THE ROLE OF AFRICAN LITERATURE IN ENHANCING

CRITICAL LITERACY IN FIRST-GENERATION ENTRANTS

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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DECLARATION

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SUMMARY: ENGLISH

In this research project the profile and academic literacy proficiency of a group of First-Generation entrants at the University of Namibia were explored in order to obtain insight into the development of their critical literacy proficiency during the course of 2008. The project was undertaken against the backdrop of a Higher Education sector in Namibia that is facing an increasing influx of first-year students – often students who are the first in their families to pioneer the alien territory of tertiary studies. Such students predominantly come from marginalised and poorly resourced educational environments far from the capital of Namibia. These English second language First-Generation students consequently enter Higher Education with insufficient levels of academic literacy proficiency in English, the medium of instruction in tertiary institutions in Namibia.

An important aspect of such under-preparedness is their academic literacy which is often still regarded only as knowing how to speak and act within a particular discourse, and the reading and writing that occurs within the discipline as the only skills through which to facilitate learning in the mainstream; this, however, is not enough to assist them in problem-solving and high levels of critical thinking. In response, the University of Namibia has implemented academic support programmes to address the needs of students who enter university with poor school results. One such support programme is the ULEG course for those students who qualified for admission to the university but whose school-end marks for English were a D-symbol. Survey results showed that the majority of the students in the ULEG course in 2008 were First-Generation entrants into Higher Education. It was thus decided to conduct this project with one class group of ULEG students. Only data collected from the FG entrants were employed in this case study.

This qualitative, interpretive inquiry was characterised by multiple data collection methods. Qualitative data concerning the perceptions of the participants were generated via semi-structured interviews, observation and content analysis. In

addition, quantitative data were collected and this further contributed to the triangulation of rich, in-depth data.

An awareness-raising programme about the use of metaphoric language in order to draw appropriate inferences was designed and implemented, the rationale being to enhance the participants' critical thinking proficiency. As source material short stories, novels, a play and poetry by African authors written in English were employed. To establish the value of such a programme a mixed methods research methodology was employed where qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently.

The results of this case study question prevailing notions about under-prepared students as well as the mainstreaming of students, as all of the participants in the project attested to the significant challenges that entry into the academic community posed for them. The findings of this project, while specific to the context in which it was undertaken, contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the field of academic development within Higher Education and the role of critical literacy in student learning.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsingsprojek ondersoek die profiel en die vlakke van akademiese geletterdheid van 'n groep Eerste-Generasie eerstejaar studente aan die Universiteit van Namibiè om insig te bekom oor die ontwikkeling van hulle vlakke van kritiese geletterdheid gedurende 2008. Die projek is onderneem teen die agtergrond van 'n Hoër Onderwys sektor in Namibiè met 'n toenemende invloei van eerstejaar studente. Hierdie studente is dikwels ook die eerstes in hul families wat die onbekende wêreld van tersiêre studie betree. Hierdie Namibiese studente kom meerendeels van gemarginaliseerde en swak-toegerusde onderwys-omgewings ver vanaf die hoofstad, en die enigste universiteit in Namibiè . Hierdie Engels tweede taal Eerste-Generasie studente betree gevolglik Hoër Onderwys met onvoldoende vlakke van akademiese geletterdheid in Engels, die medium van onderrig in Namibiè .

'n Belangrike aspek van sulke akademiese onvoorbereidheid is die studente se akademiese geletterdheid wat dikwels steeds beskou word as slegs die vermoë om korrek te praat en korrek op te tree in 'n spesifieke diskoers, sowel as om te kan lees en skryf na gelang van die vereistes van verskillende hoofstroom akademiese dissiplines. So 'n vaardigheidsbenadering is egter nie genoeg om studente te help met problem-oplossing and gevorderde vlakke van kritiese denke nie. Die Universiteit van Namibia het as teenvoeter teen die akademiese onvoorbereidheid van studente akademiese ondersteunigsprogramme geimplementeer. Een so 'n program is die ULEG-kursus vir studente wat kwalifiseer vir toelating aan die universiteit maar met slegs 'n D-simbool in Engels. 'n Vraelys het getoon dat die meeste van die studente in die ULEG-kursus in 2008 Eerste-Generasie studente was. Daarom is besluit om hierdie projek met 'n klasgroep ULEG studente te onderneem. Slegs data van die Eerste-Generasie eerstejaar studente in die klas is gebruik vir die doeleindes van hierdie navorsingprojek.

In hierdie gevalle-studie is die hoofsaaklik beskrywende ondersoek gekarateriseer deur meervoudige data-versamelingstegnieke en -instrumente. Kwalitatiewe data

aangaande die persepsies van die studente in die projek is versamel deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde gesprekke, observasies en die interpretasie van geskrewe en mondelinge bydraes van studente. Kwantitatiewe data is versamel en ge-analiseer om by te dra tot die triangulasie van ryk en gedetaileerde bevindings.

'n Program om studente bekend te stel aan die gebruik van metaforiese taalgebruik om meer effektiewe gevolgtrekkings te kan maak is ontwerp en geimplementeer. Die beweegrede was om die studente se vlakke van kritiese denke te bevorder. As material vir die program is kortverhale, romans, 'n drama en gedigte geskryf in Engels deur skrywers uit Afrika gebruik. Om die effektiwiteit van so 'n program te evaluaeer is gebruik gemaak van 'n gemengde navorsingmetodiek waar kwalititatiewe tegnieke en kwantitatiewe instrumente gelyktydig en aanvullende gebruik is.

Die bevindinge van die projek bevraagteken die heersende opvattings in verband met swak-voorbereide studente sowel as hoofstroom-onderrig, aangesien al die studente in hierdie projek bewys gelewer het van die aansienlike persoonlike probleme wat toegang tot die akademie vir hulle ingehou het. Alhoewel die bevindinge spesifiek is aan die konteks van die projek, dra dit by tot die groeiende korpus van kennis in die veld van akademiese ontwikkeling in Hoër Onderwys, sowel as die rol van kritiese geletterdheid in akademiese studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATED TERMS

BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

CALP: Cognitive Academic Literacy Proficiency

CG: Continuing-Generation

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English Second Language

EFL: English Foreign Language

FG: First-Generation

FL: Foreign Language

HE: Higher Education

L1:   First Language

L2:   Second Language

NLS: New Literacy Studies

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SPSS: Statistics Package for Social Sciences

TALL: Test of Academic Literacy Levels

TL: Target Language

ULEA: UNAM Language Centre course: Academic Literacy in English

ULEG: UNAM Language Centre course: English for General Communication

ULCE: UNAM Language Centre course: English Communication and Study Skills

UNAM: University of Namibia

UP: University of Pretoria

ADDENDA

ADDENDUM A: NSSC SYLLABUS

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CHAPTER 0NE

FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

It has become increasingly evident from research studies conducted (De Kadt 2003; Katz 2005; McKinney 2004; Van Rensburg 2004) that student identity is a very important factor in the acquisition of academic literacy. African students are often made to feel that their language is inferior to the Western mainstream academic culture, leading to a loss of confidence (Parkinson 2003:249). African identities, however, still tend to be understood in essentialist terms; as such they are regarded as conservative in nature and resistant to being influenced by other cultures (De Kadt 2003:100). African students furthermore often feel that they are required to accommodate to the mainstream Western academic literacy culture (De Kadt 2003:94), and that they have to redefine themselves continuously at various levels (Van Rensburg 2004:217).

African students could, however, be positioned in another way by and in academia. They should no longer be regarded as the disadvantaged, the under-prepared, the illogical, irrational novices; they should be appreciated for having expertise themselves (Van Rensburg 2004:218), and for the wealth of cultural identity that they bring along, even if they are the first in their families to attend a tertiary educational institution of Higher Education (HE).

In order to bring together the African identity and the Western academic culture, one could involve the wealth of the students' cultural identity as explored in African literature written in English to lay a foundation for enhancing critical literacy in the academic context. Crucial to this process would be the basic ability to interpret

metaphorical language in English in order to understand inferences, not only in everyday contexts but also in the academic environment.

The rationale for involving literature in the enhancement of academic and critical literacy proficiency can be linked to an observation made by the late Edward Said in a lecture delivered in Cape Town in 2001 in which he offered a passionate as defence for a literary education, observing that:

> As reader and author I have never failed to see in what we read and write the profoundest strivings of which the mind is capable and which, whether in success or failure, suggest to the nobility of effort required to achieve moments of insight, acts of interpretation and above all *sustained performances of the humane and critical understanding that can ennoble and emancipate human beings* [italics inserted] (Cornwel 2005:51).

