms as not mixed methods but the combining of quantitative and qualitative research. These include the logic of triangulation, an ability to fill in the gaps left when using one dominant approach and studying different aspects of a phenomenon (Bryman, 2004). By utilising the mixed methods, the researcher aimed to come to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, namely, the workplace literacies repertoires of newly graduated employees. To this end, this study used the mixed methods approach to investigate and establish as to whether or not the teaching of a course like ESP is well tied to real world applications, such as equipping students with required workplace literacies.

4.3.6 Content analysis – the analytical framework of choice

Content analysis was the analytical framework of choice for this study in an effort to make sense of both the quantitative and qualitative data. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005,

p. 78), qualitative content analysis is a "research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns." Patton (2002) defines qualitative data analysis as a "qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings" (p. 453). These two definitions illustrate that qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may manifest or which are latent in a text. It allows a researcher to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS, whereas qualitative data were analysed through coding which was performed manually.

For both close and open-ended items which were in the questionnaire, content analysis worked very well within the quantitative design as the numbering of answers and calculating frequencies indicated, as well as the prominence of themes that were later statistically analysed by using SPSS software. In order to develop a deeper understanding of the responses to these open-ended items, written responses were read several times (Creswell, 2008) before emerging themes were identified and codes assigned to the themes (Schreier, 2012). Following Miles and Huberman (1994), a list of themes were identified and broken down as they emerged from the data. This approach allowed for the perspectives of both participants and respondents to be identified without applying preconceptions. With these open-ended items I sought to articulate participants and respondents' perspectives regarding the ESP course and its workplace literacy offerings.

4.3.7 Processes in content analysis

Bryman (2008) suggests four stages and approaches to content analysis. The first stage, applied, according to Bryman (2008), was to scrutinise the complete data set, looking for major emerging themes, unusual issues and events. Cases were then grouped into types of categories as reflected by the research questions. During stage two, the texts were perused once again, this time marking aspects by underlining, circling and highlighting. Stage three involved the identification of codes throughout the data set by reviewing the codes, indexing them, as well as eliminating repeated and similar codes. The researcher thus documented how initial codes led to more elaborate codes and linkages and finally to formal data analysis. The fourth stage was to relate general theoretical ideas to the text. The data analysis process continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, that is, when no new themes or issues regarding a specific category arose, after having consistently eliminated repeated and similar code of analysis.

4.4 Research design

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 58) define research design as "procedures for collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies." A research design addresses different aspects of the research procedure, from philosophical assumptions to data analysis. A design may be considered mixed if it employs qualitative and quantitative approaches at any stage, including research questions development, sampling strategies, data collection approaches, data analysis methods or conclusions (Creswell & Garrett, 2008; Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). According to Durrheim (2006), a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between

research questions and the implementation of the research. For Yin (2009), a research design is a plan to guide one through the research process, from the beginning to the end. Notwithstanding, a case study was utilised to establish how the newly employed graduates from Namibian universities fitted into the working world, with reference to the workplace literacies which the ESP courses they attended at tertiary institutions were believed to have prepared them for their new employment environment.

In developing a research design, the choice of the paradigm constitutes one of the key tasks, as it is the essence of the whole research process. A mixed method, single study design was chosen for this study. To employ a simple definition, mixed methods research entails the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, either simultaneously or at different phases of the same study (Creswell, 2006). The use of mixed methods in a case study design presented an in-depth understanding of the social phenomenon or issue that was explored, namely, the workplace literacies the ESP courses offered graduate employees as preparation for the world of work in commerce.

4.4.1 The sequential explanatory mixed methods design

Due to both theoretical and practical considerations, this study was based on the sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design propounded by Creswell (2003), as well as Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), who developed mixed method typologies. According to Cameron (2009), typologies are "the study or systematic classification of types that have characteristics or traits in common and form part of models and theories" (p. 144). Typologies are used by theorists to assist in organising abstract and complex concepts.

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Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) classify four major types of mixed methods designs: the triangulation, embedded, explanatory and exploratory designs. Table 2 below provides an illustration of the major, mixed method design types adopted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2007).

Table 2: *Major mixed method design types*

Design type	Timing	Mix	Weighting/Notation
Triangulation	Concurrent: quantitative and qualitative at the same time	Merging the data during Interpretation or analysis	QUAN + QUAL
Embedded	Concurrent and sequential	Embedding one type of data within a larger design using the second type of data	QUAN(qual) Or QUAL(quan)
Explanatory	Sequential: Quantitative followed by qualitative	Connecting the data between the two phases	QUAN to qual
Exploratory	Sequential: Qualitative followed by quantitative	Connecting the data between the two phases	QUAL to quan

Note. Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007 (p. 85)

The main purpose of this study was to utilise both numerical and narrative data to understand the same phenomenon, in order to provide a broad and complementary explanation of the phenomenon. The sequential, exploratory, mixed methods design is characterised by an initial phase of quantitative data collection, processing and analysis followed by a phase of qualitative data collection and analysis. Therefore, the first priority was given to the quantitative aspect of the study. The findings of these two phases were then integrated during the interpretation phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006).

This study was viewed as a two-phase project in which quantitative data collection preceded qualitative data collection. Typically, in this design, the researcher first collected and analysed the quantitative data through a quantifiable questionnaire instrument administered to young graduates. The second qualitative phase, employing a semi-structured interview schedule, was utilised to determine emerging themes and patterns. This approach assisted in explaining and corroborating the quantitative results obtained in the first phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). A serendipitous (conversation of data) data integration from the two sets of data, that is, the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, was then done.

One of the aims of this study was to establish and advance an understanding of graduates and employers' perceptions of the acquired training by means of ESP courses for new employees and how this benefitted both trainees and employers in the workplace. There was thus a need to develop a classification or typology to test the phenomenon under study during the first phase in order to identify important variables that could not be known before testing them qualitatively by way of semi-structured interviews with employers and representatives of tertiary institutions. The second reason for this approach was that the qualitative data and their subsequent analysis were envisaged to provide a deep understanding of the research problem (Ivankova et al., 2006).

4.4.2 Advantages and limitations of the sequential explanatory mixed methods design

The strengths and weaknesses of mixed methods designs have been widely discussed in the literature (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Morse & Niehaus, 2009). Advantages of this design include, among others, that it is easy to implement for a single researcher, as it proceeds sequentially from one stage to another, thus assisting to build a new instrument. A sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design was useful for exploring qualitative results in more detail. This design was especially useful when unexpected results arose from the quantitative study (Morse, 1991, 2009). While the explanatory design is better suited to explaining and interpreting relationships, the primary focus of this design was to obtain from insiders, especially those who have just entered the workforce, the gaps between the English training provided by universities and the English literacies and competencies required in their employment environment. The data sets were collected in three phases, namely a preliminary phase (by way of a pilot study to test the relevance of the research questions), the quantitative phase and the final qualitative phase. However, the sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design was not without its limitations. The design required a lengthy timeframe to complete. It requires the feasibility of resources to collect and analyse both types of data. Furthermore, quantitative results of the first phase could show no significant differences.

4.5 Population sampling procedures

The sampling procedures regarding participants and respondents were one of the most vital aspects to the successful implementation of a sequential, explanatory, mixed methods

research. The sampling for the study was purposive (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010; Johnson & Christensen, 2012), and was based on criteria for the targeted participants. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) espouse that "on occasion, based on previous knowledge of a population and the specific purpose of the research, investigators use personal judgment to select a sample" (p. 99). When sampling the graduates, the employers and the representatives of the three tertiary institutions demographic variables, such as age and gender, were disregarded.

Young graduate employees who graduated from the commercial training faculties, employers and representatives of tertiary institutions constituted the three arms of the targeted population. The first phase of the study entailed a self-completed questionnaire that was administered to sixty graduates who graduated from the University of Namibia (UNAM), University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the International University of Management (IUM). The questionnaire was developed based on the main research question to explore how the ESP course prepared graduates for the workplace literacies required for employees in the Namibian, commercial sector in Windhoek. Ten institutions in the commercial/financial sector which employed young graduates between the ages of 23 and 26 were targeted in this study. Windhoek was the geographic area of choice for fieldwork.

Furthermore, nine employers from the (commercial/financial sector) and nine academics at UNAM, NUST and IUM respectively were interviewed during phase two. For one thing, qualitative researchers are less interested in asking about central tendencies in a

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larger group (Given, 2008). Embedded in this is the idea that who a person is and where that person is located within a group is important, unlike other forms of research where people are viewed as essentially interchangeable. Due to the nature of the study (i.e. MMR), I took a cue from Given (2008), who opines that research participants are not always created equally. One well-placed informant will often advance a research project far better than any randomly chosen sample of say fifty informants, hence the sampling decision and numbers provided above.

4.5.1 Criteria for sampling in the Windhoek matrix

The Windhoek matrix was chosen as the location of fieldwork, and reflects the urban and geographic character of Namibia's capital city. The city reflects different class, race and socio-economic backgrounds. Fields of culture and power relations shaped by distinct histories and biographies exist within this setting. Windhoek was relevant for this research because it has the largest population in Namibia, namely 325 858 inhabitants (2011 census). Windhoek has the greatest volume of economic activities in the country, with diverse life style patterns when compared to non-urban areas.

The youth culture is emergent and vibrant, and the city is a magnet for young people from other parts of the country who come for work or study at a number of tertiary institutions. The city is, furthermore, a hub for financial institutions in the commercial sector.

4.5.2 Sampling for the questionnaire

A purposive sampling method was employed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010). A sample of sixty (60) young graduates working in commercial industries was drawn from financial firms/institutions, such as the Bank of Namibia, Four commercial banks (Bank Windhoek, First National Bank, NED Bank and Standard Bank), four auditing firms (Alexander Forbes, KPMG, Deloitte & Touché Namibia, Price Waterhouse Coopers) and the Ministry of Finance.

Young graduates targeted had to be between 23 and 26 years of age, graduating from the University of Namibia (UNAM), the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the International University of Management (IUM) and employed in the Windhoek, urban, commercial sector. This age group was significant as it is the age that most young people would have finished tertiary studies and been possibly two or three years in employment. As stated above, these participants (graduates) had to be engaged in this particular work industry as their first professional employment after graduation. A self-completed questionnaire was administered. Graduate employees were asked the specific, communicative English language competencies and literacies they regarded as essential in order to fulfil their work roles in the commercial workplace and to what degree they regarded themselves as competent in these.

4.5.3 Sampling for interviews

This study was grounded in the mixed methods paradigm. Semi-structured, interview protocols were used to obtain qualitative data from employees and academics. A sample of nine supervisors, managers and co-workers was drawn from the population of ten institutions (commercial banks, financial firms and Ministry of Finance) in Windhoek.

The rationale for setting this study in these institutions was due to characteristics of the products and services these sectors offer. Apart from the above considerations, the Windhoek-based commercial industry provided an appropriate context to investigate workplace literacies and competencies from a resource-based view. It was conducive to limit workplace literacies research to one market or geographic region or area. Employers at supervisory level from these institutions were interviewed to share their perspectives on young graduates' workplace literacies and competencies they were believed to have acquired at the universities they attended. The rationale for employers at this level was to provide comprehensive accounts regarding the way they perceived graduates and their university training in courses, such as ESP.

Furthermore, the interview population of representatives of tertiary institutions was drawn from the University of Namibia (UNAM), Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) and International University of Management (IUM). I drew a sample of three (3) respondents each (Deans, HODs and Lecturers) by virtue of their positions in the faculties at the three, tertiary institutions involved in delivering commercial courses. It was important to understand how these particular groups felt, in particular about the ESP

courses and their workplace-related training, as well as the type of competencies and literacies graduates were believed to have acquired, the processes by which these attitudes were constructed and the roles these played in their respective institutions.

4.6 Tools of data collection

Each data collection method addressed a different aspect of the research. To collect data, the researcher administered a questionnaire and employed an in-depth, semi-structured, interview protocol to gather numerical and narrative data from graduate employees, employers and representatives of tertiary institutions. Each of these participants and respondents were posed a different set of questions relevant to their specific domain of responsibilities (see Appendices A, B & C).

For the first phase, a survey questionnaire was employed to gather numerical data from young graduates employed in the commercial sectors. Surveys are important when one is interested in determining the relative emphasis on an issue, that is, how strongly someone holds an opinion. Not only can survey instruments follow a fixed set of questions that can be administered by a researcher who follow a strict script, but the researcher can ask for emphasis or may ask respondents to prioritise issues or assign weights to different issues (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Surveys are also conducive to the generalisability of the research outcome, as they can cover a great number of subjects/participants more representative of the entire population (Patton, 2015). Furthermore, the results of a questionnaire can be analysed more 'scientifically' and objectively than other forms of research.

However, just as with other instruments, survey questionnaires have a drawback in that respondents may read questions differently and, therefore, reply based on their own interpretation of the question which in the end results in a lack of validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Patton, 2015). Again, it is inadequate to understand some forms of information, such as changes of emotions, behaviour and/or feelings.

The survey conducted included rateable questions on a five-point Likert scale, multiple choices and some open-ended questions (see Appendix A), asking participants to list some factors regarding their workplace literacies related to the ESP course training. This tool allowed the researcher to establish from graduates the extent of specific, English language, communicative competencies and workplace literacies they regarded as essential in order to fulfil their work roles effectively. In both cases, these instruments were thoroughly prepared, commented on by supervisors and a statistician, and then piloted before they were utilised.

Furthermore, a semi-structured, interview technique was employed to collect qualitative data by setting up a situation (the interview) that allowed respondents the time and scope to talk about their opinions of the ESP course, workplace literacies and the university training that the graduates had attended (see Appendices B and C). The objective was to understand the respondents' points of view rather than to make generalisations about behaviour. This approach allowed me to make well-informed, follow-up questions regarding themes that emerged from the survey questionnaire data.

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Interviews have strengths in that they can ensure high validity as the interviewer and interviewee can talk about something in detail and depth. Complex questions and any seemingly conflicting information/issues arising can be discussed and clarified (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Patton, 2015). To avoid any bias from respondents during the interviews, I motivated respondents during the interview. I made sure the respondents knew about the importance of the research and how important their participation was. Furthermore, I ensured that respondents did not feel that their answers regarding the ESP courses had to please the interviewer. However, interviews are time consuming and expensive to administer. The depth of the qualitative information may be difficult to analyse, i.e. deciding what are and what are not relevant data regarding the effectiveness of the ESP course for graduates employed in the commercial sector.

4.7 Piloting research instruments

A pilot study was conducted to determine the 'fitness for purpose' (Tarling, 2006). This was important to see whether the proper data to address the issue and answer the research questions could be obtained. The goal of the pilot study was to validate the instrument and to test its reliability (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Patton, 2015). These participants were excluded from the subsequent major study. The results of the pilot survey were intended to assist in establishing stability and internal consistency, reliability as well as face and content validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Patton, 2015).

Based on the pilot test results, the survey items were revised where needed. Conventional wisdom suggests that pre-testing is not only an established practice for discovering errors

but also useful for the novice researcher (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Patton, 2015). It is important to pilot-test the instruments to ensure that the questions were understood by the participants and respondents, and that there were no problems with the wording or measurement. This procedure was important to gain first-hand experience of the strengths and limitations of the methodology and of the data collected. In both cases questions of the survey and interview protocols were pilot-tested on a small number of participants and respondents that were selected on a convenience basis and that was similar in make-up to the one that ultimately was sampled. The data obtained were not employed in this study.