In the discussion below I will refer to a pilot study conducted in 2006 as the basis for the problem identification and research in this project.

1.1 The rationale for undertaking the project

One platform for ennobling and emancipating people is tertiary education. Much is invested by the state, parents and families to ensure that HE reaches this goal, both in terms of access and throughput.

1.1.1 The Namibian context

At the University of Namibia (UNAM) the Language Centre was introduced to assist English second language (ESL) students, especially those who come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, to upgrade their English language skills, as well as to introduce them to academic study and the use of academic conventions.

Apart from a variety of short courses, the current curricula of the Language Centre comprise the following:

- A ULEA course – this is a compulsory semester course for all students. Those students whose school-end examination marks for English were high enough to comply with the admission requirements for degree purposes at UNAM can enter this course without any prerequisites. In the ULEA course students are introduced to basic research methods and practice. Their reading, presentation and listening skills in academic situations are honed. They further learn to write an academic article and learn correct referencing skills. Each semester approximately 500 students attend this course.

- A ULCE course – this is a semester course in academic communication. A large number of students studying towards a degree at UNAM do not have the minimum marks in English to comply with the admission requirements of the ULEA course, even though their marks for English are above a D-symbol. They have to complete the ULCE course before they can move on to the ULEA course. The ULCE course is also academically oriented but students are required to read extensively, and basic English language skills are also honed. About 400 students per year take this course either in the first or second semester.

- A ULEG course – this is a compulsory course for most of the foreign and mature-age students, as well as all those Namibian students who complied with the university's admission requirements but received a D-symbol (or the equivalent of between 40% and 50%) for English in their school-exit examinations. These students are only allowed to enrol for a diploma course; once they have passed this diploma course and fulfilled all other requirements they may change to graduate studies. ULEG is a one-year course in general English communication and is focused mainly on practising language skills in English. Approximately 300 students attend this year course annually.

Despite the fact that a large number of ESL students at UNAM from rural areas find their tertiary studies difficult, they have the underlying ability to learn via a second language (L2). In fact, personal experience confirms that UNAM students seem to be very adept at learning and employing more than one language; however, it

appears as though these students have often not mastered adequate meta-cognitive abilities in their own language to transfer to English. Furthermore, at the tertiary institution they are suddenly expected to participate in a new global economy of learning. I agree to a large extent with Baine (2006:367) that the literacies these students bring to HE are often "stunted, inflexible, isolated and anemic." Those students who have not grown up in a "college-going tradition" are even less likely to have been exposed to the "folklore of academic life" (Penrose 2002:438), and are thus likely to feel less at home in that life, regardless of ability and motivation.

Making the current English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses compulsory entails the implantation of a British (not just Western) academic culture and the further imposition, therefore, of some form of "post-colonial colonialism which is conveyed to the students as if it was the only academic culture in the world" (Fandrych 2003:17). Sometimes, however, students seem to be "convinced that they have mastered enough English to carry them through college," and they do not "appreciate the purposes of the EAP course at their stage of maturity in the learning process" (2003:19). This situation leaves the ESL and EAP course designer with the conundrum of how to design courses that could bridge the divide and satisfy the binary perceptions regarding academic language proficiency, of the academic authorities on the one hand, and that of its student customers on the other.

1.1.2 First-Generation entrants

As a lecturer and course designer I am interested in First-Generation (FG) entrants at UNAM, since I believe their specific status as ESL students needs exploring and understanding in order to do justice to the English supplementary courses designed to support them in their academic studies. FG students are those students whose parents or guardians themselves never attended HE.

In my preliminary literature studies I have found a number of research studies conducted mainly in developed countries to investigate the specific profile of FG entry and FG students' ability to persist in HE (Bui 2005; Inman and Mayes 1999; Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006; McConnell 2000; Pascarella *et al.* 2003; Pike and Kuh 2005; Richards *et al.* 1990; Thomas and Quinn 2007; Zwerling and London 1990). I have as yet not come across any such study done in the Southern African, or specifically Namibian, context. Consequently, I feel that the demands and supply in education for this particular group of students have not been fully addressed and attended to by many Southern African universities, UNAM included. Many of the characteristics of FG entrants as identified by researchers in developed countries do not belong exclusively to FG entrants into HE but could be related to all entrants in HE; when the demographics and academic literacy proficiency of Namibian FG entrants are, however, combined, it appears that these Namibian ESL FG entrants are in double jeopardy, and that they thus deserve more than cursory attention.

The UNAM FG entrants appear to be the brightest learners from schools in rural areas where their parents (or the responsible older generation) are often subsistence farmers on communal lands. These students who, against all odds, have made it to university after completing their school careers, usually have a strong self-concept and are motivated, also by their friends and family, to "make something of their lives," to plough back what they have gained from their studies at university into their own rural environment. To this group of FG entrants and FG students at UNAM also belong a large number of mature age students who have their own specific set of characteristics differing from that of Continuing-Generation (CG) students – students whose parents or guardians had attended tertiary education. When FG entrants from poorly resourced educational backgrounds reach university they tend to become discouraged and confused by the dramatic and unforeseen demands the academic discourse society makes on them. These young people are thrown into the deep end and are often expected by their lecturers to learn to swim, unaided.

A study by Penrose (2002) has highlighted the contrast between FG entrants' intuitive models of literacy and the formalised expectations of HE institutions. The results of this study interested me to such an extent that I decided to do a pilot study on first year students at UNAM. At the beginning of 2007 I conducted an informal survey with 100 ULCE (see 1.1.1) students by means of a questionnaire. I found that of the 100 students who participated in the study 66% were FG students:

- 50% of them indicated that both their parents had never attended formal schooling at all.
- In 50% of the remaining cases the highest qualification of one or both of the parents was Grade 12.
- The rest of the school qualifications of parents ranged between Grade 5 and Grade 10.
- 51.5% of this group of 100 students themselves also attended university for the first time.

I decided to investigate the profile of only those students whose parents had not attended tertiary institutions and who themselves were attending university for the first time, in order to establish whether their profile correlated with findings by Penrose (2002). I compared the same characteristics she defined, and the high degree of correlation between the two groups was remarkable. I found that:

- a large number of the UNAM FG students were above the average age for first year students – they may thus have found it even more difficult to adjust to an environment of maturing young adults;
- the majority were female – they often had the further responsibilities of a household or elderly parents or relatives;
- a number of them still took care of either their own children or their siblings at home after attending lectures at university;
- almost all of them stayed off-campus – in general they stayed with relatives under less than ideal circumstances, and more than 5 km from campus;

- the greater majority came from remote rural areas in the far north of the country and some from countries other than Namibia. It is to be accepted that the academic environment of the university would be even more alien to these students than to CG students who are more likely to be from urban areas;

- most of them also suffered financial constraints when it came to their tertiary studies. As their parents had not received levels of education that would ensure highly salaried occupations, and none of the students themselves had an off-campus occupation to earn extra money, it was clear that the day-to-day existence of these students was heavily compromised;

- their school leaving results in English, however, seemed to be no different from that of the CG students – it did appear in answers to content questions though that their understanding of English had not developed beyond the literal, and that they found it difficult to interpret metaphoric use of language, specifically in English;

- they rated their own abilities to communicate socially in English between average and above average, indicating the self-confidence with which they came to the university. This self-confidence was more often than not shattered by well-meaning lecturers who wanted to cram as many Western academic conventions as possible into a semester EAP course, presumably "to assist the students in becoming academically literate."

Apart from the demands made by the academic environment, the FG entrants often had to live in conditions and environments that were not at all conducive to tertiary studies. I realised that to really understand the plight of these students it would be necessary to undertake an in-depth study of the current general profile of FG entry at UNAM. It is imperative that university authorities should be informed of the existence and special profile and requirements of this group, and it is a very large group, of UNAM students.

My own observations over a number of years indicated that the majority of ESL FG students at UNAM are not well-prepared for the cognitive demands of academic

discourse. They were taught at school by willing, but often poorly qualified, teachers who relied on rote-learning. It is also not acceptable in their culture to question an adult or to discuss matters ("talk back"). It is therefore essential that students receive support in their transition from the thinking patterns of their pre-tertiary education environments to the expectations embodied in critical literacy that are essential for tertiary studies. To support existing endeavours to do just that, courses promoting academic and critical literacy need to be supplemented with programmes that, for example, would raise awareness of the use and interpretation of metaphors in English. In so doing, students could become adept at drawing appropriate inferences when studying academic texts, based on their understanding of the use of metaphor in English.

In order to find a vehicle for a possible supplementary programme to enhance FG entrants' ability to draw inferences when reading academic texts, I conducted a pilot study preceding this dissertation. I investigated the UNAM students' contact with English literature at secondary school level. I conducted a survey with 100 ULEG (see 1.1.1) students at UNAM in 2006 from which it was clear that very few of them had had any contact with English literature at school. Those whose teachers did spend some time on English literature were mostly from urban areas. Furthermore, the English Second Language Syllabus for Namibia (Ministry of Education, 2005) implemented in 2006 makes no provision for any formal study of English literature (see Addendum A). The previous syllabus comprised a significant number of English literary texts to be studied and examined. It also included texts by African authors in English (albeit very limited in number and variety) that teachers could have studied with their learners. Entrants who currently arrive at UNAM thus have had very little, if any, contact with literary language, and very little practice in developing critical reading proficiency.

From the survey questionnaire the following responses were obtained from the 100 ULEG students questioned:

- 95% of the respondents indicated that they would love to study English literary texts;

- 93% indicated that they would love to study African literature written in English.

The results of this survey consequently provided me with a sufficient measure of legitimacy to explore the use of African literature as a vehicle to enhance critical literacy in FG entrants at UNAM. I consequently designed a programme that would raise awareness of higher level linguistic devices such as metaphor, employed to make meaning in academic texts.

1.1.3 Academic literacy proficiency at UNAM

Critical literacy can be regarded as a basic ingredient of academic language proficiency where the student is involved in creating links between existing knowledge and the new knowledge that is being shared (Van Schalkwyk 2008:57). Such application is transformational and should have an impact on how the student thinks and perceives the world around her or himself (Boughey 2002:282): however, this also has implications in terms of preparedness and/or proficiency, what was learnt at school and the student's own cultural capital. According to Van Schalkwyk (2008:1), in the South African situation one out of every three students will have dropped out of university by the end of his or her first year. These statistics, which include universities and the former technicons, as well as students enrolled for distance-education, paint a bleak picture for the sector. This state of affairs seems to be closely aligned to the current situation in Namibia; therefore it can be agreed with Boughey (2002:305) that,

> [i]f South Africa (and by implication, Namibia – author) is to create a more equal society, the crucial issue is not of granting formal access to the institution, but rather of granting epistemological access to the processes of knowledge construction which sustain it.

This premise and the English language proficiency of students attending UNAM were determining factors in the designing of the support programme I envisaged to enhance FG entrants' level of critical literacy. I consequently considered the general profile of the academic literacy of students at UNAM.

The English language users in Namibia are multilingual and multicultural, like students in South Africa, and "extremely creative with the English in expressing their multi-identities" (De Kadt 2000:26). Namibian L2 students' general English is adequate; however, like many students in South Africa (Kaplan-Dolgoy 1998:50), their proficiency in academic English appears not to be adequate. Often their basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS, as defined by Cummins 1980) are well developed. BICS function in daily interpersonal exchanges and is concerned with pronunciation, basic vocabulary and grammar. It is also, relatively speaking, cognitively undemanding and relies on the context to clarify meaning. Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP, as defined by Cummins 1980), on the other hand, functions in understanding academic concepts for the performance of higher cognitive operations in order to achieve academically at tertiary level. These concepts will be explored in more detail in Chapter Two.

Although a large number of the Namibian students exhibit well-developed BICS, my teaching experience has indicated that their CALP is inadequate for tertiary studies. Observations made during reading comprehension tests showed that more often than not metaphoric language was interpreted literally. When students had to interpret idiomatic expressions, they often failed to see beyond the literal meanings of the words; for example, when they were asked to explain the following *"An increase in the crime rate was observed over the past hundred years,"* students failed to see the continuity conceptualised by the preposition *over* and thus interpreted the sentences as that a hundred years ago an increase in the crime rate was observed; also in *"Their assistance was of little help to the victim."* This was interpreted as if the victim

had received a limited amount of help, as the students missed the relevance of the preposition *of*.

Furthermore, due to the way Namibian students were taught at school they remain dependent learners, even at tertiary level. According to Kaplan-Dolgoy (1998:7), South African – and by implication, Namibian – students often find academic concepts and terminology too abstract and difficult as these are less easily understood and experienced than ideas and terms employed in social situations. Not infrequently UNAM students come from a school background which emphasised rote learning rather than interpretation or own opinion. In short, it did not equip them to study independently at universities with a Western-dominated academic culture where high levels of independent thinking are expected.

This inculcated school-based thinking may contribute to the disorientation that naturally occurs when students enter university. It, however, appears to be felt more keenly by FG entrants whose "lack of family culture for higher education" (Penrose 2002:442) sharpens the contrast between their old and new surroundings. Penrose also describes the academic discomfort for FG entrants as embedded in a broader feeling of isolation in the university setting. In her study she found that the tension between school and home identities seemed to be the most consistent feature of individual profiles. Other factors were the discontinuities between home and school cultures, the conflict between norms of neighbourhood or family and those of academia, as well as isolation and possible self-doubt. The extent to which these aspects affect the FG entrant at UNAM will be discussed in depth in Chapter Five.

Furthermore, it may well be that some students do not begin to feel out of place at the university until they attempt to participate in the exclusive knowledge communities of the major fields. Studies in developed countries (McConnel 2000; Pike and Kuh 2005) indicate that FG entrants experience self-doubt and crises of confidence, yet other research results (Bui 2005; Penrose 2002) indicate no significant difference between FG and CG means on items pertaining to general self-

confidence, sense of personal identification and expectations of success. Data, however, suggest that FG entrants do not bring these insecurities with them to university; they do not begin to doubt themselves until after they have arrived. The challenge for educators is thus not how to build students' confidence, but "how to restore or reclaim it, or better yet, how not to undermine it in the first place" (Penrose 2002:456).

1.2 The research project

It is evident that the quest for support programmes at universities that cater for students from poorly resourced secondary educational institutions expands over national boundaries. In such programmes more is at stake than just confronting students with their lack of skills in employing academic English. To bridge the divide between often poorly resourced secondary education and the demands of tertiary education, educational support programmes should rate students' self-concepts and confidence levels highly. In order to make a contribution to this exciting field of study I decided to investigate the phenomenon of FG entry at UNAM, to see how the content of foundation courses in English could be supplemented by programmes that would develop the critical literacy of such students from a non-Western academic background in order to develop critical literacy, and subsequently support, as well as enhance their confidence levels.

1.2.1 The research problem

After a fair number of years of observing students at UNAM and contemplating possible avenues of academic support, I formulated the following questions on which this research project is based: How can African literature enhance critical literacy in FG entrants at the University of Namibia? The rationale for employing African literature in this programme will be explored in Chapter 3. This question implies that the following sub-questions be addressed:

- How does the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM compare with that of FG entrants in developed countries?
- What is the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM?
- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in FG students at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

I first investigated the demographic and personal features that underscored the particular profile of a group of FG entrants at UNAM. In order to form a holistic picture, I also investigated their English language proficiency on entry at UNAM and tracked its development over the course of one year. I researched in depth FG entrants' developing abilities to interpret metaphoric language use in English in order to draw appropriate inferences when studying academic texts. This area of research is particularly interesting to me, as metaphoric language use and drawing inferences have been identified as crucial to the development of critical thinking abilities (Ibáñez and Hérnandez 2003; Kővecses 2000; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Rouchota and Jucker 1998; Sperber and Wilson 2006; Van Dyk and Weideman 2004). By employing a programme in English literature written by African authors I aimed, firstly, at creating students' awareness of the rich treasure of English African literature and, secondly, sustaining "performances of the humane and critical understanding that can ennoble and emancipate human beings" (Cornwel 2005:51).

To do justice to this research project, the descriptive exploration of FG entry at UNAM will be complemented with objective and quantifiable data collected by means of a number of different instruments. The research design, data collection instruments and techniques, as well as the means of analysis of the data will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

1.2.2 Research design

According to Bassey (1999:26), the case study is an empirical enquiry that researches a "phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." A case study enquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation where there will be many more variables than data points as one result. It relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion as another result. It furthermore benefits from the prior development of theoretical proportions to guide data collection and analysis (1999:27). In the event of investigating a phenomenon such as FG entry into HE the case study design provided a suitable vehicle to journey through the complexities likely to be encountered in such a research project.