4.8 Data collection procedure

Due to the nature of the sequential, explanatory, mixed methods design adopted in this study, data collection consisted of two phases. The participants for the first quantitative phase were young graduates employed in the commercial sector. A cross-sectional survey design, which implies that data be collected at one point in time (Hall, 2008), was used. A survey questionnaire was drawn up consisting of questions rateable on a five-point Likert scale, while another section of the questionnaire had some open-ended questions (see Appendix A). This approach allowed the researcher to present multiple perspectives offered by individuals to "represent the complexity of their world" (Creswell, 2002, p. 194).

The primary technique for collecting the quantitative data was a self-developed questionnaire, containing items of different formats which Johnson and Christensen (2012, p. 170) called a "mixed questionnaire", namely: multiple choices, asking either for

one option or all that apply, 'Agree strongly' to 'No response', 'Not important' to 'No idea', 'Never' to 'Always' 'Not at all' to 'Very well', dichotomous answers like 'Yes' and 'No', and/or to 'Other (specify)' as well as self-assessment and rateable items measured on the five-point Likert scale. Open-ended questions were also utilised, and allowed for additional information. A choice of 'Not applicable' (NA) was included, when necessary. The instrument consisted of thirty sets of questions, which were organised into three sections.

The survey questionnaire was hand-delivered at young graduates' places of employment. One of the advantages of hand-delivered surveys was that participants could be encouraged to participate. Thus, a larger data bank was ensured. The informed consent part at the end of the questionnaire had to be signed by graduate employees as an expression of their compliance to participation in the study. They were assured that information collected would be for the purposes of this study only and would be presented anonymously using pseudonyms. Participants were assured of their right to refuse answering uncomfortable questions and that they could decide to stop answering the survey questions at any time if they so wished. Furthermore, they were assured that raw data would be stored safely and destroyed after a reasonable time had lapsed.

The second data collection during the qualitative phase of the study focused on, and served the purpose of, illuminating a particular issue (Creswell, 2003) as it emerged from the first quantitative phase. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with employers in the commercial industry (see Appendix B) and then with deans, HODs as well as lecturers

(see Appendix C) of the commercial faculties at the three sampled, tertiary institutions. In this way the danger of grouping all respondents together in a general category that might have stereotyped them was eliminated.

The semi-structured interview guide was divided into the following sections: (a) biographical data and b) open-ended questions. In addition to that, a consent letter of the interview was signed by all participating respondents. The interview protocols (for employers and tertiary representatives respectively) had ten open-ended questions. The respondents received the interview questions prior to the scheduled calling time, and were asked permission for the interview to be tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Furthermore, respondents were informed that they could refuse to answer questions should they feel uncomfortable. They could also end the interview at any time during the interview if they so wished. After the interviews, a debriefing with the respondents was conducted to obtain information on the clarity of the interview questions and their relevance to the study aim, as well as whether their views and opinions were recorded correctly.

4.9 Data processing and analysis

4.9.1 Quantitative data processing and analysis: Phase One

The first quantitative phase of the study focused on identifying the specific, communicative, English language competencies and literacies young professionals regarded as essential in order to fulfil their work roles (see research sub-questions 1 and 2). Outlying cases were excluded from the analysis, since a case that actually is in one

category of outcome may also show a high probability for being in another category. Descriptive statistics for the survey items were summarised in the text and reported verbatim and in tabular form. Frequencies analysis was conducted to identify the valid percentages for responses to all the questions in the survey. Responses were coded and then transferred into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for statistical analysis. Where appropriate, the results of the analysis were reported in the form of a discussion with supporting frequencies and percentages using tables and graphs to enhance a vivid description.

In addition, content analysis was used to group responses from open-ended questions of the questionnaire into themes and categories to determine the meaning of the participants' views and experience regarding specific, communicative, English language competencies and literacies.

4.9.2 Establishing reliability and validity: Phase One

In quantitative research, reliability and validity of the instrument(s) are very important for decreasing errors that may arise from measurement problems in a research study. Research reliability is the degree to which a research instrument produces consistent results when the same results would be obtained if the study were conducted again (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Kirk & Miller, 1986) under a similar methodology. It means that should the same investigation be carried out again by different researchers using the same methods, then the similar results should be obtained. According to Thorndike (1997), reliability refers to the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure. This could

mean whether measurements across and within cases are repeatable over time. The stability or test-retest reliability of the survey instrument was obtained through pilot testing of the questionnaire in order to reduce errors caused by vagueness and errors in the instruments before the actual data collection. Results of the actual survey were compared and correlated with the initial results obtained in the pilot study (Klenke, 2008).

The second type of reliability strategy was 'internal consistent reliability' which was employed to establish how different instrument items that measured the same construct compared in producing similar results. Internal, consistency reliability analysis of the items measured on the Likert-type scale was conducted on the results of the pilot study to test this internal consistency (Patton, 2015). This assisted in assessing how well the various items covered in the ESP courses were aimed at preparing the graduates for workplace literacies typical of the commercial field.

Furthermore, research validity, a concept that looks at the accuracy of an instrument at measuring what it is trying to measure, was considered during this phase. Again, Thorndike (1997) captures this concept and refers validity to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept or construct that the researcher is attempting to measure, i.e. the quality of a claim to be stated, true or correct. Content analysis is valid to the extent that the inferences about the context of the analysed texts withstands the test of independently obtained, validating evidence (Krippendorff, 2012). Content validity showed the extent to which the survey items and the scores from these questions were representative of all the possible questions about workplace literacies and the relevance of ESP offerings to commercial students at tertiary institutions. The wording

of the survey items was examined to assess whether or not the survey questions were relevant to the subject it was aimed to measure and whether it was a reasonable way to gain the needed information, as well as whether it was well-designed.

Criterion-related validity, also referred to as instrumental or predictive validity (Klenke, 2008), demonstrates the accuracy of a measure or procedure by comparing it to another measure or procedure which has been demonstrated to be valid (Klenke, 2008). For this purpose, the self-designed survey questionnaire for this study was compared on the consistency of the results with existing instruments, measuring the same construct, workplace literacies and competencies, as well as the relevance of an ESP course to young graduates employed in the commercial sector.

4.9.3 Qualitative data processing and analysis: Phase Two

It is always important that data analysis matches the research design (Patton, 2015). The researcher conducted interviews with employers and tertiary institutions representatives utilising open-ended, semi-structured interview protocols to assist in collecting data. Each of these targeted participants had interview questions tailored to their specific domains of responsibility. Content analysis was carried out to process and analyse the narrative data by following Bryman's (2008) model (see Sub-section 4.3.7 above). The choice for this was to reduce the data to manageable proportions while maintaining their varied nature. Data from employers and university faculty representatives were treated as units of analysis. In each case, the main and sub-research questions 3, 4 and 5 determined the unit of analysis. All recorded data were transcribed verbatim. The data were then transformed into manageable, written text(s), then into content-related categories (Miles & Huberman,

1994; Schreier, 2012) before analysis started. A unit of analysis for classification of messages was employed before coding.

The steps in qualitative analysis included: (1) preliminary exploration of and familiarisation with the data by reading through the transcripts and writing personal memos; (2) coding of the data by segmenting and labelling the text; (3) utilising codes to develop themes by aggregating similar codes together; (4) connecting and interrelating themes; (5) constructing a narrative (Creswell, 2002, 2008). To augment the further discussion, a visual data display was created to show the evolving conceptual framework of the factors and relationships in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data analysis, furthermore, involved developing a detailed description of each aspect raised by each participant group of employers and tertiary institutions regarding young graduates' English language readiness for employment in the commercial sector.

In this phase, the analysis was performed at two levels of each case (for employers and tertiary institutions representatives) across cases (Stake, 2006), with the expectation that the results would converge later and be analysed for themes that were either common or different, as well as for overall meaning-making of the results for the purpose of triangulation. Triangulation of different data sources is important in mixed methods research (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Based on the principle of triangulation, I endeavoured to establish corroborating information across these sources.

This analysis showed the extent to which the factors had similar or different effects on the respondents according to their perceptions of young graduate employees. In keeping with

the naturalistic approach, the interview responses were interpreted utilising categories and sub-categories that emerged from the transcriptions so as not to compromise the original meaning expressed by respondents. In addition, participants' responses to the interview questions and related issues that arose during the interview process were scrutinised and put together as complete quotations. These were subsequently filed according to the topic or issue addressed (Patton, 2015). Responses were then analysed thematically. Emergent themes were ranked by their frequency of mention, and were ultimately categorised. Frequencies and percentages obtained from quantifying data were triangulated with the qualitative data.

In all cases, data analysis was a gradually evolving process in which the data-set, the theoretical concepts of workplace literacies, relevance of an ESP course and the communicative practices were constantly evaluated, re-evaluated and reformulated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As soon as an interview was conducted, the data were subjected to preliminary analysis. This initial analysis often generated new questions, which were addressed in subsequent interviews.

4.9.4 Establishing trustworthiness: Phase Two

A close meta-analysis of the concept of trustworthiness in research shows that quantitative and qualitative research differ in criteria that evaluate the quality of research in the two traditions. In a qualitative design, the researcher seeks believability, based on coherence, insight and instrumental utility (Loh, 2013), as well as trustworthiness (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015), through a process of verification rather than through

traditional validity and reliability measures. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria for evaluating interpretive research work: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The uniqueness of the qualitative study in a specific context precludes its being exactly replicated in another context. However, statements about the researcher's position, the central assumptions, the selection of informants, the biases and values of the researcher enhance the study's chances of being replicated in another setting (Creswell, 2003).

To validate the findings, i.e. determine the credibility of the information and whether it matches reality (Klenke, 2008), I took a cue from (Creswell, 2003) who recommends the need to converge different sources of information, such as from interviews and focus group discussions. This approach provided rich, thick descriptions of the findings. Finally, and most importantly, my supervisors provided their expert review on the instruments to be employed to ensure that their critique was considered.

4.10 Data analysis and presentation

Section 4.8 has introduced the procedures of quantitative and qualitative data collection. In this section, data analysis and presentation are discussed.

For the quantitative arm of the research, all the questionnaires were scored by the test developer who used the specific SPSS software, and the raw scores were then sent to the researcher. Computerised scoring was done after capturing the answers on the completed questionnaire in an excel spread sheet form. All the data scores and ratings regarding

workplace literacies and competencies were made available for descriptive analysis. The results were presented by means of figures, graphs and tables to enhance the quality of the analysis and help explain the causal possibilities systematically.

For the qualitative arm, data were analysed by transcribing tape recordings and studying collected field notes. This technique involved the coding, categorisation and identification of particular words, phrases and concepts to reduce data and draw conclusions. Emerging themes were presented interpretively and verbatim.

4.11 Ethical matters

Ethical considerations are relevant in all research involving human participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In the present study, the ethical risk was minimal. Consistent with research ethics guidelines propounded by (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Christensen, 2012), the researcher took into consideration the respondents' right to informed consent and anonymity in the process of collecting data. Participants were provided with an explanation of the nature of the study, its purpose and the use of the results. To ensure that the research was conducted ethically, all participants were required to give their verbal and written consent to the researcher. Informed consent forms were developed (see Appendix A, section C for graduates, as well as Appendix D for employers and academics respectively). The forms stated that participants and respondents were guaranteed certain rights, agreed to be involved in the study, and acknowledged that their rights were protected.

The anonymity of participants was protected by a pseudonym which participants themselves chose to be identified with. I made sure that consent was obtained first before any interview recordings commenced. Participants were not asked to share deep psychological and emotional experiences. As respondents recounted their views on tertiary training in the ESP course, workplace literacies and the transition of young graduates from university to work, the researcher asked about the general nature of their lived experiences with graduates. All research transcripts of interviews were reviewed to ensure that the researcher had captured what respondents revealed.

4.12 Conclusion

This chapter described and provided the research direction which was adopted in this study. It espoused the general overview of the methodological structure and overall procedure used in this dissertation. The underlying philosophical assumptions were addressed at the beginning of the chapter.

The researcher identified that this study adopted the middle-range position (Laughlin, 2004) in both the epistemological, ontological and methodological stances. This worldview made the adoption of mixed methods research in this study possible. I believe that, given the research purposes and the general research question, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods in the study made it possible to take advantage of triangulation and complementarity, and enhanced the validity of the overall research.

This study was designed to be sequential, explanatory, mixed methods research. Furthermore, the sampling design and the characteristics of the sample were discussed and the method for data collection and analysis explained. The researcher argues that the use of disparate data sources was likely to achieve confirmation and consistency of evidence to gain an enriched and elaborated understanding of workplace literacies and competencies.

The next chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of this research.

CHAPTER 5
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the research method and process were described, setting out the decisions made with regards to the design of the research, the reasons for these decisions and how the decisions were brought to fruition.

Chapter 5 now presents and records the analysis of the data in more detail, setting out the findings that were generated during this process. I drew on the work of Miles and Huberman (1994) since I find their notion of crafting visual displays of the data particularly appealing. Throughout this chapter, and following on the trend established in previous chapters, I have included a number of charts, graphs, figures and tables in which the data are shared in visual format to support the descriptive texts. The presentation of findings was done in two phases, namely Phase One which presents data from the mixed questionnaire (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) and Phase Two which presents the qualitative data generated from interviews.

5.2 Quantitative data obtained through questionnaire responses: Phase One

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

- RQ1: What specific communicative English language competencies do young professionals regard as essential in order to fulfil their work roles?

- RQ2: What specific communicative English language literacies do young professionals regard as essential in order to fulfil their work roles?

Sixty questionnaires were delivered and only forty-six were returned; this represented a response rate of 77%.

5.3 Graduates' demographic information according to Section C of the questionnaire responses (Appendix A)

This section displays the demographic data of the fourty-six (46) graduates who participated in the study. Participants' demographic data were captured from the survey questionnaire and covered aspects such as gender, age and qualifications. A sample of sixty graduate employees who worked in the commercial industries in Windhoek was purposively selected from financial firms and institutions, such as the Bank of Namibia, four commercial banks (Bank Windhoek, First National Bank, NED Bank and Standard Bank), Alexander Forbes, KPMG, Deloitte & Touché Namibia, Price Waterhouse Coopers, as well as the Ministry of Finance.

5.3.1 Distribution of participants by gender presentation

Graduates'questionnaire protocol can be found as Appendix A. Table 3 as well as Table 4 below display fourty-six graduates' demographic information as provided in section C of their questionnaire protocol.

Table 3: *Distribution of participants by gender*

GENDER

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	F	26	56.5	59.1	59.1
	M	18	39.1	40.9	100.0
	Total	44	95.7	100.0	
Missing	99	2	4.3		
Total		46	100.0		

Table 3 above displays the gender information of fourty-six young graduates who participated in the study. Twenty-six of the participants (56.5%) were female while, eighteen (39.1%) were recorded as being male. Two graduates (4.3%) did not indicate their gender preferences.

5.3.2 Distribution of participants by age presentation

Table 4: *Distribution of participants by age*

AGE GROUPS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-22	2	4.3	4.8	4.8
	23-25	14	30.4	33.3	38.1
	26-28	16	34.8	38.1	76.2
	29-31	4	8.7	9.5	85.7
	OTHER	6	13.0	14.3	100.0
	Total	42	91.3	100.0	
Missing	99	4	8.7		
Total		46	100.0		

Table 4 above displays the age information of fourty-six young graduates who participated in the study. The majority, 20 participants, were between the ages of 26 and 28. Fourteen were between the age of 23 and 25 and only two respondents fell in the age group of 20 to 22. Four were recorded to be between the ages of 29 and 31. The questionnaire had provision of 'Other' as an option for the age group variable and six young graduates indicated their age as 'Other'.

5.3.3 Distribution of participants' qualifications and work experience presentation

From data collected by means of the questionnaire, I was able to establish that most graduates had Bachelor's degree qualifications in accounting, economics, auditing and finance such as Bachelor in Accounting, B-Tech in Accounting and Finance, B-Tech Economics as well as Bachelor of Economics (Honours) from the three tertiary institutions. The further profile question asked graduate employees about their work

experience. Table 5 below indicates their years of working experience as employees after graduation.

Table 5: *Graduates responses regarding their work experience*

Years of experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<1	21	45.7	53.8	53.8
	1-3	11	23.9	28.2	82.1
	4-6	5	10.9	12.8	94.9
	>6	2	4.3	5.1	100.0
	Total	39	84.8	100.0	
Missing	System	7	15.2		
Total		46	100.0		

As displayed in Table 5 above, twenty-one of the fourty-six graduates who completed the questionnaire had been in employment for less than a year which represents 45.7% of the total number. That figure was followed by eleven graduates or 23.9% with more than one to three years' work experience. Furthermore, two graduates were recorded to have had more than six years of work experience, while seven indicated 'other' as their years of work experience under this option of the question.

5.3.4 Graduate participants' language use in the workplace
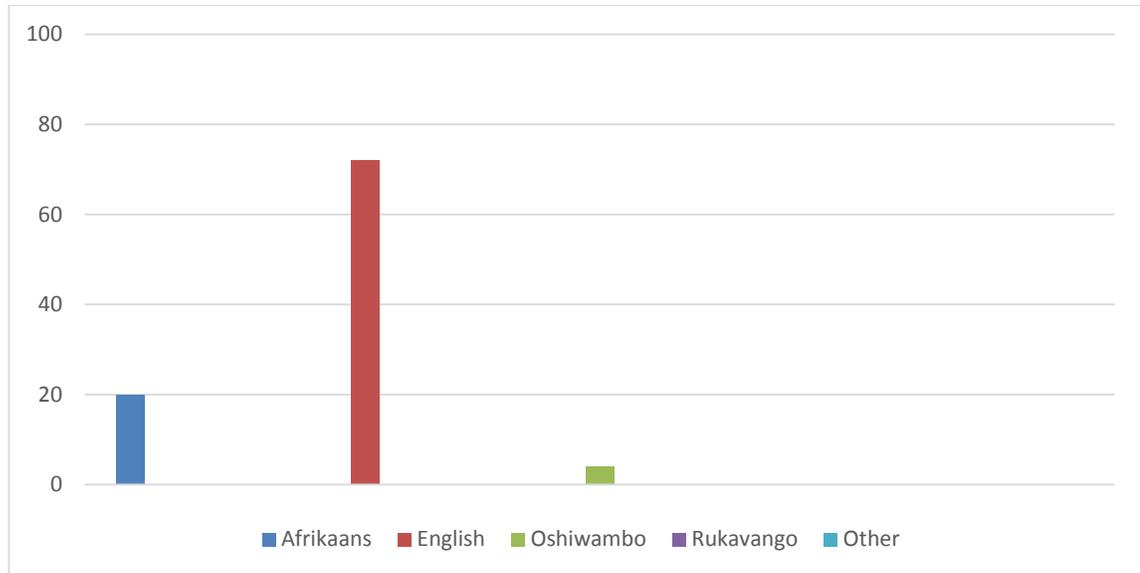
Figure 15: *Languages used in executing daily tasks by graduates*

Figure 15 above displays the frequency of the languages that the fourty-six graduates used when executing their work-related tasks. It is clear that English was the language most used, with thirty-four (73.9%) graduates recorded. Afrikaans was used second most (17.4 %) in the commercial sector. Interestingly, Oshiwambo was mentioned by four graduate (8.7 %) participants as one of the languages used in the workplace. There was a zero percent recording of this sector for using Rukavango or any 'other' languages.

5.3.5 Theme 1: Graduates' responses to tertiary training and current employment

The experience of students on their trajectory from higher education to employment is influenced by certain variables, such as a perception of the curriculum, job goals, expectations and motivation factors. Fourty-six graduates had to respond to a list of

choices related to the tertiary training attended and actual practice, as well as the relevance thereof in their current employment. They were asked to tick only one option each time. The results are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: *Graduates' responses to tertiary training and current employment*

Statement	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response
Tertiary learning helped me to fit into my professional career.	22 47.8%	24 52.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
I feel comfortable listening to and understanding English in telephonic and person-to-person conversations.	29 63.1%	17 36.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
I read English documents such as manuals, graphs and schedules with ease.	21 45.7%	15 32.6%	10 21.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
I feel comfortable using English when communicating ideas and information through verbal presentations and telephonic conversations.	26 56.5%	20 43.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
I write English documents such as manuals, reports and graphs with ease.	15 32.6%	22 47.8%	0 0.0%	9 19.6%	0 0.0%
I use English when performing basic computations and use the appropriate math techniques with ease.	20 43.5%	16 34.8%	10 21.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Tertiary education requires better alignment with industry when it comes to English skills needed in the workplace.	23 50.0%	21 45.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 4.3%
Companies know best how to train new employees for the workplace when it comes to communication skills.	21 45.7%	24 52.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 2.1%

Table 6 above reveals the counts and frequencies of the data collected. Most of the forty-six participants who returned questionnaires agreed or strongly agreed with statements put

to them. Regarding the first statement whether tertiary learning helped them to fit in well in their professional careers, twenty-four graduates (52.2%) agreed with the statement, while twenty-two (47.8%) strongly agreed. Data obtained show that twenty-nine graduates (63.1%) agreed strongly when asked whether they felt comfortable listening to and understanding English in telephonic and person-to-person conversations. Seventeen (36.9%) agreed with the statement. Furthermore, twenty-one of graduates (45.7%) agreed strongly that they could read documents, such as manuals, graphs and schedules, with ease, while fifteen (32.6%) and ten (21.7%) agreed and disagreed respectively. Twenty-six (56.5%) of the graduates agreed strongly that they were comfortable using English when communicating ideas and information through verbal presentations, while twenty (43.5%) of young graduates agreed.

The results also show that nine graduates (19.6%) disagreed strongly that they experience the ease when writing English documents, such as the manuals, reports and graphs that they are supposed to write in the workplace. This was in contrast with the results regarding the reading of these English documents as stated above, which was more favourable at 45.7%. However, twenty-two (47.8%) of young graduates agreed that they conducted the writing and reading of these documents with ease. The data further indicate that only twenty graduates (43.5%) agreed strongly, while sixteen (34.8%) of the graduates just agreed and ten (21.7%) disagreed that they used English with ease when they performed basic computations and employed math techniques.

5.3.6 Theme 2: Competencies graduates regarded as essential

The survey probed graduates regarding those competencies they saw as essential to fulfil their work roles; they had to tick only one option each time. Table 7 below illustrates the results.

Table 7: *Graduates' responses on essential competencies*

Competencies/Skills	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	No idea
Teamwork	8	7	10	21	0
	17.4%	15.2%	21.7%	45.7%	0.0%
Oral communication and presentation	0	0	20	25	0
	0.0%	0.0%	43.5%	54.3%	0.0%
Problem solving	0	7	11	21	7
	0.0%	15.2%	23.9%	45.7%	15.2%
Time management	0	0	7	39	0
	0.0%	0.0%	15.2%	84.8%	0.0%
Commercial awareness	0	11	19	16	0
	0.0%	23.9%	41.3%	34.8%	0.0%
Reading	0	0	20	26	0
	0.0%	0.0%	43.5%	56.5%	0.0%
Writing	0	4	19	23	0
	0.0%	8.7%	41.3%	50.0%	0.0%
Document use	0	0	26	20	0
	0.0%	0.0%	56.5%	43.5%	0.0%
Numeracy	0	0	13	33	0
	0.0%	0.0%	28.3%	71.7%	0.0%

Table 7 above reveals the counts and frequencies of responses from young graduates. Thirty-nine participants (84.8%) rated time management as a very important skill, followed by numeracy at 71.7%. Teamwork as a soft skill was the only skill that was rated by eight graduates, representing 17.4%, as not being important to graduates. However, the literature is abound with the importance of this skill in the workplace. It offers the company and staff the ability to become more familiar with one another and learn how to work together. Kalantzis and Cope (2000) recommend that programmes focus on the development of interpersonal and group skills. Team members need to know how to understand one another, communicate their own thoughts and beliefs, and listen to what others have to say. Problem solving was also the only skill graduates rated as having had 'no idea' regarding its importance. Problem solving ought to be the responsibility of everyone in an organisation and not just something for the frontline supervisors and senior managers. Employers would value employees who are able to see problems before they happen and come up with creative solutions. To solve these problems, good communication and language literacies and competencies are imperative, depending on the nature of the problem. Oral communication and presentation skills were rated at 54.3% by twenty-five graduates as being very important. Oral communication in the workplace reflects the pervasive widespread and powerful role of language and communication in human society. I agree with Halliday (1994, p. 22) who explains that communication is more than merely an exchange of words between parties in that "it is a sociological encounter and through exchanges of meanings in the communication process, social reality is created, maintained and modified." Kalantzis and Cope (2000) have also postulated that programmes should incorporate and develop the ability to present and

defend a report orally and in writing and the skills required to write quality e-mails that are not only technically sound but also clear in their attention to form, grammar and style.

According to employers, attention to form and grammar in graduates' writing were challenges for most, if not all, graduates in commerce. English was considered the most useful, common language in the context of financial institutions with a multilingual and multicultural workforce. A manager at a local bank also emphasised the importance of employees' language competencies for communication, particularly with clients.

Comments made by most managers and lecturers also indicated the underlying belief in the value of English as a common language between multilingual employees. The questionnaire results indicated that English played a predominant role in written and spoken communication tasks. Above all other languages, English was reported to dominate written reports. Although language courses did not have the same influence on language practices as the mechanism of recruitment, its importance could not be underestimated. According to Thomas (2007, p. 100), language training determines the methods that "work best to create the proper balance of employees who speak the operating languages." Clearly, a language course, such as ESP, could have played an important role in managing the necessary linguistic competencies of the young employees to meet the needs of the organisation.

5.3.7 Theme 3: Workplace literacies and English use

Graduates were asked how often they used English to read certain language tasks.

Table 8: *Graduates' responses on workplace literacies*

Statement	Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always
How often is **English** only used in the execution of your daily tasks?	0 0.0%	3 6.5%	5 10.9%	17 36.9%	21 45.7%
How often do you have to read **technical reports** in English?	0 0.0%	8 17.4%	2 4.3%	7 15.2%	29 63.0%
How often do you have to read **memos** in English?	0 0.0%	2 4.3%	3 6.5%	13 28.3%	28 60.9%
How often do you have to read **instruction manuals** in English?	5 10.9%	3 6.5%	4 8.7%	4 8.7%	30 65.2%
How often do you have to read **schedules** in English?	4 8.7%	4 8.7%	0 0.0%	6 13.0%	32 69.6%
How often do you have to read **e-mails** in English?	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	10 21.7%	36 78.3%
How often do you have to read **minutes of meetings** in English?	0 0.0%	10 21.7%	0 0.0%	4 8.7%	32 69.6%
How often do you have to read **payroll forms** in English?	9 19.6%	4 8.7%	0 0.0%	4 8.7%	29 63.0%
How often do you have to read **tables** in English?	4 8.7%	2 4.3%	0 0.0%	6 13.0%	34 74.0%
How often do you have to read **charts** in English?	4 8.7%	4 8.7%	0 0.0%	8 17.4%	30 65.2%
How often do you have to read **brochures** in English?	4 8.7%	4 8.7%	3 6.5%	9 19.6%	26 56.5%

Table 8 above indicates the counts and frequencies of responses of fourty-six graduate

employees regarding language related tasks they read. The counts/percentages show that

graduates regarded the frequency of reading e-mails and tables highly. Thirty-six graduates (78.3%) indicated that they always read emails, while thirty-four (74.0%) read tables respectively. This finding is not surprising given the fact that e-mails have become the technological tool for most communication in the workplace worldwide. Some of the most e-mail communication issues one has to consider are in its use pertaining to the amount of background and personal information, tone, grammar and spelling which one has to adhere to. The reading of schedules and minutes of meetings was reported from thirty-two graduates (69.6%) respectively. Reading this technical information in English could prove difficult for any employee when operating instructions, process sheets and technical terms are all in English.

The questionnaire data further revealed that an average of twenty-nine (63.0%) of graduates in their various commercial sector institutions always read technical reports (29 graduates), memos (28 graduates), payroll forms (29 graduates), charts (30 graduates) and brochures (26 graduates) in English.

5.3.8 Graduates' use of non-verbal language in the workplace

Table 9: *Responses of graduates regarding the frequency of non-verbal language tasks for explanation in the workplace*

Statement	Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always
How often do you use *graphs* to explain aspects to yourself and others in the workplace?	21 / 45.7%	7 / 15.2%	10 / 21.7%	6 / 13.0%	2 / 4.3%
How often do you use *still or moving images* to explain aspects to yourself and others in the workplace?	23 / 50.0%	9 / 19.6%	6 / 13.0%	8 / 17.4%	0 / 0.0%
How often do you use *objects* to explain aspects representing meaning to oneself and others?	24 / 52.2%	8 / 17.4%	8 / 17.4%	6 / 13.0%	0 / 0.0%
How often do you use *visual clues* from your immediate environment?	13 / 28.3%	11 / 23.9%	21 / 45.7%	1 / 2.1%	0 / 0.0%
How often do you use *gestures and body language* from your immediate environment?	7 / 15.2%	9 / 19.6%	20 / 43.5%	6 / 13.0%	4 / 8.7%

As demonstrated in Table 9 above, graduates did not use non-verbal language tasks very often, and their responses ranged from 'never' to 'not often'. The study investigated whether the ESP courses graduates attended provided them with the ability to use and understand non-verbal communication episodes. Of the fourty-six graduates polled, twenty-one (45.7%) indicated that they never used graphs, while six (13.0%) and two (4.3%) used non-verbal communication tasks very often and always, respectively. Asked how often they used still or moving objects or images to explain aspects to themselves or

others, twenty-three graduates (50.0%) stated that they did not use such non-verbal aspects. The trend of their responses was the same for visual clues, facial and body language aspects which drew from zero to four counts of graduates respectively. It is evident from the findings that non-verbal communication was an aspect not covered in the ESP course and, as a result, not practised in the commercial sector. Meaning in non-verbal communication resides in perceivers' ascriptions and whether a nonverbal behaviour is implicitly or explicitly noticed. As every company has a different culture and its own rules, it is important to know that what is acceptable for one company can be totally unacceptable for another one. The majority of managers and academics answered that non-verbal communication was a very important form of communication. Interestingly, one supervisor in an auditing firm commented that it was important but not the most important form of communication in his company.

The conclusion drawn from this aspect is that non-verbal communication was either not given the importance it deserves in the organisational culture or the fact that it was used unconsciously made it difficult to determine, as reported in the survey. On the other hand, graduates seemed to use this type of communication approximately half of the time. Non-verbal communication is an important, but under-studied, element of organisational life. Non-verbal, language tasks or an expression and understanding of messages through graphs, visual clues, gestures and body is essential in the workplace (Knapp, 2011).

5.3.9 Graduates' responses to Questionnaire items (14f – 20) and related findings (Closed and Open-ended)

Question 14f: In your opinion how well were you prepared for these non-verbal communication tasks by the tertiary institution?

Table 10: *Graduates' responses to questionnaire item 14f*

Question 14f	Not at all	Not very well	Moderately	Well prepared	Very well
In your opinion, how well were you prepared for these non-verbal communication tasks by the tertiary institution?	2 4.3%	4 8.7%	18 39.1%	22 47.8%	0 0.0%

This question expected graduates to state how well, and to what extent, they were prepared for those non-verbal, communication tasks which would have enabled them to fulfil the tasks institutions required from them during their university training. Table 10 above illustrates fourty-six graduates' responses. The data showed that twenty-two (47.8%) graduates felt that tertiary institutions prepared them well to handle non-verbal communication tasks. Furthermore, eighteen (39.1%) of them felt moderately and four (8.7%) not very well prepared. Interestingly, in their earlier responses, graduates indicated that they did not always use these non-verbal communication tasks. This finding means that tertiary institutions prepared them fairly well on how to use non-verbal language tasks, but that these were not being used or practised in the workplace.