In order to explore the existing phenomenon of FG entry at UNAM, I employed a mixed methodology. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:124) mixed methods go beyond the mixing of methodologies as mixing methods also encompasses different aspects and stages of the research process. Therefore, in researching the phenomenon identified for this project, I made use of a concurrent triangulation design and strategy (Creswell 2003:214). My research design can be visually presented as follows:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  ┌──────────────┐                              ┌──────────────┐       │
│  │ QUALITATIVE  │                              │ QUANTITATIVE │       │
│  └──────────────┘                              └──────────────┘       │
│         ↓                                             ↓                │
│  Qualitative.                                  Quantitative            │
│  data                                          data                    │
│  collection  ←─── techniques and instruments correlated ──→ collection │
│         ↓                                             ↓                │
│  Qualitative                                   Quantitative            │
│  data                                          data                    │
│  analysis       ←───  data results compared  ──→    analysis           │
│                                                                        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
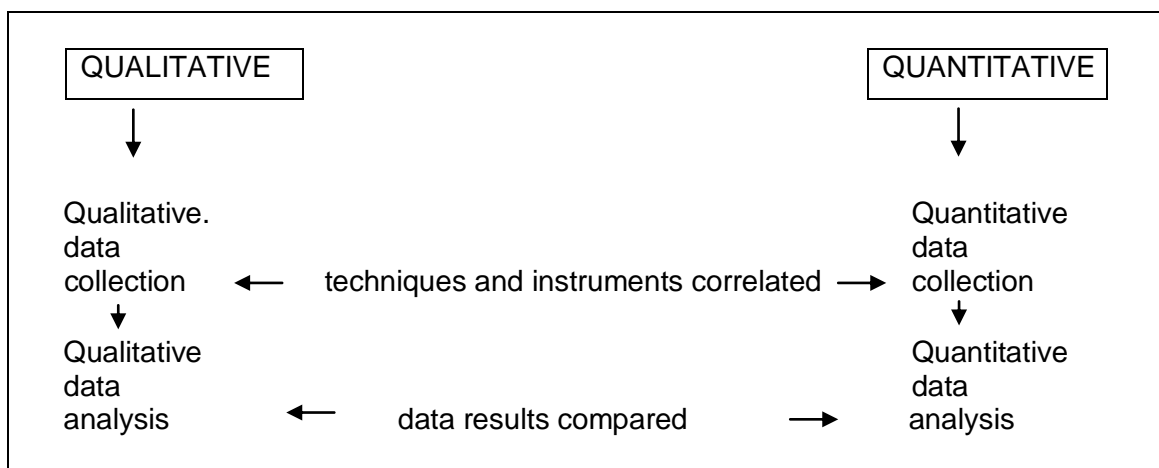
Figure 1.1 Concurrent triangulation strategy

I decided to employ this model of concurrent triangulation strategy, as both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were employed concurrently in an attempt to cross-validate and corroborate the findings in this project. This was to ensure that the weaknesses inherent within one method would be offset to as large an extent as possible by the strengths of the other. Although the qualitative and quantitative data collection was concurrent, in practice the priority leant towards the qualitative approach, as the project intended to identify and characterise the phenomenon, FG entry at UNAM, by means of a case study. The results of the data collected and analysed by both the qualitative and the quantitative methods were, however, integrated during the interpretation phase of the project.

In this project the participants were observed. Collected data, as well as ongoing documentary sources, were employed to conduct a descriptive analysis of interviews, journal entries and descriptions of the continued development of the participants throughout the course of the project. To augment the qualitative data, quantifiable information about the characteristics of the FG entrants were collected by means of two questionnaires (see Addendum C). The closed questions in the first questionnaire were used to gather quantifiable data concerning shared experiences and background information of the participants. The main aim of the first questionnaire was to obtain preliminary quantifiable, as well as some qualitative data concerning the profile of FG entrants at UNAM. These data were then further explored in personal interviews (see Addendum D for interview questions). Both the answers to some of the questionnaire items and discussions in the personal interviews opened new channels of inquiry. A second questionnaire probed these channels deeper and consolidated data already gathered. This second questionnaire investigated the FG entrants' personal experiences, and some of the open-ended questions were used to gather qualitative descriptions of such personal experiences.

Tuckman (1988:118) warns against instrumentation bias in questionnaires as researchers and respondents may become more experienced as the study proceeds and they may thus inadvertently provide cues which may influence the data collected. Since I used two separate questionnaires consisting of both open and closed questions, and only I was responsible for collecting the data, the danger of instrumentation bias was minimised. The decision to investigate FG entry at HE has, however, always been personal. My subjective stance towards the data collected is justifiable, since this project has had an immense impact on my personal growth as an academic, as well as a lecturer involved in the designing of support programmes in ESL for students at UNAM.

1.3 Research methodology

To ensure a firm hold over the data collected in this project it was decided to conduct a case study in which an existing class group of ULEG (see 1.1.1) students, attending a year course in general communication in English, was studied. In order to define the parameters of the project it was decided that the only common denominator when determining the sample of participants in this project would be the FG status of students in a specific ULEG class in 2008 and their first time entry into HE. Aspects such as gender, ethnic origin and cultural background were not employed as variables but only as descriptors of the characteristics of the participants who represented FG entry at UNAM.

I decided specifically to use a group of ULEG students, as it became clear from a separate questionnaire I piloted on ULCE students in 2007 (see 1.1.2) that, although the ULCE students may be FG students, they are often second year students who had attended the ULEG course previously. Furthermore, the ULEG course is compulsory for those students who have attained very low marks in English in their school-exit examinations and for mature age entry students – in other words, those students who can be assumed to need most all possible support to enhance their academic English literacy proficiency.

After deciding on the cohort for this case study, the parameters for participation in the project were determined by adopting a working definition of what comprised FG entry at UNAM. This definition will be discussed and justified in Chapter Two. A summary of the subsequent methodology employed to answer the research questions can be formulated as follows:

- The first questionnaire administered in this project was piloted on a group of ULEG students in 2007. The main aim of this questionnaire was to establish the number of FG entrants in the class group, as well as their demographic characteristics. It further looked at the educational background of the participants as far as English as a language of learning was concerned. Once the teething problems identified in the pilot study were ironed out the questionnaire was distributed among all the members of the participating class group of ULEG students at the beginning of 2008. Although most of the questions were closed questions which could be quantitatively analysed, a number of open-ended questions were also included and they were qualitatively analysed and descriptively interpreted. These findings will be discussed in depth in Chapter Five.

- A programme in which English literature – mainly African literature written in English – was designed and conducted for the duration of the one-year course with the class group of ULEG students, to whom the participants in this project belonged. The rationale was to enhance their existing abilities to interpret metaphorical language and draw appropriate inferences in English. This programme included the discussion of short stories, a drama and poetry, as well as the assessment of students' ability to understand a novel they had read in their leisure time. The programme and the resulting findings derived from the analysis, as well as the interpretation of data collected in the programme, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

- In order to measure the participants' level of academic literacy proficiency on entry at UNAM, I conducted the Test for Academic Literacy Levels (TALL), a standardised test obtainable from the University of Pretoria (UP) in South

Africa. The TALL, as well as analysis of the data collected by means of this instrument, will be discussed in Chapter Six.

- Qualitative data concerning the FG entrants' personal experience and feelings regarding the academic discourse community of UNAM were gathered by means of personal interviews. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed before employing qualitative analysis and descriptive interpretation. Ongoing observations of the students, as well as analyses of entries in a personal dialogue journal, were recorded. These observations and journal entries were employed to augment the numerical and descriptive data collected by other instruments and techniques and thus became a means of triangulation. Furthermore, data collected in this way that could be quantitatively recorded were statistically analysed and interpreted and will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

- A second questionnaire was administered towards the end of the project in order to establish how FG entrants had reaffirmed, or changed, their perceptions of tertiary education after spending some time in an academic environment. These data were qualitatively analysed and descriptively interpreted. This second questionnaire also elicited quantifiable data concerning students' collective pre-university personal and social circumstances, as well as familial background. This information was objectively analysed and tabled before interpretation. The findings are reported in Chapter Five.

- It was decided that the final essay in the ULEG examination paper at the end of 2008 would be scrutinised to establish the extent to which the FG entrants were able to draw appropriate inferences as demanded by the academic text provided, and how they employed metaphoric language in their own responses to the topic set. To assure a measure of objectivity in the interpretation and description resulting from such scrutiny, the essays were peer marked by a colleague at the Language Centre of UNAM. These findings are discussed in depth in Chapter Six.

1.4 Data Analysis

In case study research the danger always lurks that qualitatively collected data could be manipulated according to pre-set ideas and possible personal biases, resulting in a subjective interpretation and one-sided descriptions. The mixed methods methodology allowed me to counteract the limitations of data collection driven exclusively by qualitative techniques, since subjective data were triangulated with quantifiable data collected concurrently. Employing qualitative data collection techniques did, however, allow me to move from the periphery into the core of the project and, in so doing, assess my own preconceived ideas about the positioning of the FG entrant at UNAM. The interpretation and description of the qualitative data in this project thus also became a reflection of my personal journey and the enhancing of my own objective critical thinking and discriminatory abilities.