Question 14g: To what extent do you feel that you are fulfilling the tasks that your institution requires from you? Please tick only one option and motivate your answer.

Table 11: *Graduates' responses to questionnaire item 14g*

Question 14g	Average	Not so good	Good	Very good	Excellent
To what extent do you feel that you are fulfilling the tasks that your institution requires from you?	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 10.9%	30 65.2%	11 23.9%

Graduates were further asked about the extent to which they are fulfilling the tasks institutions required from them. As displayed in Table 11 above, thirty (65.2%) of the fourty-six graduate participants felt very good about the extent to which they were accomplishing tasks required of them by their financial institutions. Five (10.9%) and eleven (23.9%) of graduates in each case felt good and excellent about it. Again, no response was recorded for feeling average and not so good for this question item. This open-ended question drew a divergence of views from participants. Some graduate participants had the following to say when asked to motivate their answers:

> *Supervisor is there to assist when something comes up that I don't understand, I am a dedicated employee and personally believe in going the extra mile in executing my duties, however, the bureaucracy that is rampant in state and agencies (for one) inhibit me from performing at my best. The other said, "I very often receive good feedback about the quality of my work.*

The responses and perceptions above regarding employee competences demonstrate an issue where graduates appeared to overrate themselves on that aspect, because employers, when probed later, felt the opposite about employees' language competences, and this could have substantial effects on work performance, as well as perceptions of training needs.

Question 15: *Name the areas of your work that you feel you were well prepared for by your tertiary institution through the ESP course offered to you? Give a reason for your answer.*

It was important to establish the general views of graduate employees regarding their tertiary preparation. Data obtained from this question revealed that graduates felt very strongly about their theoretical knowledge preparation by the three tertiary institutions. Communication skills, presentation of financial statements and reading and explaining financial statements were some of the areas graduates felt were well prepared by their various institutions. One graduate said the following regarding communication skills: *"I do not struggle with expressing myself in English and often I am approached to help edit documents and help phrase certain concepts."*

Furthermore, in one of the companies, graduates reported that they felt numeracy, making presentations, analytical and critical thinking were areas for which they were well prepared. Interestingly, there were five (10.9%) graduates overall who responded with *'not any'*. This indicates that they could not say anything good about their preparation at tertiary institutions. Such comments are not surprising. Albrecht and Sack (2000) argue that "Students forget what they memorise. Content knowledge becomes dated and is often not transferable across different types of jobs. On the other hand, critical skills rarely become obsolete and are usually transferable across assignments and careers" (p. 55).

Question 16: *Which areas of your work were you not well prepared for by your tertiary institution through the ESP course offered to you? Give a reason for your answer.*

Following the above question item 15, it was also important to rephrase the question and to ask graduates about aspects they felt that they were not well prepared for by their tertiary institutions through the ESP course offered to them, hence the above questionnaire item 16. Questionnaire data obtained revealed quite a number of areas with which graduates were not happy. Lack of practice in their areas of study, problem-solving skills, as well as how to interact with clients, were areas they felt that they were not well prepared for. Graduates further reported a lack of preparation in presentation skills, conflict handling, preparation of reports and writing emails. Some verbatim quotes gathered were:

> *Practical part, there were no practical cases at school said one graduate. Another said: I was not well prepared for the accounting system used in the workplace or to transfer what I learned to my workplace. Again, one graduate had this to say: The accounting system used at work is not the same as the one trained at university.*

Speaking and communication skills were also areas in which some graduates felt that they lacked preparation. In a survey undertaken to capture a student perspective, Meixner, Bline, Lowe and Nouri (2009) found that students majoring in accounting rated oral communication skills more important than other communication skills. Furthermore, one graduate expressed that *"modules or subjects are quite broad and do not offer in-depth knowledge of the courses."* All in all, it emerged that one area that stood above the rest is the lack of practical experience graduates went through at their respective universities.

Question 17: *How did your tertiary institution through the ESP course offered to you support your transfer of learning to the workplace? Do you think it was well done/appropriate?*

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This questionnaire question asked graduates whether their tertiary institutions facilitated some kind of support for graduates' smooth transfer to the workplace. Data obtained revealed that the support was moderate, according to some graduates. One graduate said: *"No not really, had to learn to adapt. Took some time."* Another graduate said, *"The theoretical knowledge acquired made it really easy for me to transfer what I learned to my workplace."* However, some graduates felt that there was little support provided as this graduate reflected: *"Good but not so well done."* This comment from a graduate indicates that transfer of learning did not happen as expected. Transfer of training is defined as the extent of retention and application of the knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training environment to the workplace environment (Subedi, 2004). The transition out of university and into the work force is not always a smooth one (Dahlgren, Handal, Szudlarek, & Bayer, 2007). Examples of difficulties with the transition include discrepancies between what employers and students viewed as desired employability skills. In other words, transfer of training is the degree to which trainees can apply the learning from a training context to the job effectively. The literature on the transfer of learning recommends that universities should have systems in place that prepare young graduates to be ready for the work environment. The key aspect that was related to this question was the 'how', that is, how did tertiary institutions support graduates' transition of what they have learned to the world of work. Almost none of the graduates could provide plausible explanations.

Question 18: *What additional support from the tertiary institution through the ESP course you attended would have facilitated your transfer of learning to your current employment?*

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Seven graduates from a national bank spoke about work experience gained during work-based learning programmes, such as formal placements and internships which represented a significant aspect of many of the graduates' experiences in this institution. This placement afforded multiple benefits, providing a valuable learning opportunity during which theoretical skills could be applied to 'real-life' employment: *"The placement gave me the chance to use everything I learned at university and to apply it in a practical way"*, said one graduate. Another graduate said,

> *I benefited greatly from the placement. I learned a lot. I applied what I'd learned in the first two years of my degree … it was a really good experience.*

However, many graduate employees were not afforded placement and/or internships, and their responses generally bordered on statements such as *"The university should have secured internships and more practical opportunities."* Another response was that *"The university should have set up a platform to enrol students in their final year of study to get internship and placement programmes with employers."* One other interesting response from a graduate employee was:

> *There need to be a close link between university and industry in terms of asking opportunities for students to practise while in university through internships.*

The views expressed by graduates regarding internship programmes were genuine. However, there is always one thing missing in these debates when internships are not possible for all students. According to Laughton (2012), many institutions and universities are offering work-related learning (WRL) as a substitute for work-based learning (WBL), when the latter is difficult to provide for in terms of curriculum match, resources available and logistical necessities. Laughton (2012, p. 37) defines work-related learning as

"learning which results in knowledge, skill or attribute development derived from engaging with tasks, processes and environments similar to those that occur in specific organisational and vocational contexts." The aim of WRL is to help to prepare students for employment in an organisational context by equipping them with the relevant knowledge, skills and attributes that can be used and applied in situ. Furthermore, WRL pedagogy has attempted to simulate, replicate or mimic workplace situations or problems.

Question 19: *To what extent did your tertiary training through the ESP course offered to you meet the demands of your current job?*

In answering this question, graduates did not say much but postulated that their tertiary training through the ESP course had equipped them well. Again, there were discrepancies between what employers and graduates viewed as the actual desired learning of the ESP course. Most graduates appeared to overrate themselves regarding this question. Graduates provided contradictory responses. Some responses ranged from *"I learned a lot"* to *"I would say about sixty percent as a strong theoretical foundation was laid*." Most placed their learning at a rating scale of eight out of ten, while employers had a lower rating or perception about graduate employees' readiness to meet the demands of their current jobs. A manager in a financial firm said the following:

> *University graduates are not well prepared for the rigours of the business environment in terms of writing, reasoning skills and organisational awareness. The business and financial environment require a reasoning skill to handle business documents, critical thinking, problem solving, audience analysis, critical thinking, persuasive argument and message construction.*

Not all of the graduates' experiences of moving from education to employment were wholly positive. Some expressed practical difficulties reflective of perceived 'gaps' in their commerce/business education as illustrated by the following comment: *"You don't get taught enough about how to put together the formal documentation you have in employment."* Another said, *"You don't actually get taught how to do presentations properly which would have been very useful."* One graduate simply said, *"Does not"* and another expressed an opposite opinion and said, *"Not much."* Finally, there was one response where a graduate said the following:

> *Until late in my course the institution had prepared me little for my current job but in the third year when we did Namibian economy as a module did I see the link/connection to my current job, However, the English for Specific Purposes did not prepare me adequately for the communicative English language competencies and literacies, such as being able to write financial reports, financial and legal documents, research reports, as well as financial product descriptions, which I'm currently required to do, and most of all, presentation skills.*

Throughout this study, the need for commerce graduates to be able to apply theoretical and conceptual knowledge to their 'real life' commerce or business situation was evident. According to Wu and Chin (2010), the fulfilment of these functions requires expeditious reading skills, such as scanning (locating specific information) and search reading (i.e., retrieving information related to pre-determined topics).

Question 20: *Any suggestions regarding the ESP course offered to you as preparation of students for the demands of your institution(s) on you as an employee.*

Responding to this question, almost all graduates provided strong opinions. The issue of tertiary institutions needing to focus more on practical teaching than theory was widely brought out. The majority of graduates made startling revelations regarding English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in which one of them poignantly pointed out that the current EAP course on offer did not address the many communicative English language competencies needed in the commercial sector. One respondent said,

> *I don't think the current EAP course is addressing all the needs I needed to have after competing my studies, and apart from that, the course is rushed and by the time you realise, the semester is over and is all exams.*

One graduate said:

> *I did not gain considerable writing skills at university … I use these skills a lot in my employment. Practical exposure must be emphasised in terms of job attachments or internships.*

Another said:

> *Train students regarding how to apply what they are learning to real working environment and assist students with internship programmes.*

And yet another said,

> *I think there should have been more practice at … presenting things in front of other people as part of my degree course. Students should be well equipped in presentations, public speaking and thinking out of the box.*

The majority of graduates also expressed the view that private institutions should collaborate with the universities to enable students to obtain first-hand experience of the organisational practice, especially during the fourth year of study. It was interesting to establish that none of the graduates mentioned the importance of soft skills or any other

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language-related skills, such as listening, reading, speaking and writing, which were the core skills needed to perform their various tasks, and often the only skills catered for in university core courses. I agree with Jozwiak (2004) who asserts that:

> While technical skills or [subject knowledge … my own emphasis] may not be as much as an issue with employers now as they were formerly, the lack of soft skills are of increasing concern today. (pp. 19-20)

Jozwiak (2004) states that soft skills include those skills, beyond technical training, that help an employee contribute to a company at an overall higher level than another employee with equivalent (or even superior) technical skills. Chapter 2 and 3 of this dissertation explored these soft skills in detail (see Sections 2.4; 3.4; 3.6).

5.3.10 Graduates' responses to Section B of the Questionnaire (Open-ended)

This part reports questionnaire data obtained from graduate employees, and mainly focuses on aspects of workplace literacies, competencies and English for Specific Purposes. What follows are some open-ended questions and responses of graduates.

Question 2: *What are the main competencies that your employer expects from you in your current job?*

To answer this question, graduates provided broad ideas about what was generally understood to be a competency. Responses, such as *"to be able to assess taxes of payers"* to communication skills, leading a team successfully and *"payments should be done on time before due dates"* were provided; these answers gave me the impression that some

graduates did not have a good understanding of what is meant by 'competency'. Most graduates listed their job descriptions as competencies. According to Rowe (1995), 'competency' refers to the behaviour and how the standard of performance is reached and achieved (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4). It ought to be an underlying characteristic of an individual that is related to superior performance in a job or situation. Furthermore, competency is seen as an underlying characteristic which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job (Boyatzis, 1982). Responses, such as having good communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, were, however, advanced by many graduates as competencies. Some went further to mention flexibility and willingness to learn as competencies. Among all these responses, there was one that was of interest to me and what follows is the verbatim response of the graduate, when he commented that *"numerical competencies, computer literacy as well as linguistic competencies are what my employer most expect from me."*

Question 3a: *Which English or ESP-related course have you gone through at the tertiary institution you attended? To what extent did it prepare you for your particular job?*

Almost all graduates mentioned the usual university courses, such as English for General Communication, English for Communication and Study skills, as well as English for Academic Purposes, on offer. A few graduates expressed satisfaction about these English courses, while the majority felt that the current English courses did not prepare them adequately for their particular jobs, as their varied responses below indicated. One respondent stated,

I did English for Academic Purposes. This course is a life-saver, however, there is more to be done in enhancing its relevance. However, many graduates said: None, we did English for Academic Purposes which is also in terms of general contexts. It was more on how we could organise our academic studies and writing assignments.

These observations by the graduates, although differently phrased, are important in one sense as they contextualise what ESP courses should be. Data collected revealed that none of the three tertiary institutions offered an ESP course for students of commerce, finance and economics. One graduate simply said, *"my institution did not provide ESP."* An ESP course ought to be directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning with students' job-related needs in mind. At the time this study was conducted, the above mentioned courses were not catering for that need. Robinson (1989) states that ESP first arose, and has continued to develop, in response to a language need and to use it for some clearly defined practical purpose (see Chapter 3, Section 3.8).

Other related questions asked graduates whether there was a need to introduce an ESP course for Economics/Finance/Accounting, something which graduates overwhelmingly welcomed and supported. One particular student had the following to say, *"Yes it would give economic students skills on how to tackle and interpret economic reporting and writing."* Another said, *"Yes, it would help students to gain better understanding of the terms used in industry."* The above responses beautifully summed up the essence of what ESP ought to be.

Question 5: *As an employee and graduate, what would you say are your real needs as far as fulfilling the requirements of your job description?*

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Graduates' responses varied when asked. The majority mentioned the need for more job-related training courses, as well as guidance from their immediate supervisors and co-workers. They also mentioned time management skills, business etiquette, as well as better internal support from within the company.

Question 7: *To what extent do you feel the ESP course you attended helped you to fulfil the current job requirements of this organisation? Give reasons.*

Most graduates felt that they were fulfilling the job requirements of their organisations. The reasons given, amongst others, were that they did not receive complaints from their supervisors. However, little is known about how people in their early careers view their competences and whether their supervisors share their views or not. Interviews with employers revealed that they were not satisfied with graduate employees' problem solving, oral and written communication, as well as interpersonal skills.

Question 8: *Were you provided with an induction process when you started at this company? Comment about this process please.*

The majority of the responses indicated that graduates had received an induction when they started at their various companies. One graduate said, *"Yes, I had to have induction in my first week as a new employee. It was definitely vital in this financial sector."* Another said, *"It was very important to have an induction in order to understand the culture of the company…uhm… you know, it is an advantage in employment."* Data from this group

drew attention and expressed instrumental reasons to the importance of induction that helped enhance their confidence and employability.

Fifteen graduates expressed frustration regarding the lack of induction, as the following two comments show: *"Not really, cos you do things but don't know why."* Another one simply said, *"There was no initial formal induction process. One gets to learn what is required as you go along."* Responses such as these were unfortunate. The overall objective of employee induction is to provide new-comers with a local guide for their new job and workplace. According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), a properly implemented induction programme has many benefits to both the individuals and employer in that the company would have well-motivated and energised employees, as well as a good retention and good turnover of its employees. It helps new employees gain awareness of what the organisation, company or institution expects from them and thus guides and helps them find their place in it. In the end, employees experience high job satisfaction and thus perform well.

Question 9: *Do you think your tertiary training prepared you to fit in well in this organisation? Why do you say that? Motivate your answer by explaining the differences between tertiary training and organisational practice?*

Responses to this question were markedly mixed. Data obtained indicated that the majority of graduates felt that tertiary training prepared them to fit in well in their organisations. The 'Yes' group mostly said that they knew how to apply and execute what was expected of them. One graduate surmised that *"Tertiary institutions provided*

opportunity to get the desired job. Organisational practice provides you the necessary

experience." Another one said,

> *Yes, my institution has done well on what was expected of it, but there is a line between university and work environment. However, there is room for improvement in bringing the two environments to talk to one another in preparing graduates.*

Responses from the 'No' group stated, amongst others, that tertiary institutions did not prepare them as was expected. One graduate stated that *"tertiary training was broad while my work in tax is quite specific*." Another forcefully said, *"No, they did not prepare me for the migration from university to corporate environment*." There was a group of responses that bordered on the yes and no answers to this question. This group felt that to some extent universities had prepared them, but went further to express the need for more practice as the following comment of one graduate illustrates:

> *Yes and no. It is yes, because tertiary training helped me with the theoretical knowledge to easily understand processes and on the other hand I was not really prepared for the pressure demands of a competitive industry such as ours.*

It is evident that universities need to take stock regarding the preparation of students. The above could be interpreted that universities covered their curricula well but yet ignored some salient aspects of learning. Instructional strategies that promote transfer of learning in a course, such as ESP that fit the context of learning to the context of application as well as providing extensive and varied practice, were needed.

Question 10: *How important do you regard problem-solving skills and how do you see problem-solving skills in your current work environment? Please motivate your answer*.

All graduates regarded problem-solving skills as a very important competency. It is the skill most needed in their daily execution of their work. One graduate said, *"In my current position, I am faced with different challenges every day and having such a skill is really important*." Another employee commented that *"Line managers don't like hiring graduates who will come running every time they're out of their depth. In my opinion, problem solving is a must have skill for new graduates."* Overall data revealed that graduates regarded problem solving as an important, all-round skill.

I argue that entry-level graduates are not equipped with general, non-technical skills, such as problem solving and decision-making, necessary to thrive in their jobs. I am in agreement with Jozwiak (2004, p. 20) who states that the ability to solve problems is an elusive skill that is not usually emphasised in university curricula, largely because it is much more difficult to teach than "book smarts" or technical skills. This question, however, generated positive responses from graduates. There is no shortage of challenges and issues that could arise on the job. Whether in an office or on a construction site, experiencing difficulties with the tasks at hand or with co-workers, the workplace presents ongoing challenges on a daily basis. Whether these problems are large or small, they need to be dealt with constructively and fairly. Having the necessary language literacies and competencies to identify solutions to problems were some of the skills that employers looked for in employees.

5.4 Summary of findings regarding the questionnaire with graduates

A theme of unpreparedness emerged when some graduates commented about their university training with regards to the practical knowledge and logistical aspects of their transition to employment. The findings also revealed that graduates did not have an understanding of the full realm of graduate competences. In comparing graduates' perceptions to employers' perceptions, the research found that graduates experienced perceived skills to be more important than the ability to actually execute those skills.

Furthermore, some graduate employees stated that they entered employment with the feeling that their programme of study was not complex enough, while others felt they were immersed into too much book knowledge and not enough practical experience. Such findings indicate certain dissatisfactions with university curricula. Another aspect graduates expressed poignantly was the need for tertiary institutions to introduce English for Commerce or Economics Purposes so that undergraduate students could receive specific training in English related to their field of study. The identified gaps in graduate and employer perceptions about graduates' workplace literacies and competencies in English were clear in areas, such as reading, writing, problem-solving, critical thinking skills and teamwork.

5.5 Qualitative data obtained through interviews with employers and lecturers:

Phase Two

Phase One looked at workplace literacy from the point of view of the employees. Phase two focuses on the perceptions of the participants from industry and the different tertiary institutions, in which the following specific research questions were explored:

- RQ3: What are employers' expectations of graduates as far as workplace literacies and competencies are concerned?

- RQ4: What are employers' experiences of graduates as far as workplace literacies and competencies are concerned?

- RQ5: To what extent do academics/lecturers in the commercial field regard the tertiary institutions as effective in providing communicative competencies and workplace literacies to graduates for effective participation once employed?

As has been introduced in Chapter 4, evidence was gathered from interviews with nine employers who were in supervisory roles in the identified financial institutions, as well as nine representatives of tertiary institutions in Windhoek. The intention of these interviews during Phase Two was to enhance triangulation of the two data sets with findings from graduates' responses. Results will be given in Tables and illustrated with verbatim comments.

5.6 Employers' profile

A sample of nine employers was drawn from ten financial firms and institutions, such as the Bank of Namibia, Four commercial banks (Bank Windhoek, First National Bank, NED Bank and Standard Bank), four financial firms (Alexander Forbes, KPMG, Delotte & Touche Namibia, Price Waterhouse Coopers and the Ministry of Finance). These participants were interviewed during Phase Two. All respondents were either heading a department in the company or was an overall manager in a unit I was referred to. In the Ministry of Finance, I managed to interview a Deputy-Director.

5.7 Employers' responses to interview questions (Appendix B)

Interview Question 1: *What workplace literacies are required in general in your business/company?*

Some of the responses to this question revealed that employers required administrative, listening, reading, speaking, writing, critical thinking, numerical and organising skills. The most sought after literacy was numeracy. They went on to say that the reasons were that they worked with numbers involving claims, provident funds of clients and income tax returns. Applying discipline knowledge, principles and concepts was also mentioned. It was clear that there were many divergent views regarding this theme. Table 12 below illustrates some sought-after language literacies employers regarded as important.

Table 12: *Responses to Question 1 regarding workplace literacies required by employers*

Employer(s)	Workplace skills needed
A1 & A2	• Administrative skills • Numerical skills • Organising skills • Problem solving skills • Critical thinking
A3 & A4	• Professional skills • Teamwork • Interpersonal skills • Speaking • Listening
A5	• Applying discipline knowledge • Analytical and critical thinking skills • Problem solving • Decision making • Writing
A6 & A7	• Personal management skills • Teamwork • Information skills • Writing
A8 & A9	• Oral communication skills • Willingness to learn • Numeracy • Initiative • Written communication skills

Table 12 above shows top managers' diverse views regarding the literacies and competencies required in their companies. Analyses of responses obtained revealed that the level of satisfaction was generally below the expectation level. Manager A2 stated that:

> *We mostly require a graduate to have passion for the job, numerical and problem solving skills. They should come to the job market with those competencies. Another Head of Unit expressed their expectations as our company values ability and willingness to learn, teamwork and interpersonal communication skills as key to be able to survive in the type of work we do here.*

Both interpersonal communication and, particularly, written communication skills were highly regarded by employers but were found to be deficient. Manager A8 expressed concern when he said,

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Oral and written communication in a professional office is very important when dealing with clients and outside organisations. Often we find that spoken and written English levels leave much to be desired.

And yet another manager stated, *"Written communication is often appalling and has to be thoroughly checked before being released to the public."* Writing tasks were found to be more concerned with written communication, such as email messages, letters/faxes, proposals and reports that were conducted in English.

Question 2: *What are the main workplace literacies that you expect from young graduate employees?*

Interview data show that this question produced similar responses as Question 1 above. Various managers proposed a number of workplace literacies and competencies required or expected of graduates. Most considered oral and written communication, problem-solving skills, numerical competencies and critical thinking to be the most important literacies and competencies required of graduates. An Organisational Development Manager in a financial firm regarded problem-solving, teamwork, communication skills and personal qualities as the most important competencies, but further suggested that *"workplace context must usually determine their relative importance during training."* One employer said, *"It is important that they be able to think outside the box… Having studied at degree level means they know how to put forward an argument."* Another said, *"The discipline isn't so important, it's the other skills learned at university that are important. The analytical skills and problem solving skills."* This aspect of having problem solving skills was supported by some graduates' assertions. An employer further

postulated that *"We're after the added-value of the university experience… Someone who is flexible and who has the ability to prove themselves."*

Wagner (2008), after speaking to representatives from the New World of Work in the USA, identified what he called the Seven Survival Skills of the twenty-first century as critical thinking, problem solving, effective oral and written communication skills, amongst others. This finding from local employers suggests a link between what they thought locally about workplace literacies and what was happening even in developed countries, such as the USA. I, furthermore, agree with Facione (2006, p. 22) who asserts that "critical thinking is essential as a tool of enquiry." It is a judgement which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference upon which that judgement is based.

Question 3: *Do you think tertiary training prepares young graduate employees to fit in well in this organisation? Why do you say that? Give reasons.*

Various themes emerged from this question. Employers felt positive about the preparation of graduates by tertiary institutions in aspects, such as book keeping. At the same time, employers felt that there was often a gap in the ability of graduates to link theoretical knowledge to practical application. A human resource manager had this to say: "*We try our best to give them inductions and then assign them to an experienced co-worker for three months."* It emerged strongly that employers often had to assist graduates with their transition to the workplace before they (graduates) were let "loose", according to one employer. Furthermore, it was said that graduates lacked problem solving skills in general. Three employers felt that graduates were more interested in obtaining the "paper"

(qualification), and not in how they would apply what they had studied in the workplace.

One manager in a financial firm said the following:

> *They just want the paper so that they can get employment…uhm…what they do not know is that, that is not good for the company they will work for.*

It came to the fore that graduates would rather have their supervisors solve issues for them.

One supervisor had this to say:

> *It is a hassle … they need to read and study the issue to get a solution to it instead of always running to the supervisor for a solution.*

An interesting finding that came up even when I did not probe for it was that of employers' views on graduates' self-confidence. This aspect, according to them, is important in terms of performance and relationship building. Business employers complained that graduates do not have soft skills, such as a work ethic, attendance, interview abilities and positive attitude. As one employer said,

> *We want somebody who shows up on time, somebody who works hard and someone who's trainable.*

Some comments from employers were:

> *Relationship building … they think they have it. But some don't have any idea of this important aspect. Self-confidence … uhm … too many are over-confident.*

A manager in a bank said that:

> *Most graduates are extremely confident and not interested in repetitive tasks. Some have high expectations of their self-worth and usually that is not backed up by the reality.*

Furthermore, employers considered that it was important for graduates entering the commercial sector to have some work experience prior to completing their tertiary study.

Essentially, these results indicate that most employers wanted graduates to be more 'work-ready'. For some employers there was a direct link between graduate competency levels and a lack of prior work experience.

Question 4: *How do you feel about the statement that Namibia is experiencing a lack of English communicative competencies in workplaces like your own? Provide reasons for your answer.*

Employers spoke of a mismatch between tertiary institutions' English courses and the workplace. In one financial firm, the supervisor spoke very strongly about graduates not having an adequate grasp on how to execute most of their communicative tasks, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. And because of that:

> *We have to teach them again to gain understanding and the repertoire ... introduce in-service training and as well as attach young graduates to someone experienced in the company.*

One Head of Unit expressed his concern about grammar errors found in graduates' written work and this is how he put it:

> *Some graduates' writing ... I mean some ... is pathetic to say the least ... I am always shocked to read what they have written, they do not follow the writing conventions, there are always sentence and tenses errors, they do not adhere to punctuations and capital letters and always use text message icons which is not supposed to be allowed.*

Industries, such as that of commerce with high communication content and use of formal language, should have graduates who have been prepared well through a course, such as ESP. Almost all employers agreed with the statement that Namibia was experiencing a lack of English communicative competencies.

Employers suggested that there was a need to create a regular platform where the two parties could exchange ideas on curricula. When employers were probed further as to what could be done, they suggested that tertiary institutions should look at what and where the scarcity actually was and then train graduates accordingly. However, tertiary institutions were confronted with choices to be made. They have to decide which workplace literacies should be developed in higher education and which not. Not every literacy can be developed in higher education. The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 suggests that this approach could be difficult to implement, considering that the level at which workplaces was changing dramatically (Dovey, 2006). Whereas hard skills in the ESP course can be learned and perfected over time, soft skills are more difficult to acquire and change and it puts tertiary institutions in an awkward position to provide.

Question 5: *What English literacies are young graduate employees required most frequently in their work settings? Why?*

This question generated various responses. Employers in the commercial sector felt that oral communication in English was very important. Competency in the English language was a necessary ingredient, especially when customers came face-to-face with employees, and as such, the ability to express oneself in English was seen as a vital component that graduates should possess. One manager stated that:

> *We are always on the lookout for qualities such as good interpersonal skills and good communication skills which include written and spoken English as an employee who can communicate in a clear and proper manner is an asset to any organisation. He further posited that interpersonal skills go hand-in-hand* with communication skills so that one can work effectively with different people.

Another manager also commented about the importance of listening skills and stated that *"Often a written document is produced in response to an oral request."* Some managers mentioned critical reading and analysis of financial documents as other important language attributes graduates should have. This implies that language teaching would not be adequate or efficient if it only covers generic language contents and skills without considering target language varieties and specific learners' needs (Long, 2005). General correspondence, report writing, internal memoranda and working papers are some of the unique examples of specific writing varieties practised in the commercial sector. Knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts and practices is important. According to Hyland (2007, p. 391), the field of ESP emerged to address "the communicative needs and practices of particular professional or occupational groups." English has indeed become the lingua franca where graduates whose native language is not English is an attribute that employers expect. A key challenge for faculties of commerce is to develop language competencies for students that match or align with the most frequently performed communication tasks.

Question 6: *What communicative tasks do they have to perform in English?*

Interview data obtained revealed that professionals in the financial service industry frequently needed to gather, read and critically analyse information from different written sources, such as research reports, financial product descriptions, finance-related websites and financial newspapers or magazines. One manager in an audit firm stated that *"As graduates they should be able to convey their thoughts with clarity and confidence both*

in written and oral forms." Writing was found to be more concerned with written communication tasks, such as e-mail messages, letters, faxes, proposals and reports that were carried out in English. One senior manager stated that *"We write and respond to e-mails on a daily basis within the company, communicating with our clients as well as outside stakeholders."* Another spoke of written documents as essential requirements in organisations. She stated that *"Writing forms is an essential day-to-day routine of the financial office environment."* I managed to establish that all companies and institutions were involved in tasks, such as business conversations, oral presentations, telephone calls and conveying messages. This finding agrees with St. John (1996) who profiled language skills and abilities needed in English. Furthermore, I asked employers to comment on any difficulties graduates encountered when they performed these tasks. Employers felt that in performing these tasks, graduates needed some specific language skills. For example, one manager spoke about the need for graduates to have careful and expeditious reading capabilities as financial and legal documents generally required careful reading, as well as the skills associated with comprehending and verifying details.

Question 8: *What non-linguistic or non-verbal communication events are practised in your company?*

This question did not yield much information about the non-verbal communication events and practices in this sector. A Head of Department in a financial firm said, as a matter of fact, that *"I cannot think of any"* after he had been quiet for a while. Most employers could not say anything related to this question other than that they did not know. The findings suggested that this was an area all organisations tended to ignore. Most people

have an intuitive sense about non-verbal communication to including gestures, facial expressions, body movement, gaze, dress and the like to send messages. However, Sadoski and Paivio (2004) assert that this notion of body language as it is known in the popular vernacular is fairly vague and omits a number of important communicative non-verbal elements (such as use of the voice, touch, distancing, time and physical objects as messages). Kalantzis and Cope (2012) call for change in the way we currently make meaning in the environment and significant challenges to the old meaning of literacy as the ability to read and write; they suggest a move towards increasing the multimodality of meaning-making (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). I agree fully with Kalantzis and Cope (2012) because non-verbal cues could say much more about a certain behaviour in terms of rapport with an individual employee. It is also a primary way to communicate our feelings and attitudes. In the commercial sector, graduates could encounter and observe non-verbal communication with their co-workers and supervisors during meetings and oral presentations.