The built-in advantage of triangulation in the mixed methods design became evident in the analysis of quantifiable data. I made use of the Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for descriptive analysis of numerical data. I employed independent t-tests and paired samples tests, particularly in the analysis of the TALL (see 1.3). I also employed subtest inter-correlations between the participants' scores in TALL 1 and 2. These analyses will be discussed in depth in Chapter Six. I further made use of graphs and tables to illustrate some of the findings in this project.

1.5 Reflections on the rationale for this project

In this research project my goal was to study a specific kind of student who attends UNAM, namely the FG entrant. I consulted previous studies, as well as available literature, to found a basis from which I could conduct an informed inquiry about the demographic profile of the FG entrant at UNAM. Keeping in mind the politically determined hegemony of English as an official language and medium of instruction in Namibia, this project investigated the positioning of the ESL FG entrant in the

English academic discourse community of UNAM. The perceived academically disadvantaged position (see 1.1.2) of students hailing from poorly resourced school backgrounds, as well as my own love for literature, inspired me to investigate the value of a programme in African literature written in English which would complement and run concurrently with the existing ULEG course in general communication skills in English at the Language Centre in 2008.

 I narrowed the scope of the project down to only investigate whether English literature by African authors, Namibian authors included, could be employed to raise students' awareness of the metaphoric use of language in English, in order to assist them in drawing more appropriate inferences in the academic contexts they are confronted with at university. The aim was not to change the existing curriculum but rather to augment it and facilitate lecturers with an additional tool in honing the below-standard CALP (see 1.1.3) of FG entrants at UNAM. Administrative constraints made random sampling of participants very difficult; a further rationale for conducting the programme with an existing group of students at UNAM, who attended the ULEG course for general communication in English at the Language Centre of UNAM in 2008, was that the literature programme should complement an existing course; it should further be replicable with all future groups of ESL FG entrants with comparable characteristics to those identified in this project, who attend the ULEG course at UNAM.

1.6 Developing the argument

Chapter One comprises an introductory overview of this research project. By addressing key issues that will be further explored in subsequent chapters, the rationale and the circumference of this project were established and presented to the reader.

Chapter Two will be specifically concerned with the unpacking of existing literature consulted to explore the phenomenon of FG entry into HE. It will define key

concepts and summarise main findings and conclusions. Since studies referred to in literature on FG students were mainly conducted in developed countries, attention in Chapter Two will be given specifically to those features of FG entry as established in developed countries that either compare with those of FG entrants in developing countries or features that appear to be exclusive to FG entry in developed countries. Chapter Two continues with a discussion of those concepts of literacy related to tertiary education. Both academic and critical literacy are discussed, and their relevance is related to the current project.

Chapter Three comprises a discussion of metaphoric use of language and its importance in drawing appropriate inferences when studying literary and academic texts. Key concepts are defined and differing positions of scholars are posed and discussed. The positioning of this project as far as metaphor and metaphoric language use is concerned is discussed and justified by referring to previous research and scholarly input. Chapter Three also explores the use of literature in academic contexts and pays specific attention to English literature by African authors.

Chapter Four comprises a discussion of the research design and methodology employed in this project and looks at its aims and objectives. It conceptualises and defines key variables and discusses issues of measurement, sampling, data collection methods, as well as data capturing and data analysis.

Chapter Five presents the findings and interpretation of descriptive, as well as quantifiable data that characterise the profile of the FG entrant as conveyed by data collected from the participants in this project. It includes a discussion of the demographic profile of the participants, tabling of results and presentation of graphic illustrations. Chapter Five further discusses these results, as well as concluding interpretations and descriptions, to present a holistic profile of the FG entrant at UNAM.

Chapter Six continues with the presentation of the holistic picture of the FG entrant at UNAM by reporting findings concerning the English language proficiency of the participants. It is followed by a detailed description of the literature programme employed to supplement the course content of the ULEG course, as well as reflection on the possible gains that participants had made in academic and critical literacy after being exposed to awareness-raising of the existence and use of metaphor in literary and academic texts.

Chapter Seven concludes with a discussion of salient points and the interpretation of results in terms of the literature and theory that underscore this project. It further discusses anomalies in the data and the limitations of the project. It concludes with a look at the larger significance of the results, their relation to existing policy and other recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS AND LITERACY

In Chapter One the background that initiated this research project was discussed. Chapter One furthermore served to demarcate the boundaries of the investigation which was prompted by the following research questions:

- How does the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM compare with that of FG entrants in developed countries?
- What is the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM?
- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in First-Generation students at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

In an endeavour to answer the first two questions, Chapter Two will present the theories and literature that informed this research project. First of all, current studies concerning FG entry and physical persistence in HE will be discussed. This discussion will be followed by a look at the way in which literacy as a concept has been defined and characterised. Since this research project is concerned mainly with critical literacy, an overview of cognitive linguistics and those elements of cognition that underscore the investigation will also be addressed.

2.1 First-Generation (FG) entry into Higher Education (HE)

It is becoming increasingly apparent that there is a shift in the status of university students in Southern Africa, as more and more black students enter a previously white-dominated academic domain. Due to their socio-economic circumstances, the

profile of this generation of students entering HE also dramatically differs from that of traditional tertiary students. Since this new generation of university students often comes from poorly resourced secondary education environments, cognisance needs to be taken of their particular academic, as well as socio-cultural characteristics and identity, so that they can be assisted to integrate successfully into the mainly Western academic culture prevalent at most academic institutions in Southern Africa.

FG first time entry at academic institutions in Namibia such as UNAM is also expanding. With the changing political and socio-economic profile of previously disadvantaged Namibians, school leavers, as well as mature Namibians, increasingly decide to invest in HE for an improved future. McCarron and Inkelas (2006:546) found in their study that FG entrants and students may desire to pursue HE but extenuating life situations may compromise their studies, and they may have to delay or temporarily discontinue their college education at some point in time. It appears as if many of the Namibian FG student cohort find themselves in similar situations. Despite multiple difficulties, it is to the FG students' credit "that they dream of attaining an education and pioneering beyond the bounds known to their families" (2006:547).

Namibian students from homes where the responsible older generation was deprived of opportunities to enrol in education facilities are also pioneering and positioning the world of academia for themselves. In their quest for an own education, they are at the same time paving the way for improved HE for future generations. Since FG entry as a phenomenon seems to be at present a common feature of HE internationally (McCarron and Inkelas 2006:534), as well as in Namibia, education authorities should keep in mind that a large number of the students, who attend universities such as UNAM, are FG students who have entered the tertiary institution of their choice with the deserved expectation that their academic, as well as social needs will be met.

Although a number of studies describe FG entry into HE as it occurs in developed countries, it appears as though no studies have been specifically conducted to describe this phenomenon in the Namibian context. Before researching FG entry into HE at UNAM, it is necessary to analyse research done on the profile of FG students in developed countries as described by current international literature.

2.1.1 Defining FG entry into HE

According to Leathwood and O'Connell (2003:598), the constructions of the word 'student' are changing as there have been "many, and ongoing, challenges to traditional notions of a student as a young (white) man from an upper-class or middle-class background studying in the ivory tower, as a result in part from campaigns to further the participation of previously excluded groups, …" Consequently, to demarcate FG entry into HE a number of definitions have been coined by researchers studying the FG profile. FG students are primarily described as college or university students from a family where no parent or guardian has earned a university degree (Lee *et al.* 2004; Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; Pike and Kuh 2005). These students may consequently be the first in their families to attend a tertiary institution (McConnell 2000:2). A student may, however, not be the first in his/her family to go to university if a sibling has already entered but he/she would still be regarded as first-generation. Lohfink and Paulsen (2005:409) have found that FG students "are overrepresented in the most disadvantaged racial, income, and gender groups" due to the fact that they are the first in their families to invest in upward mobility, as promised by HE.

In the Namibian context a large number of the students who enter HE as the first in their families were often raised by adults other than their birth parent or parents, often in cases where one or even both of the birth parents are still alive. These older generation of people who are the care-takers are mostly grandparents or guardians, and they themselves were more often than not deprived of any education such as primary or even basic literacy acquisition. Therefore, in order to encompass the

complex dynamics of the extended family relationships of Namibian FG students, the following was adopted in this research project to serve as a working definition to determine who could be regarded as FG at UNAM:

> First-generation students are those of whom the responsible older generation (not necessarily birth parents) has not had any opportunity to study at university at any stage of their lives (Thomas and Quinn 2007:51).