Question 9: *How important do you regard problem-solving skills and how do you see problem-solving skills in your institution/company? Please motivate your answer.*

According to interviewee comments provided in this study, problem-solving was a skill that employers and supervisors valued highly in their employees, irrespective of their occupational situation. All employers interviewed for this study claimed that, as a result of changes in the workplace, they looked for evidence of problem-solving skills in prospective employees. It was revealed that a large number of employers were dissatisfied with the knowledge and skills of the graduates when it comes to problem solving. One

manager commented that *"Having the necessary skills to identify solutions to problems is one of the skills that our company look for in employees."* All nine employers said that some of their problems were big and complicated, others may be more easily solved. The importance of problem-solving skills is supported by Fallows and Steven (2000) who note that the current economic situation has rendered an academic degree with mere knowledge of an academic subject insufficient for the workplace. They propose that students should be taught skills, such as planning and problem-solving. Problem-solving is about using rational and logical reasoning to deduce appropriate and well-reasoned conclusions of a case. All interviewees in this study from both industry and tertiary institutions agreed that teaching problem-solving should be a high priority, and they shared the responsibility for doing so equally.

Question 10: *How do you see the relationship between industry, tertiary education and graduate employees?*

Employers felt that tertiary institutions did not give much preparation to students and did not engage the industry in asking how it could assist in curriculum development. It came out strongly that tertiary institutions were producing graduates with qualifications already saturated in the commercial industry. One manager in a big financial firm implored tertiary institutions to stop *"spoon feeding"* students. This is what the manger had to say:

> *The functional role of a university is to develop professional expertise and other workplace-related literacies. At the moment…uhm…am sorry to say this but need to say it that it seems local universities are spoon feeding students, yes they pass but they do not have the necessary practical knowledge. Even your best graduates take eighteen to twenty-four months to gain sufficient competence. We have to send*

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them to South Africa for further training. This is a major cost for the company. It
takes a long while to be able to recoup the initial cost.

The researcher could not establish what employers meant with "spoon feeding" of graduates. However, they said that tertiary institutions should target relevant courses and create a forum where tertiary institutions and industry could come together to discuss the country's real English, communicative needs. All nine employers interviewed called for career planning to be introduced as a subject from primary school up to tertiary level.

5.8 Summary of findings regarding interviews with employers

The findings discussed in the sections above revealed that problem areas regarding the communicative tasks and difficulties graduates encountered, according to employers, were writing tasks and problem solving skills. The commercial sector employers, furthermore, regarded the answering of telephones, face-to-face interactions, email communication, fund presentations and report writing as very important communicative tasks. All nine employer representatives also mentioned communication and report writing as very important communicative tasks. Managers' views, however, were that perhaps graduates did not have enough controlled practice in communicative tasks and written work at university. Employers felt that graduates should ideally have practised work-related letters and e-mail communication conventions, write summaries and make work-related oral presentations before joining the work environment.

Furthermore, employers expressed their expectations for graduates to be active listeners while providing the necessary response to a question or query from supervisors and co-

workers. Most employers regarded the preparedness for the workplace of graduates after graduation as less than satisfactory. Overall, employers were concerned that graduates did not have the ability to transition smoothly from graduation to employment. The results showed that most employers provided some form of industrial internship and induction workshops to new recruits of graduates to help them settle in after graduation. One financial institution reported that it offered some form of job placement to graduates as a way of preparation before such graduates were hired. To some degree, employers had the responsibility to make this transition easier. Some employers felt that they were involved by one local tertiary institution through career fairs organised on campus. Only half of employers were satisfied with their involvement with career development for students during their time at university. Data obtained from academics further revealed and confirmed that there is no constant communication between the two parties as well. This poor communication from employers about the demands of industry has been defined by academics as hypocrisy on the side of the employers.

More extensive graduate-employer interaction through internships and career fairs before hiring could be helpful in enhancing graduates' workplace literacies. When that happens, graduates would know what employers expect from them. Naturally, employers should communicate to tertiary institutions the kind of graduates they desire in the domain of English language. Employers felt there was a gap between the English language related competencies they expected of newly graduated employees and what these employees actually provided. The interviews and questionnaire data have shown gaps in employers' and graduates' perspectives in areas of problem solving, decision-making skills,

interpersonal, work experience, as well as oral and written communication literacies. The study found a significant difference between the fact that graduates rated themselves highly and employers expressing a gap in graduates' language literacies and competencies. Likewise, barring employer feedback, how could newly graduated employees know if their English literacies are above, below or meeting expectations? In the hiring process, job seekers send signals about employability competencies to employers by their level of educational credentials. Credentials carry an assumption that graduates possess adequate language literacies, but sometimes that is proved untrue after graduates have started the job. Thus, a gap in expectations and performance could arise.

5.9 Lecturers' profile

A sample of nine academics at the University of Namibia, Namibia University of Science and Technology and the International University of Management were required to be interviewed during Phase Two. Three respondents were at supervisory level, such as the Dean of the faculty, a Head of Department, as well as a lecturer teaching commercial subjects in the Faculties of Economic and Management Sciences. The study managed to interview two deans, two HODs and five lecturers. Among all these, eight respondents were male and one female, who was a Head of Department. These academics were defined as those directly involved in lecturing within university-level undergraduate commercial programmes.

5.10 Lecturers' responses to interview Questions (Appendix C)

This section reports on the views and opinions expressed by academics.

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Interview Question 1: *What do you think is the role of tertiary training through the ESP course young graduates* attended *in preparing them to be employed in the field of economics? Why do you say so?*

Respondents commented that schooling and learning starts in high school. Lecturers were of the view that their role was to prepare students for the world of work through work-integrated learning by providing them with cross-cutting skills by way of group work. One Dean of Faculty and another lecturer said that, although difficult to do, it was the responsibility of higher education to prepare graduates for the many challenges they might face individually and in society.

Question 2: *How do you feel about the statement that Namibia is experiencing a lack of communicative competencies in the area of English? What are the reasons?*

This question generated divergences in the way lecturers responded. Five lecturers said that there was an obvious lack of communicative competencies, while three said that there was no lack of communicative competencies in the area of English. A lecturer stated that it depended on the areas of competencies referred to here and went on to comment that:

> *What I have personally noticed is that our students communicate very well in English when it comes to writing and speaking, may be the mechanics sometimes are not right.*

Interestingly, one Dean of Faculty gave a 'yes' and 'no' response to the question and had this to say:

> *As a country, I think we have done enough in some areas that lacked needed skills. And yet in others like English, we do have a shortage of language competencies,*

however, we must employ our own and not import certain skills that we already have.

Two of nine lecturers conceptualised the issue as being a regional and world trend. They went as far as to state that the issue came from Namibia's past where Afrikaans was the official medium of instruction and that Namibia picked up the pieces after Independence, and this might take a while for English to be established as a medium of communication.
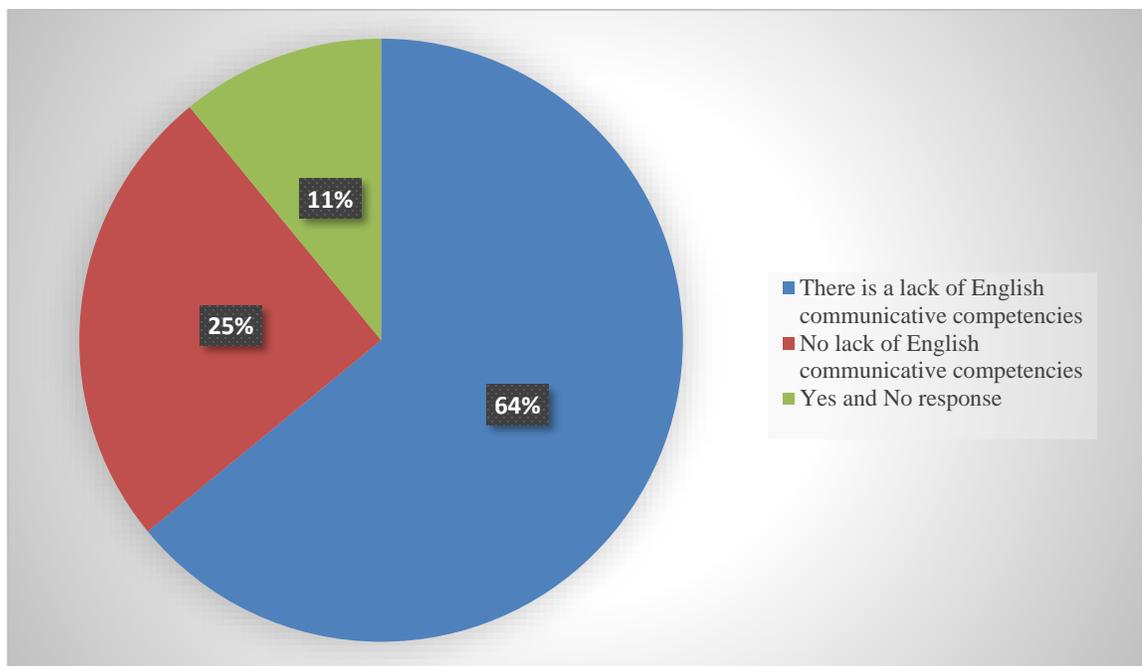
**Figure 16:** *Lecturers' responses on the theme of lack of communicative competencies in the area of English*

Figure 16 above shows lecturers' views regarding the issue of a lack of communicative competencies in the area of English in the country. It is clear from the statistics that 64% of lecturers believed that there was an obvious lack of English communicative competencies in the country.

Question 3: *What ESP competencies that will allow them to transition to industry do you think Namibian graduates should possess upon completion of their tertiary studies?*

In nearly all my interview interactions, academics agreed that professional expertise and general English competencies should be developed in higher education. The idea was that developing these English competencies should be the main focus of the ESP course. A Head of Department stated that:

> *The functional role of higher education vis-à-vis the ESP course on offer is to develop communicative language skills as well as general academic skills; this is the primary objective.*

One lecturer said that *"Expert knowledge is essential. This is the reason you study."*

Another lecturer, however, postulated that:

> *Developing general workplace literacies is not only the matter of higher education… in an ideal situation it should start from kindergarten and the role of higher education is to develop it even further and on higher levels.*

A Dean stated that:

> *Professional expertise should be taught up to a certain point. You cannot expect to get top experts straight from universities. University gives a foundation upon which a company can develop additional skills and knowledge.*

All in all, academics commented that, apart from oral and written communication skills, reading, as well as listening, students needed academic skills.

Question 4: *What kind of oral communication literacies do you think should be imparted to students in your faculty to equip them for industry/workplace?*

The emergence of innovative, communication technologies, expanded team-based management and a diverse workforce has caused the need for employees who need to deal with words, figures and data. This question intended to establish from academics the oral communicative events that graduates needed most in the commercial sector. Most academics felt that graduates needed oral communication literacies for telephone conversations, meetings, formal discussions, presentations, as well as for social interactions. These findings are in agreement with what Fallows and Steven (2000), as well as Vaatstra and De Vries (2007), postulate. They argue that apart from theoretical knowledge, graduates need communication and presentation competencies to be able to function well in the workplace.

Question 5: *How important do you regard problem-solving skills in the work environment? Please motivate your answer.*

Based on the findings, most academics regarded problem-solving skills as very important. Graduates needed the ability to think creatively to generate solutions, as well as the ability to apply logical and rational processes to analyse problems facing the company. One lecturer stated that:

> *Problem solving skills is very important for graduates as they navigate the workplace tasks, but unfortunately our side [tertiary education] could do something in this area to see how we can embed and then enhance their soft skills to handle problems… I believe it is something we can help teach students.*

Another commented, *"It is an important skill because all types and areas of work require problem solving skills and our courses must teach it."* Interestingly, a Dean of Faculty put it as follows:

*For me problem-solving skills are important for any graduating student…uhm…
and I think a module in problem solving skills should be introduced at tertiary
institutions under the ESP course. It would help them a great deal in individual
and social lives and contexts.*

Again, the literature on problem solving unpacked in Chapter 3 shows that Fallows and
Steven (2000), as well as Vaatstra and De Vries (2007), concur, and indicate further that
English courses in higher education should provide students with not only occupation-
specific competencies but generic competencies as well, to enable them to maintain their
position in an ever-changing professional environment. The writers believe that the
acquisition of problem solving competencies depend, in part, on the extent to which
students were stimulated during instruction.

Question 6: *As graduates in the field of economics, what kind of documents should they
be able to read and write? Why?*

Lectures felt that graduates should be reading and writing memoranda, reports, business
letters, emails, proposals and do general writing. These responses are in tandem with what
the literature says about the kind of communicative tasks found and practised in the
commercial sector.

Question 7: *What types of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training courses does your
faculty/department offer to students before they enter industry?*

It emerged that not one of the three respective faculties of the three universities targeted
in the study offered language and occupational specific courses in the area of ESP, and
had left that mandate to their language centres and units. It was striking to hear academics

say that the current English courses on offer were adequate for students enrolled in commercial courses in meeting their language needs after graduation. This sentiment was in apposition with the views expressed by graduates, who argued that the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course on offer did not address their workplace-related needs. Much attention has been focused on skills training in EAP courses at tertiary institutions, whereas it is clear that workplace literacy involves much more than skills. Data obtained revealed that none of the three tertiary institutions offered an ESP course. Lecturers, however, expressed the need for English for Academic Purposes course to be "updated" to meet each faculty's specific needs. In hindsight, this is a misunderstanding on the part of academics, because English for Academic Purposes traditionally serves a different, general, academic purpose and is not the kind of ESP envisaged for the enhancement of specific occupational knowledge. The literature unpacked in Chapter 3 clearly illustrates that ESP ought to teach the English that caters for the needs of learners in specific disciplines other than the arts and languages (Raisanes, 2008). Graduate employees, by their own admission, gathered by means of the questionnaire, felt that the EAP module did not prepare them for what they experienced in the workplace.

ESP has followed the assumption that, if the English language needs of a group of students can be accurately specified, then this identification can be used to determine the content of a language programme (Munby, 1978). ESP students usually already have some acquaintance with English and are learning the language in order to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform particular job-related functions. An ESP programme is,

therefore, built on an assessment of purposes and needs and the functions for which English is required.

Question 8: *How do you see your role as a lecturer in economics in the transfer of English language competencies to students as a way of preparing them for the rigours of employment?*

Data obtained revealed that academics felt that their role was to equip graduates with the theoretical and disciplinary knowledge in the area of economics, as well as professional and interpersonal skills. Although respondents agreed that interpersonal skills could be developed in many ways and at many stages in life, most of academics claimed that it should also be developed in higher education to help graduates with that transition. The complaint that the current higher education system did not focus enough on the development of this particular skill is often heard, as the following comment from a lecturer, who once worked in the private sector, illustrates:

> *We are not the best when it comes to this [interpersonal skills]. It is not developed enough, and it is essential to develop it, and I think that it should be the role of higher education.*

Regarding this aspect of developing social skills, one employer actually mentioned something to the effect that higher education could definitely help in this area and stated that:

> *Often it is a matter of teaching methods. We do not expect separate courses for social skills, but it could be combined with any subject. It is a question of how lecturers teach. This finding shows some convergence in opinions between academics and employers.*

Question 9: *What is your experience at the tertiary institution regarding employers' involvement in course development and provision?*

An emerging theme in current data regarding employers' involvement was that employers should be responsible for conveying expectations for future employees to universities. Four out of nine lecturers stated that their faculties involved not just employers but students, as well, when a programme was introduced. They, however, could not say more about how students were involved. Nevertheless, one lecturer said:

> *We consult and work together … and an example of that is when the faculty introduced a Mineral of economics programme and that is how we pick up the needs of the industry.*

All nine lecturers were of the opinion that engaging employers was very important. Asked the extent to which tertiary institutions were providing the competencies required by graduates, lecturers felt positive and confident that the necessary competencies were being provided through what one lecturer called "work integrated learning". It was clear that lecturers spoke about the theoretical knowledge they imparted and not the specific English language competencies graduates would need to complete work-related tasks.