In their study Thomas and Quinn did not make a difference between FG students and FG entrants. My interest, however, is focused on those students who enter the often mysterious world of HE for the first time, and who are not only novices as far as HE is concerned but who are also pioneering a domain from which their families were previously excluded. Lee *et al.* (2004:6) found that many of the previous studies done on the phenomenon of FG entry into HE assumed that the views and experiences of FG students were homogeneous. Thomas and Quinn (2007:50) warn, however, that FG entry should not be put within the matrix of class and ethnicity, as it constitutes a point of overlap of many factors. It is therefore neither possible nor desirable to disentangle FG entry from its various features.

2.1.2 Features of entry into HE and their influence on FG students

Studies on FG entry into HE have determined a number of variables indicating that FG entry consists of specific distinguishing features which influence the successful transition into, as well as the rate of physical persistence in, HE among students who fall in this grouping. The following discussion looks at three variables which are regarded as significant determiners to the FG students' positioning in the HE milieu. These variables will also underscore the direction of the research in this project.

2.1.2.1 The influence of secondary education on FG entry into HE

A major influence on FG entry and persistence appears to be the experiences FG entrants have already had at school level. According to studies conducted in developed countries, at the end of their school careers FG students appear to have

gained fewer reading, mathematical and writing skills than CG students (Bui 2005; Lee *et al.* 2004; McConnell 2000; Penrose 2002). They also seem to have had lower levels of engagement at school (Pike and Kuh 2005:1), and are thus less prepared for academia (McConnell 2000; Penrose 2002). These students also seem to lack prior knowledge of what student life involves (McCarron and Inkelas 2006; Thomas and Quinn 2007), and have often had inappropriate information to make appropriate course choices (Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006).

The FG entrants into HE also differ from CG students in their demographic characteristics and the importance they place on tertiary education (Inman and Mayes 1999; McConnell 2000). It is not just the initial differences in background and academic preparation, but also the choices they make and the experiences they have as a consequence of those decisions that set FG students apart. FG students seem initially not to be less confident and ambitious than their CG peers (Penrose 2002:445) but, according to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991:59), the transition from high school to college can be viewed as a form of culture shock involving "significant social and psychological relearning in the face of encounters with new ideas, new teachers and friends and quite varied values and beliefs, new freedoms and opportunities, new academic, personal and social demands."

2.1.2.2 Family influence on FG entry into HE

Participation in the decision to enter HE by family members, or the lack thereof, seems to have a major influence on all students, including FG students, to secure successful entry into and continuation in HE. FG students, however, often seem torn between their responsibilities at the academic institution and those at home (McConnell 2000; Penrose 2002; Thomas and Quinn 2007; Zwerling and London 1990), as they have to reassure their families that they have invested wisely (Thomas and Quinn 2007:59). Although parents are pleased that their children will enter HE, and they also to a large extent encourage them, they seem to be unprepared for those changes their children undergo as they enter academia

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(Knighton and Mirza 2002; McCarron and Inkelas 2006; Penrose 2002). Their quest for autonomy can take the FG entrants further from family, class, racial and ethnic origin, and they often have to renegotiate relations with family members (Zwerling and London 1990:6). Furthermore, FG students also appear to be less likely to receive encouragement from friends (McConnell 2000; McGhie 2007; Thomas and Quinn 2007), and relationships with old friends may suffer due to lack of contact once these students leave for the university. This may result in divided loyalty, as McCarron and Inkelas (2006:546) have found that cultural characteristics of the FG entrant were just as valuable to them as the HE culture they entered.

FG students are also more likely to come from working class families (Knighton and Mirza 2002; Penrose 2002; Thomas and Quinn 2007) with lower income (Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006; McConnell 2000; Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005). It does appear though that they have more personal income than CG students (McConnell 2000:4). They seem, however, to be concerned about their actual lack of money and worry about debts, as well as their comparative lack of money in relation to friends not in HE (Thomas and Quinn 2007:78). As FG entrants are often also mature-age students, likely to be married, they may have more dependants (McCarron and Inkelas 2006; McConnell 2000; Thomas and Quinn 2007); this increases the concerns about finances and time management.

Even though FG entrants come from a range of family structures (Thomas and Quinn 2007:51) contrary to general belief, they report their families' attitudes toward HE as positive and that parents and family support them while they are at university – financially, emotionally and they even attempt to do so academically (Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; Thomas and Quinn 2007). According to Penrose (2002:442), however, the "[l]ack of family culture for higher education" sharpens the contrast for FG entrants between their old and new surroundings, as "FGS […] make choices based on different habiti – i.e, worldviews that may be unique to their own groups" (Lohfink and Paulsen 2005:419).

2.1.2.3 The influence of experiences at university on FG entry into HE

Once the FG entrants arrive at university, though, they face a large number of challenges which could prevent successful entry and persistence beyond the first academic semester, as these students live on the margin of two cultures (Frindt 2002; Zwerling and London 1990).

As they appear to complete fewer hours in their first year (McConnell 2000:4), FG students are less likely to graduate than their CG peers (Duggan 2004 – 2005:169). Pike and Kuh (2005:1) have found that in general FG students do not compare favourably with CG students, and are less likely to integrate the diverse academic experiences. They also perceive the academic environment as less supportive and report making less progress in learning and intellectual development (Pike and Kuh 2005; Zwerling and London 1990) than CG students. McConnell (2000:5), however, has found that FG students are not more likely than their CG peers to be placed in remedial classes.

Researchers have further found that low levels of engagement and learning off campus result in lower academic aspirations (McConnell 2000; Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005; Thomas and Quinn 2007; Zwerling and London 1990). FG students report studying fewer hours (McConnell 2000:4); they appear to be unprepared for the amount of free time (McGhie 2007; Thomas and Quinn 2007) and lack time management skills (McConnell 2000:4). Thomas and Quinn (2007:78), on the other hand, have found that FG students seem to spend more time on studying and preparing for classes than their CG peers. This could be because of difficulties arising from changes in learning and teaching styles from school to those employed at university where learning consists of more adult teaching, and relies on independent learning. The inability to ask for help, as well as the lack of formative access and feedback on progress, makes FG students unsure whether to listen or take notes during lectures and how to structure their work (Thomas and Quinn 2007; Zwerling and London 1990). Studies, such as that of Penrose (2002), however,

indicate that although their literacy proficiency is in general at particular risk, it does not appear to observably affect the FG students' ability to acquire the literacy proficiency needed to succeed at tertiary level.

Research further indicates that FG students spend less time on partying and socialising than CG students (Duggan 2004 – 2005; Thomas and Quinn 2007); therefore, building bridges appears to be difficult for FG students (Thomas and Quinn 2007:78). Lohfink and Paulsen (2005:420) found that participating in social clubs was significantly more positively related to CG than to FG students. Therefore, FG students gain less social capital than their CG peers. Furthermore, spending more time in paid employment off-campus (Penrose 2002; McConnell 2000; Thomas and Quinn 2007) may further result in FG entrants gradually drifting into full-time employment. Financial concerns are, however, rarely the primary reason for FG students' departure from the tertiary institution. They often leave voluntarily because of dissatisfaction with elements of university experience, such as a lack of fit between their goals and the institution's mission or adjusting difficulties and lack of integration into the academic environment (Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006; Penrose 2002; Thomas and Quinn 2007).

It thus seems that some students do not begin to feel out of place at the university until they attempt to participate in the exclusive knowledge communities of the major fields (Lee *et al.* 2004; Penrose 2002). The FG entrants' lack of knowledge further manifests itself in a lack of cultural capital (Thomas and Quinn 2007:68). Cultural barriers are also implicated in every stage of the decision-making process of transition into HE, even before students enter in aspects such as where to stay, which institution and what course to choose (2007:78). FG students often also look for institutions close to home (McConnell 2000:4). Among those undecided about entering HE perceived financial barriers appear to be a major cause of indecision; it is, however, not clear whether finance is a barrier per se or whether HE is not valued enough by some groups (Thomas and Quinn 2007:69). These students also often look for study programmes focusing on job-related skills (Lee *et al.* 2004; McConnell

2000). It further seems that finance not only influences the access to HE but also the extent to which students are able to persist in HE (Thomas and Quinn 2007:70).

FG students also predict lower semester grades for themselves (McConnell 2000:5). Penrose (2002:458) makes the observation that perhaps FG students' lower self-assessments reflect a greater understanding of the distance between their family discourses and those of academia; thus they do not necessarily have less confidence in their abilities than their CG peers but may have a greater knowledge of what there is to be mastered.