Question 10: *How do you see the relationship between industry, tertiary education and graduate employees?*

Some of the 'new realities' facing higher education are about responsiveness to curricula and training. Data gathered indicated that lecturers were of the opinion that partnerships with employers should be established, nurtured and maintained with employers. One Dean of Faculty stated,

It is currently accepted world-wide that industries and higher education must form partnerships to share the needs, problems, issues, strengths and weaknesses of educational programming.

One HOD stated,

*It is a perennial issue with employers… I mean, they just complain but they do not tell us what they need. We have to cater for so many sectors of the economy and unless a sector like the one you are researching in could come and we sit around a table, there is no way we would know their English communicative ne*eds.

A lecturer expressed the following: "*Better trained students are useful to the industry and to the nation as a whole."* It is indeed important that tertiary institutions of higher learning share the internal workings of higher education with representation from industry, business and a range of other related bodies and stakeholders.

5.11 Summary of findings regarding interviews with academics

The findings reveal the workplace competencies Namibian graduates should possess as perceived by academics. Apart from academic literacy skills, lecturers mentioned attributes, such as being a team player and interpersonal skills, as well as oral, written communication skills, reading and research skills, as some of the attributes graduates needed. When asked about how they regarded problem-solving skills, lecturers spoke highly of problem-solving skills and went further to propose that a problem-solving module be introduced at tertiary level under the ESP course. However, all academics argued that the current English for Academic Purposes course on offer was adequate to fulfil these expectations. This study, however, found the EAP course at all tertiary

institutions to be inadequate to address many work-related, language literacies and competencies.

One lecturer believed that they trained graduates with the intention to fit into the workplace, but could not elaborate when asked what they do to make that happen. When asked about the relationship among industry, tertiary education and graduate employees, the majority of lecturers felt that the relationship was inseparable, in the sense that the two, with feedback from students, ought to work together as a partnership to produce competent graduates in English communicative literacies and competencies for the Namibian workforce. Representatives of tertiary institutions, furthermore, felt that employers should be responsible for conveying their expectations to universities regarding future employees. It is, therefore, important for employment sectors to be more clear, consistent and effective in signalling their requirements to students and universities.

5.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented data and the findings collected through graduates' questionnaires, as well as employer and lecturer interviews. The findings revealed significant discrepancies among graduates, employers and academics' views regarding the English language literacies and competencies that graduates had in their repositories which would enable them to operate effectively in a working place, such as the commercial sector. Chapter 6 deals with conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations regarding workplace literacy as addressed in this research study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 the first two steps in the process of analysis that informed this study were described. In this final chapter the many strands of this multi-layered study are drawn together to construct a synthesis of the study, according to an explanatory framework, and to respond ultimately to the research questions and, thereby, complete the third step of the analysis process.

Firstly, recommendations both for future practice and future research are given. This is followed by the limitations of the study. Finally, I will give my concluding remarks.

6.2 The relevance of the topic and conceptual framework

This study, through the preceding chapters, has demonstrated the role English for Specific Purposes courses could play in enhancing the workplace literacies and competencies of graduates employed in the commercial sector. The field of workplace literacy is relatively new in Namibia, and only a few researchers have set out to study the role of English language literacies and competencies in work life and tertiary education, whereas the second language factor has often not been taken into account. Chapter 2 provided the framework and explored how to become literate and develop English language literacies. The purpose was to clarify concepts and propose relationships among the concepts in this

study at a macro level. It traced and identified the various models of literacy as a cognitive and social theory by finding and framing relevant literature. The nature and development of workplace literacy, and how it ought to be understood, was explored at the micro level in Chapter 3 which gave further impetus to the kind of oral, reading, writing, listening and numeracy, as well as non-verbal communication practices, required for successful transition to the commercial sector.

6.2.1 Restatement of research questions

The aim of this study was to investigate the role and relevance of English for Specific Purposes in enhancing workplace literacies for graduates employed in the commercial sector in Windhoek. The issue of the ESP courses offered by Namibia's tertiary institutions, in particular the perceived inability of the country's training authorities to produce graduates with workplace literacies, as well as communicative language competencies required by the industry, has become something of a controversial topic in Namibia over the last decade. To investigate this, the study was informed by the following main research question, namely: How do ESP courses prepare graduates for the workplace literacies required for employees in the Namibian commercial sector in Windhoek? To support this central conceptual question, five further research questions were identified (see Chapter 1, Sub-section 1.4).

In relation to the main research question, the overall conclusion made in this study is that graduates regarded English for Specific Purposes as highly useful. However, the findings confirmed that tertiary institutions in Namibia did not offer ESP courses specifically meant for students to be employed in the commercial sector.

ESP, a well-groomed branch of English Language Teaching (ELT), is distinguished from General English due to its comprehensive needs analysis on the deliberated level. The findings show that the graduates favoured an ESP course more than English for General Communication and English for Academic Purposes which, according to them, did not prepare them far enough in terms of language areas for the skills of listening, oral, reading and writing, as well as grammar, lexis, register, discourse and genres appropriate to the activities and tasks they encountered at the commercial workplace. They expressed the wish that a type of English for Economics/Accounting or Finance course should be introduced at the three tertiary institutions in Namibia, just like specific English courses for lawyers and nurses that were offered at one local university. ESP courses, such as English for Lawyers and English for Nurses, provide a good model for what is proposed in this study.

The research established that none of the three universities offered a course related to ESP in economics, accounting or finance. Furthermore, ESP focuses on the training of language competencies while integrating specialised terms and discipline content. Graduates expressed the need for such a course to enhance their workplace literacy in their specific work domains. In particular, Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) theories about ESP can help provide a rationale for the rapid growth of ESP courses worldwide and in Namibia. It is at the university level that students now need to acquire higher levels of language literacies and a course, such as ESP, could fulfil such a role. Furthermore, involved in this broader literacy are such competencies and attributes as exercising initiative, problem solving and interpersonal communication. The purpose is to produce

improvements in workplace literacy that would lead to improvements in workforce productivity. For example, employees with good workplace literacy levels converse more easily with supervisors and co-workers, read and write work-related materials better, as well as know more about the job, workplace and the community.

ESP courses are centred on the context. The English language is taught as subject-related to the students' real needs and wishes in a particular field of human activity. The English language is usable immediately in the employment context. The employees are highly motivated as they are aware of their specific purposes for learning English. Finally, in an ESP course, it is needs analysis that determines which language competencies are useful for the learners to be able to accomplish certain professional tasks. For example, for a commercial student, ESP courses should be focused on oral communication, listening, reading and writing, as well as numeracy in a commercial field.

Sub-research questions 1 and 2 were concerned with the specific communicative English language competencies, as well as English language literacies, graduates regarded as essential in order to fulfil their work roles. Being able to complete a task does not constitute a transferable skill. For, example, telephone etiquette is an important, oral communication task. However, it would be problematic and arguably a waste of academic teaching resources for a faculty of economics to train their students in answering the phone. Instead, it would be more practical and realistic to improve skills and elements of speech, for example, clarity and brevity; by doing this, graduates' ability to use the phone, as well as answer questions, give oral presentations and conduct meetings would be improved. Studies that examined communication tasks, but made no attempt to identify

skills and elements of communication that are critical to accomplish tasks, stopped one step short of providing critical information necessary to improve education related to the commercial sector.

The literature discussed shows that, it is important to situate literacy in the broader context of social practice, in which literacy interrelates, and not just in the individual so that the concept of workplace literacy is understood in its various facets. This evolution has implication for the workplace because of the role of language as some of the traditional assumptions about literacy centre on language.

Sub-research questions 3 and 4 emphasised employers' expectations and experience of graduates as far as workplace literacies and competencies were concerned. In response to this question it was found that employers had divergent views regarding their expectations and experiences of graduate employees. Firstly, employers expected graduates to be work-ready and exhibit non-technical skills and practical experience to apply their discipline knowledge, as well as language literacies and competencies in the workplace. Most importantly, employers expected graduates to have high levels of critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Sub-research question 5 gauged the perceptions of academics/lecturers in the commercial field regarding how effective the tertiary institutions are in providing communicative competencies and workplace literacies to graduates for successful participation once employed. The findings show that academics did not provide ESP specific, language competencies, contrary to what they claimed to be doing.

6.3 Workplace literacy in the Namibian context

The intent of this study was to gain insight into the workplace literacy experiences of graduates from the University of Namibia, Namibia University of Science and Technology and International University of Management, as well as employers in the banking and financial sectors and representatives of tertiary institutions. In the search for a definition of workplace literacy in the Namibian context, the following collection of some English language communicative literacies and competencies needed in the workplace, such as listening, reading, writing, numeracy, visual and non-verbal communication skills, as well as soft skills, have been identified. It is argued that these are required in order for young graduates to carry out their roles and functions in the workplace effectively.

Literacy means to know and understand not only your immediate work environment but also the larger cultural and historical milieu. In order to understand workplace literacy at workplaces, Hull (1995) argues that higher education institutions must engage employers by collecting the texts, documents graduates are required to read and write.

Different social situations require different literacy practices. Currently, it seems as if the workplace is, for most, the most important and culturally institutionalised site for literacy practices that students, soon after university studies, currently encounter. Workplace literacies are social practices, such as ways of reading and writing and using written texts, bound up in social processes, which locate individual action in social and cultural processes. Workplace literacies regarding the competencies of reading and writing depend on conventions. The way in which people read and write is not universal

but governed by cultural and situational conventions; hence, the need to offer ESP courses in the commercial faculties at tertiary institutions. I concur with Barton and Hamilton (2000) (see Sub-section 2.3.2) and call that 'local workplace literacy' that fits with local cultural and social contexts. Street (1984), The New London Group (1996) and Kern (2000), as well as Gee (2010), regard any form of litercay as a multiplicity of various elements.

6.3.1 The offering of ESP to improve workplace literacy

Though universities and employers do not have competing goals, they do have dissimilar understandings of what makes an individual employable and competent. Raisanes (2008) states that it is not an exaggeration to say that most universities in Europe today are offering English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Taking into consideration the importance that English has for international communication, I argue that this communication is not restricted to everyday language but to different types of register where people exchange their ideas by employing certain functional styles, be these formal or informal, written or verbal.

There are notably, three compelling reasons common to the emergence of all ESP: the demands of a Brave New World, a revolution in linguistics and focus on the learner (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) describe it as the teaching of English used only in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes. Lorenzo (2005) reminds us that ESP "concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structures" (p. 1).

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I, furthermore, agree with Carter (1983) who believes that self-direction is important in the sense that an ESP course is concerned with turning learners into users of the language.

General language for no purpose courses at any proficiency level almost always teach too much vocabulary, skills, registers or styles that some learners do not need, and too little (or omitting) lexis and genres that they do need. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, it is more defensible to view every course as "involving specific purposes" (Long, 2005, p. 19).

6.4 The proposed English for Specific Purposes and Competency models

The major focus of this section is to present proposed English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and competency models for tertiary institutions in Namibia. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of English for Specific Purposes in enhancing workplace literacies for graduates employed in the commercial sector in Windhoek.

6.4.1 The proposed ESP model

This study was precipitated by the perceived English language incompetence of graduates and the non-existence of courses, such as English for Occupational/Professional Purposes, at the three major tertiary institutions in Namibia. Based on the findings, the recommendation is to formulate clear policies to guide curriculum development in courses, such as ESP, at tertiary institutions to ensure that these curricula are aligned to the language literacies typical of the different workplaces.

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ESP courses are often discussed in terms of 'wide-angled' and 'narrow-angled' designs (Tsou, 2009) (see Section 3.11). The term 'wide' refers to courses for learners targeting a broader range of work, professional or academic environment, while the term 'narrow' pertains to courses for learners targeting one particular workplace, professional or academic field (Basturmen, 2010). At the moment, ESP courses, such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP), are 'wide-angled' and housed in language centres/units. This arrangement may remain as it is because the English for Academic Purposes course serves a different purpose, i.e., to provide language instruction for academic study at universities.

This study proposes a 'narrow-angled model' for tertiary institutions in Namibia. This implies that each faculty at the various tertiary institutions should design its specific ESP course and syllabus based on a needs analysis of their targeted students and workplace contexts. The specific ESP course should preferably be housed in each faculty. For an ESP lecturer, language teaching competency includes English knowledge (grammar, lexis, syntax, rhetoric, style, among others). Besides, she/he must have a high level of language competence and the knowledge of recent methodologies for teaching of English as a foreign or second language. It is my position that the mainstream of language teaching has been more concerned with methodology, with the *how* rather than the *what* to teach. The issues of needs, specificity and relevance of courses for learners have been dealt with extensively by scholars such as Hutchinson and Waters (1989), Popescu (2010) and Gatehouse (2012).

6.4.2 The proposed competency model

Competency is one of the lingering issues regarding the way employers perceive Namibian graduates. The issue of competency was dealt with extensively in sub-section 2.4.1 of Chapter 2. It refers to one's actual performance or behaviour in a situation by which competence is achieved. A competency model is a descriptive tool that identifies the competencies needed to operate in a specific role within a job, occupation, organisation or industry which a course, such as ESP, is supposed to provide.

This study proposes a model in which tertiary institutions in cooperation with industry representatives develop a generic framework depicting the competencies on nine tiers, with lower tiers serving as building blocks for the higher tiers (see Figure 17 below).