FG students further often seem to perceive the different faculties at university as only concerned with students' development and training (McConnell 2000:4), and they are thus less likely to develop relationships with faculty members and other students (Pike and Kuh 2005:2). They are often shocked at the lack of supervision and guidance they observe at the tertiary institution; consequently they experience anxiety when not knowing what is expected in assignments, how to structure academic writing and what the examination standards are (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991; Thomas and Quinn 2007). They thus seem to be less satisfied with the campus environment (Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005). This manifests in little academic engagement, such as visiting the library (Pike and Kuh 2005:10). It could therefore be assumed that the discomfort of FG students is embedded in a broad feeling of isolation in the university setting (Penrose 2002:440).

Furthermore, FG students have to do much work to perfect themselves as educated and employable (Thomas and Quinn 2007:59). They are, however, less likely to attend racial and social awareness workshops (McConnell 2000; Pike and Kuh 2005) and thus score lower on social acceptance, creativity and humour than their CG peers (McConnell 2000:4). Thomas and Quinn (2007:62) observe that this may not necessarily be only negative as "social capital does not ignore inequalities; it rather can be produced by shared knowledge of exclusion and hard times, as well as imagined links with mythological communities, thus potentially FG students are in a

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better position than others to create this form of capital because of and not in spite of the marginal positions that their families often occupy in society."

It would, however, not only be irresponsible but also dangerous to assume that FG entry can be seen as constituting a lack which needs to be remedied. It is necessary to keep in mind that on joining the institution FG entrants become insiders and are no longer outsiders of the educational and social community (Thomas and Quinn 2007:124). They also bring their family into the fold and, given time, FG entry could help to foster new sets of values within their respective families (2007:125). This is not, however, a process that can be left to mature on its own, since the demands made by HE are immediate and unforgiving. Therefore a combined effort to support FG students is required by all stakeholders, and responsible thought and planning should go into designing and adopting approaches conducive to the requirements of the customers buying into the services offered by specific tertiary institutions.

2.1.3 National and institutional approaches to support FG students

Thomas and Quinn (2007) have identified three national and institutional approaches to assist FG entrants in successful transition to and persistence in HE. I will describe the two most commonly accepted approaches. A possible third approach suggested, however, seems to be the most beneficial for FG students, especially those in developing countries such as Namibia.

2.1.3.1 Academic approach

The academic approach assumes that FG students do have the potential to enter HE and succeed, but that they lack either the aspirations or necessary information to access HE. It therefore explains the differential rates of participation on the basis of attitudinal factors which are distinguished from students' educational potential. Therefore, according to this approach, non-participation should be viewed as the consequence of a lack of expectations or, at least, of low aspirations.

Such an approach positions the individual, family or group as inadequate and thus culpable. It places the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the non-participants and thereby excuses the national system and HE institutions from reform. In this accusatory approach the solution to the problem lies largely within the individual, and attention is deflected from the structural and institutional factors which inhibit and constrain access and success.

The solutions provided by this academic approach tend to emphasise remedial work and skills training to rectify assumed deficiencies as any positive personal contribution of the FG entrants to HE is ignored; instead, FG entrants are assumed to require 'fixing' or normalisation. Such an approach tends to give rise to project-based activities which all too often have a short-term orientation. Furthermore, the academic stand of the access discourse ignores the complexity and multiplicity of obstacles facing people from lower income socio-economic groups and offers simplistic solutions. It appears that this academic model has informed a significant proportion of governmental thinking around access to HE, not only in the UK (Thomas and Quinn 2007) but also very much so in Namibia, as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

2.1.3.2 The utilitarian approach

The utilitarian approach describes potential FG entrants as having low aspirations, as well as having had insufficient information about HE opportunities; it does, however, recognise that academic credentials may be lacking too; thus, it does not see non-participation as wholly culpable. The utilitarian approach tends to focus on the relationships between the HE sector and the economy, and the need for the former to adapt to, and meet, the needs of the latter. It further may engage with aspects of structural barriers that confront non-participants, such as negative educational experiences, poor schooling, low academic achievement, low family

income, as well as social and cultural dispositions that do not value study to degree level.

According to Thomas and Quinn (2007:104), the utilitarian approach to widening participation does not explicitly blame students for non-participation but it still seeks to change students to fit the HE system which is serving a broader purpose than meeting students' needs. Typically, utilitarian intervention consists of pre-entry activities, generic skills and employability modules, means-tested bursaries and mentoring and guiding activities. These processes are often not integrated with core activities of teaching and learning.

2.1.3.3 The transformational approach

The transformational approach is defined as related to progressive thinking around adult education and more radical perceptions of access movement (Thomas and Quinn 2007:105). It embraces the idea that HE should change to enable it to gauge and meet the needs of under-represented groups rather than being predicated on deficit models of potential entrants and positioning students as lacking aspirations, information and academic preparedness.

Transformation requires serious and far-reaching structural changes. These changes are informed by under-represented groups and families concerned with creating a HE system and institutional culture that does not require participants to change before they can benefit from HE. Diversity is perceived as a definite strength. Transformation further focuses not on creating changes via short-term, marginal projects undertaken by a few committed practitioners; rather, all of the institutions' activities are underpinned and informed by valuing and learning from difference and diversity.

The transformational approach thus appears to require the institution to review its processes of knowledge production, as well as transfer and internal structures of

power and decision-making. Curricula should be perceived partly as a response to the input of new categories of learners and must also encourage critical reflection, together with an understanding of the constructed qualities of knowledge and various implications related thereto. Such curricula should further attempt to prioritise knowledge that is of value and relevance to the under-represented groups. In all this, students would develop the academic literacy abilities to question and seek out new ways of understanding the world, since learning is seen as relevant to people's lives and concerned with personal, social and political change.

The challenge for educators is therefore not how to build FG students' confidence but how to "restore or reclaim it, or better yet, how not to undermine it in the first place" (Penrose 2002:457). It is Important to keep in mind the impact of how students perceive themselves in the integration process. If they see themselves as being 'different' from the rest of the academic community or as having special needs, it can affect the process of 'fitting in.' Socialisation is an important aspect of integrating into HE and the academic community, and has a positive impact on academic motivation, willingness to seek help and personal achievements.

Thomas and Quinn (2007:131) categorically state that the current divide exhibited in educational research and practice, between widening participation activities and community-based informed learning, is a false and unhelpful one. Therefore, making FG entry the locus of investigation is one way in which theoretical and practical bridges can be built. One area that needs investigation is how to assist FG students with concept formation and enhance abstract thinking abilities. It is, however, necessary first to take an in-depth look at the concept *literacy* in an attempt to establish the value of critical literacy over academic literacy.

2.2 Literacy

From a post-modern perspective one cannot but wonder with Hasan (1996:377) whether the word *literacy* has not become semantically saturated in the long history

of education. It seems that literacy has not only meant different things to different generations but also different things to different people in the same generation. It actually appears as if the word *literacy* has been honed in such a way that it becomes understandable and interpretable by the larger community of educators. It remains dangerous, however, to widen the scope of meaning to an extent where it develops such blurred edges that *literacy* becomes something that can be owned like any other commodity. The inability to box in the term *literacy* might thus be read as a sign that in the fading academic jargon of yesteryear the term is ripe for deconstruction.

2.2.1 Background to literacy

Any attempt to 'pin down' literacy will be fraught with contradictions, and it will be necessary to keep this *caveat* in mind when discussing the features of literacy. Literacy, as argued by Street (2005:417), needs to be recognised as a dynamic concept that will differ from context to context and from culture to culture.

2.2.2 Features of literacy

A number of scholars have occupied themselves with attempts to capture the essence of the term *literacy. Literacy* used to be understood as the ability to read and write in a language – the opposite being *illiteracy*. Nowadays, however, definitions seem to be concerned with the purposes that literacy serves in the everyday lives of people. In other words, there exists a more functional and contextualised, as well as a culturally relative, view of literacy as a social practice.

To understand and define literacy, a distinction has been made between an "autonomous" model and an "ideological" model of literacy (Street 2005:417). According to Street, the autonomous model is based on the assumption that literacy in itself will have effects on other social and cognitive practices: hence, the acquisition of literacy itself will lead to, for example, higher cognitive skills, improved

economic performance and greater equality. Street (1997:5) states that "the exponents of an 'autonomous' model of literacy conceptualise literacy in technical terms, treating it as independent of social context, an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character." Literacy is consequently seen as having these effects autonomously, irrespective of social conditions and cultural interpretations.

This conservative approach to literacy attempted to define literacy as "simply making sense of linguistic signs" (Hasan 1996:381); however, this practice seems to unjustifiably privilege language. A more progressive approach seems to be one that gives literacy a definition that is neutral as to the semiotic character of what is being interpreted. These views involve two related albeit slightly different positions:

- The term literacy should be separated from any specific sign system.
- Literacy should be separated specifically from language (1996:381).