The lower tiers describe foundational competencies with a broad application to many industries or occupations. This foundational competencies group includes tiers one to three, which represent personal effectiveness, academic and workplace competencies. As one moves up the tiers, the competencies become more specific to an industry and an occupation. The second grouping is industry-related competencies, and includes industry-wide, as well as industry-specific, technical competencies which are on tiers four and five (Ellstrom, 1997). The third and final grouping on the model is occupation-related competencies that subsume tiers six to nine which then include the occupation-specific knowledge competencies, occupation-specific technical competencies, occupation-specific requirements as well as management competencies.
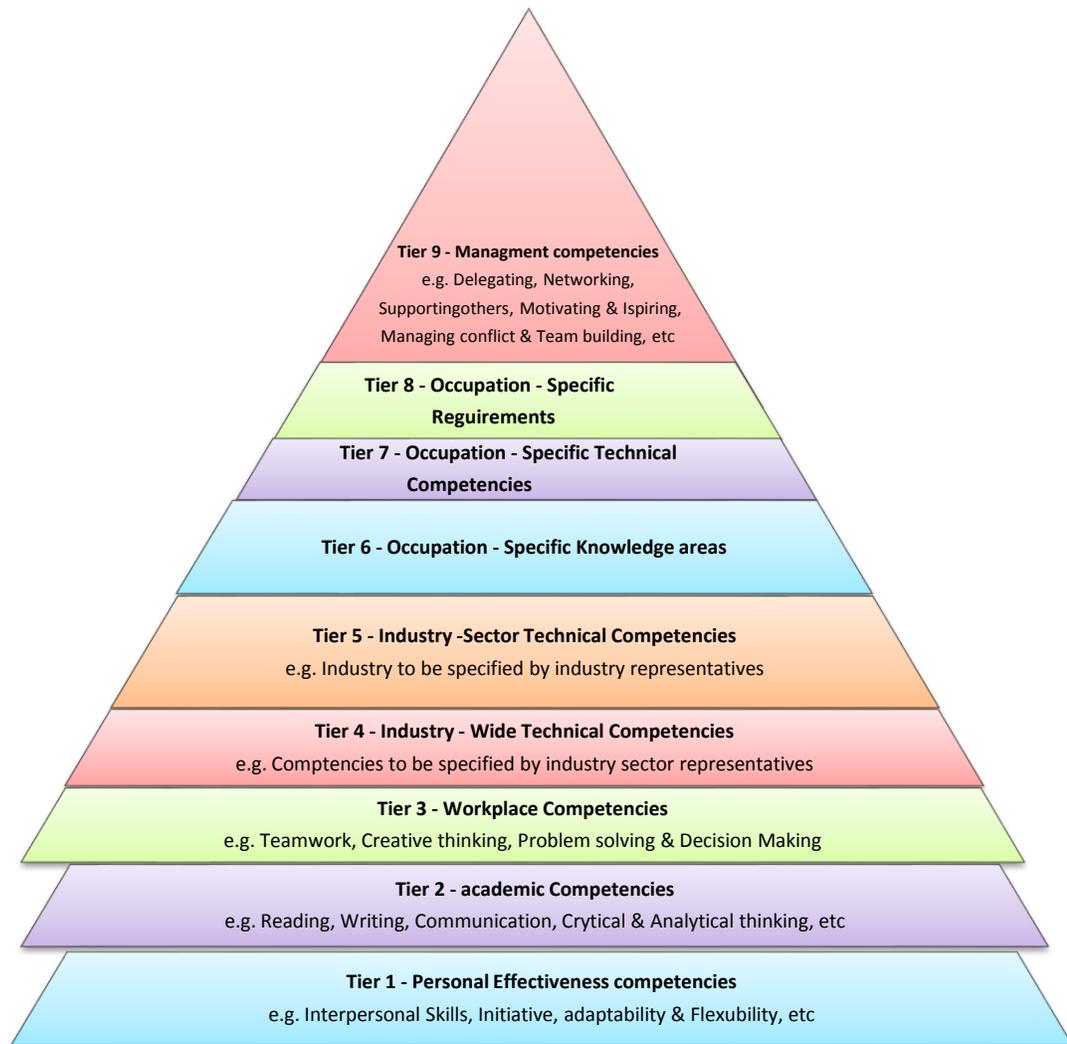
Figure 17: *The proposed competency model framework*
Note. Mungongi (2017)

What all the above tiers mean is that ESP competencies are also context-specific. Some competencies are more important or essential than others for a position. The degree or level to which they are needed or demonstrated may vary depending on the job or task required of the position. For instance, a sales person and a cashier both work with customers but likely require a different capacity or facility for interpersonal skills,

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computation, speaking, etc. Thus, there are different levels of proficiency for the various behavioural descriptors included in a competency model.

6.5 Limitations and opportunities for future research

This study investigated the role of ESP in enhancing workplace literacies for graduates employed in the commercial sector in Windhoek. This research could be seen as a commencement of the journey into a better understanding of workplace literacies, a new field that has not been researched to date in Namibia. Firstly, one of the constraints that emerged in this study was that since the present study focused on one industry, one possible next step could be for the same study to be repeated on a broader spectrum, such as covering more than only one particular commercial industry, and with a higher number of participants. Therefore, this study may not be a true reflection of Namibian graduates' English language perceptions regarding workplace competencies and literacies.

Finally, the findings of this study can only be taken as indicative of a broader issue that needs more extensive and specific investigation in future studies. As this study was restricted to one particular faculty, namely that of commerce, it cannot claim to be exhaustive nor one that was representative of all other faculties at Namibian universities in general and, therefore, cannot give an overall conclusion.

6.6 Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study outlined above, the study recommends that:

- There is a need to reconceptualise workplace literacy at regular intervals, so that a better understanding of all that it implies and new and different ways of looking at the issue are found.

- Definitions should be developed to describe the competencies that employers are looking for in graduates to arrive at a clearer understanding of what is being measured.

- A needs analysis pertaining to competencies in English must be conducted in order to ascertain the requirements of the industry, and this information must be brought into the classroom and made known to both lecturers and students.

- Universities should conceptualise ESP courses and, simultaneously, develop everyday, academic and professional literacies.

- Universities should introduce work-related, ESP courses in the field of commerce.

- While graduates seemed to possess advanced theoretical competencies, their practical competencies in English were found to be weak. Therefore, graduates needed to be kept more in touch with what is actually needed in the commercial industry.

- Tertiary institutions and employers should create a platform where they constantly, and on a regular, basis talk to one another. For example, if educational programmes do not know the expectations of industry, they cannot be sure how to prepare students adequately in courses, such as ESP.

6.7 Conclusion

I am aware that the style that I have adopted in writing this dissertation could be critiqued. I have, for example, used the first-person particularly when I wished to emphasise my position or understanding. Thus, I conclude by revisiting my opening thoughts.

Higher education in Namibia is currently being challenged in a number of ways, not least of which is the issue of English language communicative literacies and competencies among young graduates from Namibia's tertiary institutions. The results of this study, generally, illustrate that graduates, employers and academics had significantly different perceptions and preferences regarding the language, communicative, workplace literacies supposedly found and needed in the commercial workplace.

In this study I have explored the experiences of a group of graduates in one such intervention, specifically with regards to their acquisition of language and workplace-related literacies and competencies, and how these impacted their careers. The study has shown how exposing students to work-related literacies seeks to create links with mainstream content modules and the workplace expectations. To this end, the findings of the study could make a contribution to the field of higher education in the broader context, as well as to the renewal of curricula within academic support programmes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Graduates' questionnaire protocol

University of Namibia
(Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

_____

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN ENHANCING

WORKPLACE LITERACIES FOR GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE

COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN WINDHOEK

_____

Number: _____

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

Section A (Closed questions)

Below are choices as they relate to your tertiary training and current employment.
Please tick (√) only one option each time.

Statement	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	No response
1. Tertiary learning helped me to fit into my professional career.					
2. I feel comfortable listening to and understanding English in telephonic and person-to-person conversations.					
3. I read English documents such as manuals, graphs and schedules with ease.					
4. I feel comfortable using English when communicating ideas and information through verbal presentations and telephonic conversations.					

	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	No idea
5. I write English documents such as manuals, reports and graphs with ease.					
6. I use English when performing basic computations and use the appropriate math techniques with ease.					
7. Tertiary education requires better alignment with industry when it comes to English skills needed in the workplace.					
8. Companies know best how to train new employees for the workplace when it comes to communication skills.					

9. Which of the following competencies/skills do you regard as essential in order for you to fulfill your current work role? *Please* tick (√) only one option each time.

Competencies/Skills	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	No idea
Teamwork					
Oral communication and presentation					
Problem solving					
Time management					
Commercial awareness					
Reading					
Writing					
Document use					
Numeracy					

10. How long have you been at this workplace as an employee? *Please* tick (√) only one.

One year	Two years	Three years	Four years	Other

11. Which of the following languages are used in the execution of your daily tasks at the institution?

Afrikaans	
English	
Oshiwambo	
Rukavango	
Other	

12. How often is English only used in the execution of your daily tasks? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

13. How often do you have to read the following in English? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

a. technical reports

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

b. memos

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

c. instruction manuals

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

d. schedules

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

e. e-mails

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

f. minutes of meetings

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

g. payroll forms

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

h. tables

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

i. charts

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

j. brochures

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

14. a. How often do you use **graphs** to explain aspects to yourself and others in the workplace? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

b. How often do you use **still** or **moving images** to explain aspects to yourself and others in the workplace? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

c. How often do you use objects to explain aspects representing meaning to oneself and others? Please tick (√) only one option.

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

d. How often do you use **visual clues** from your immediate environment? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

e. How often do you use **gestures** and **body language** from your immediate environment? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

Never	Not often	Approximately half the time	Very often	Always

f. In your opinion how well were you prepared for these non-verbal communication tasks by the tertiary institution? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

Not at all	Not very well	Moderately	Well prepared	Very well prepared

g. To what extent do you feel that you are fulfilling the tasks that your institution requires from you? *Please* tick (√) only one option.

Average	Not so good	Good	Very good	Excellent

Please motivate your answer:

_____

_____

_____

15. Name the areas of your work that you feel you were well prepared for by your tertiary institution through the ESP course offered to you? Give a reason for your answer:

_____

_____

_____

16. Which areas of your work were you not well prepared for by your tertiary institution through the ESP course offered to you? Give a reason for your answer:

_____

_____

_____

17. How did your tertiary institution through the ESP course offered to you support your transfer of learning to the workplace? Do you think it was well done/appropriate?

_____

_____

_____

18. What additional support from the tertiary institution through the ESP course you attended would have facilitated your transfer of learning to your current employment?

_____

_____

_____

19. To what extent did your tertiary training through the ESP course offered to you meet the demands of your current job?

_____

_____

_____

20. Any suggestions regarding the ESP course offered to you as preparation of students for the demands of your institution(s) on you as an employee.

_____

_____

_____

SECTION B: Workplace literacy (Open-ended)

Number: _____

1. What is your job description in this organisation/company?

_____

_____

_____

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2. What are the main competencies that your employer expects from you in your current job?

_____

_____

_____

3. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is defined as an approach to language teaching and learning which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning with students' job related needs in mind.

a. Which English or ESP-related course have you gone through at the tertiary institution you attended? To what extent did it prepare you for your particular job?

_____

_____

_____

b. Do you think an English course for Economics students should be introduced in the economics faculty? Please motivate your answer.

_____

_____

_____

c. What are your perspectives as a graduate and employee regarding the English for Specific Purposes that was provided to you by your tertiary institution?

_____

_____

_____

4. Name the overall areas of your work that you feel were well prepared for at your tertiary institution?

_____

_____

_____

Give reasons for the aspects/areas mentioned above:

_____

_____

_____

5. As an employee and graduate, what would you say are your real needs as far as
   fulfilling the requirements of your job description?

_____

_____

_____

Give reasons for your answer:

_____

_____

_____

6. a. Would you say that the skills that you need to do your job are the same skills
      that your employer expects you to have? *Please tick (√) one option*.

Yes	No

   b. Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

7. a. To what extent do you feel the ESP course you attended helped you to fulfil the
      current job requirements of this organisation? Give reasons.

_____

_____

_____

   b. To what extent would you say that your employer's expectations of you as an
      employee are realistic?

_____

_____

_____

8. Were you provided with an induction process when you started at this company? Comment about this process please.

_____

_____

_____

9. Do you think your tertiary training prepared you to fit in well in this organisation? Why do you say that? Motivate your answer by explaining the differences between tertiary training and organisational practice?

_____

_____

_____

10. How important do you regard problem-solving skills and how do you see problem-solving skills in your current work environment? Please motivate your answer.

_____

_____

_____

Section C: Biographical data

1. Please provide the following information by ticking one option:

- o Male
- o Female

2. Your age: Please tick (√) one option.

20-22	23-25	26-28	29-31	Other

3. Highest Qualification: _____

4. Tertiary institution attended: _____

5. Name of institution/Company: _____

6. Sector: _____

5. Position in the company: _____

6. Years of working experience: _____

Thank you for answering all the questions as accurately and as honestly as possible. The information provided here will be used in strict confidence for the sake of research. The researcher promises to maintain strict confidentiality and anonymity of your information.

I declare that I have provided the above information meant for research only with my permission without any coercion from the researcher.

Pseudonym/Make up name _____

Signature_____   Date_____

University of Namibia
(Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

_____

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN ENHANCING

WORKPLACE LITERACIES FOR GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE

COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN WINDHOEK

_____

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

Section A (Biographical data)

1. Respondent: Male/Female: _____

2. Name of institution/Company: _____

3. Sector: _____

4. Chosen nick name: _____

1. What workplace literacies are required in general in your business/company?

2. What are the main workplace literacies that you expect from young graduate
   employees?

3. a. Do you think tertiary training prepares young graduate employees in the area of
      English to fit in well in this organisation?

   b. Why do you say that? Give reasons.

4. How do you feel about the statement that Namibia is experiencing an English
   communicative competencies shortage in workplaces like your own? *Provide reasons*
   for your answer.

5. What English literacies are young graduate employees required most frequently in
   their Work settings? Why?

6. What communicative tasks do they have to perform in English?

7. What difficulties do they encounter in performing the required tasks?

8. What non-linguistic or non-verbal communication events are practised in your company?

9. How important do you regard problem-solving skills and how do you see problem-solving skills in your institution/company? *Please motivate your answer.*

10. How do you see the relationship between industry, tertiary education and graduate employees?

11. Any nuggets of wisdom/question?

Thank you for your time!!!

University of Namibia
(Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

_____

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN ENHANCING

WORKPLACE LITERACIES FOR GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE

COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN WINDHOEK

_____

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

Number: _____

Section A (Biographical data)

1. Respondent: Male/Female: _____

2. Name of institution/Company: _____

3. Faculty/Department: _____

4. Position: _____

5. Chosen nick name: _____

Section B (Open-ended question)

1. a. What do you think is the role of tertiary training through the ESP course young graduates attended in preparing them to be employed in the field of economics? Why do you say so?

   b. To what extent would you say does your institution fulfil these goals?

2. How do you feel about the statement that Namibia is experiencing a lack of

communicative competencies in the area of English? What are the reasons?

3. Question 3: What ESP competencies that will allow them to transition to industry do you think Namibian graduates should possess upon completion of their tertiary studies?

4. a. What kind of oral communication literacies do you think should be imparted to students in your faculty to equip them for industry/workplace?

   b. To what extent do you think that your institution fulfils these goals?

5. a. How important do you regard problem-solving skills in the work environment? *Please motivate your answer*.

   b. To what extent are graduates equipped with problem-solving skills in your institution?

6. a. As graduates in the field of economics, what kind of documents should they be able to read and write? Why?

   b. To what extent are they equipped with these literacies by your institution?

7. What types of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) training courses does your faculty/department offer to students before they enter industry?

8. How do you see your role as a lecturer in economics in the transfer of English language competencies to students as a way of preparing them for the rigours of employment?

9. a. What is your experience at the tertiary institution regarding employers' involvement in course development and provision?

   b. To what extent does the institution provide English language competencies required by graduate employees in the economics industry?

10. How do you see the relationship between industry, tertiary education and graduate employees?

11. Any nuggets of wisdom/question?

Appendix D: Consent for participation in an interview

University of Namibia
(Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

_____

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN ENHANCING

WORKPLACE LITERACIES FOR GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE

COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN WINDHOEK

_____

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

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 coerced. I am satisfied that the information was recorded anonymously.

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 E: Ethical clearance certificate

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: SEC/FOS/63/2014   Date: 8 October, 2014

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: THE ROLE OF ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN ENHANCING WORKPLACE LITERACIES FOR GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR IN WINDHOEK
Nature/Level of Project: Doctorate

Principal Researcher: FILLEMON MUNGONGI (Student No: 9301682)

Host Department & Faculty: Department of Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Supervisor(s): DR. T. C. SMIT(Main) PROF. C. VAN DER WALT (University of Stellenbosch) (Co)
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.

Prof. l. Mapaure
UNAM Research Coordinator

Appendix F: Research permission letter

English Section
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Namibia

WINDHOEK

9 May 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This correspondence serves to inform you that MR F. MUNGONGI is enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Namibia. l, the undersigned, am his main supervisor and his co-supervisor is Prof. C. van der Walt of the Stellenbosch University.

Mr Mungongi is nearing the final stages of his studies where he has to collect data for the research. He has arranged to collect such data from 16 May to 30 June 2016 in Windhoek which is the site of his research.

Should you need any further information feel free to contact me at Windhoek 206 3822.

Yours sincerely

Dr T. C. Smit