Both these positions seem to be problematic. Firstly, if literacy is regarded as simply making sense, detached from any sign system, it would be difficult to determine what pedagogical practices could be regarded as relevant to the achievement of its goals – if those goals could be determined. Furthermore, it is also not clear what would count as evidence for the successful achievement of goals and what attributes would be applied as necessary to engage teachers and learners in the process of developing such literacy. It can only be agreed with Hasan (1996:382) that literacy, when it is seen as the ability to make sense in dissociation from specific sign systems, is thus an incoherent concept. Furthermore, should literacy be detached specifically from language, it implies that another sign system with a higher potential would be accessible only to those who have access to such a higher potential. Hasan (1996:383) argues that to say that some semiotic system, for example language, is being privileged at the cost of others simply because it receives greater attention, further shows no attempt to engage with the variability of the various sign systems in the life of a community.

Therefore, due to its conflicting assumptions about literacy, academic researchers and practitioners working in literacy seem to be coming to the conclusion that the autonomous model of literacy, on which many reading and writing programmes were based, is not an appropriate intellectual model for both understanding the diversity of reading and writing around the world, and for designing the practical programmes it would require. Street (2003:77) regards the autonomous model of literacy as also "disguising the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it, so that it can thus be presented as though they are neutral and universal and that literacy as such will have specific benign effects."

Street (2003:77) suggests, as alternative to the autonomous model, an ideological model which offers a more culturally sensitive view of literacy practices in their differing contexts. In this model literacy is regarded as a social practice; it is not simply a technical and neutral skill but it is "always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles" (Street 2005:418). Literacy is further about knowledge. Thus literacy could be seen as a tool which "cuts across all shades of human endeavours" (Onukaogu 1999:144). To be literate is not just to have mastered the written registers but to be aware of how society is constructed out of discourse or rather "out of the dialectic between the discursive and the material" (Halliday 1996:366). Therefore, it is not valid to suggest that "literacy" can be "given" neutrality and then its "social" (Street 2005:418) effects are experienced only afterwards. It can thus be agreed with Street (2003:77) that the autonomous approach would "simply [be] imposing Western conceptions of literacy on to other cultures or within a country, those of one class or cultural group onto another."

The model of New Literacy Studies (NLS) as discussed by Street (2005) represents a further shift in perspective on the study and acquisition of literacy from a dominant cognitive perspective, with its emphasis on reading, to a broader understanding of literacy practices in their social and cultural contexts. This approach has been particularly influenced by those who have advocated an ethnographic perspective in contrast to the experimental and often individualistic character of psychological

studies of reading. NLS approaches focus on the everyday meanings and uses of literacy in specific cultural contexts, and link directly to an understanding of the work of literacy in educational contexts. Reder and Davila (2005:171) further advocate NLS, as they state that social literacy is a practice "embedded in existing social structures [that] cannot be separated from the ideological baggage which participants bring to any literacy event." Therefore, even literacy practices that are taught in schools "are not neutral or autonomous but serve ideological interest" (2005:171). According to Hugo (2003: 47), such a broad-based perspective of literacy, as proposed by NLS, would include the full range of communicative arts, reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and focus on the visual arts of drama, film, video and computer technology.

From this discussion it seems apparent that literacy cannot simply be regarded as a semantically saturated term; what it refers to, however, is a socially powerful process which can be used in different ways – some perhaps more beneficial to a society and some to only some persons in it (Hasan 1996:417). Literacy, even at a low level of it, appears to be beneficial as one of the determining elements of success in an academic context.

2.2.3 Literacy and the academic context

The term *academic literacy* is complex at a number of levels. According to Van Schalkwyk (2008:76), the difficulty of defining academic literacy and trying to compartmentalise the different and even sometimes conflicting perspectives, approaches, models, terms and paradigms that have evolved over time, bear testimony to the way in which the discourse relating to the field is fixed. This evolution over time has resulted in the term *academic literacy* being applied fairly loosely in a variety of situations by those who have not kept up with changing definitions and approaches (Hawkins 2005; Johl 2002).

Effective academic literacy acquisition is supposed to empower the individual to collaborate and play a positive role in any community of learners. Literacy, furthermore, should enable the individual to search for information continually and promote the art of content area enquiry; therefore, students who engage in content area enquiry would learn that knowledge is dynamic. They furthermore learn that there are multiple ways of knowing and expressing. Most importantly perhaps is that students know that they play an active role in creating the world. According to Onukaogu (1999:146), a truly literate person will consequently be an interpretative, analytic, critical and creative thinker. Onukaogu continues by saying that such a student will collaborate with members of her/his immediate discourse community and in so doing become a useful member of any community of learners.

Weideman (2003:61) provides a somewhat narrower "blueprint for the placement test of academic literacy," employed at a number of South African universities. According to this blueprint a student who is academically literate should be able to:

- understand a range of academic vocabulary in context;
- interpret and use metaphor and idiom, and perceive connotation, word play and ambiguity;
- understand relations between different parts of a text, be aware of logical development of (an academic) text, via introductions to conclusions, and know how to use language that serves to make the different parts of a text hang together;
- interpret different kinds of text type (genre), and show sensitivity for the meaning that they convey, and the audience that they are aimed at;
- interpret, use and produce information presented in graphic or visual form;
- make distinctions between essential and non-essential information, fact and opinion, propositions and arguments;
- distinguish between cause and effect, classify, categorise and handle data that make comparisons;

- see sequence and order, do simple numerical estimations and computations, that are relevant to academic information, that allow comparisons to be made, and can be applied for the purposes of an argument;
- know what counts as evidence for an argument, extrapolate from information by making inferences, and apply the information or its implications to other cases than the one at hand;
- understand the communicative function of various ways of expression in academic language (such as defining, providing examples, arguing);
- make meaning (e.g., of an academic text) beyond the level of the sentence.

Weideman (2003:61) says that these components and abilities are what students are required to do at tertiary level, as this blueprint "resonates very strongly with the experience of academics across the disciplinary spectrum." The acquisition of academic literacy that is essential for graduate studies is therefore more than the ability to read and write effectively. Students need not only build interactive relationships with their lecturers and peers and develop good research strategies and good writing skills; they also need to adapt smoothly to the linguistic and social milieu of their host environment and to the culture of their academic departments and institution (Braine 2002:60). They furthermore need to develop linguistic competence, as well as cognitive competence, in order to succeed in their studies at tertiary level (Kasanga 1999:106).

Zimba (2005:6) regards the following as essential components of academic literacy: firstly, students need to learn how to obey reason and logic so that they can become people who are guided by rational reasoning and not by stereotypic characterisation, myths or received but untested wisdom; students should learn to systematically solve problems, learn to enquire and be curious and, finally, they should understand and make sense of life circumstances, and not follow blindly the whims of others; they should rather take in reasoned positions and make justifiable judgements.

2.2.3.1 Critical literacy and critical thinking

The terms *academic* and *critical* literacy are often used interchangeably to describe those language proficiencies required for successful tertiary studies. A large number of scholars have been fine-tuning definitions and descriptions of critical literacy to demarcate the rather fluid borderlines between assumptions that literacy can be achieved by teaching academic conventions to students, and the understanding of what measures to employ to empower students who often never before had the opportunity to develop informed opinions.

Critical thinking can be seen as "learning how to ask and answer questions of analysis, synthesis and evaluation" (Paul 1985:37). Pienaar (2001:127) regards the ability to evaluate statements or arguments put forward by others and the ability to draw inferences from spoken or written discourse as some of the essential elements of critical literacy.

According to McLaughlin and De Voogd (2004:54), critical literacy focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation and action. Secondly, it focuses on problematising – seeking to understand a problem and its complexity. Thirdly, the techniques that promote critical literacy are dynamic and adapt to the contexts in which they are used. Finally, critical literacy is creating an environment to promote a critical stance. It is therefore not surprising that students who engage in critical literacy become open-minded, active, strategic readers who are capable of viewing text from a critical perspective. They understand that the information presented in text, maps, newspapers, academic journals and websites has been authored for a particular purpose. They know that meaning is "grounded in the social, political, cultural and historic context of the reading event" (2004:56). They furthermore acquire the necessary tools to develop into self-sufficient students who can take responsibility for their own learning.

Critical literacy and critical thinking abilities are furthermore powerful ways to promote social justice and to lay the foundation of a just, humane and democratic society, as the 'critical' part of critical thinking denotes an evaluation component (Halpern 1996:5). It can help the individual to understand better the society she/he lives in, and consequently to negotiate better that society.

2.2.3.2 Affective features and academic and critical literacy acquisition

In the study process both cognitive abilities and affective abilities are involved; the functioning of the cognitive domain is strongly influenced by the affect domain concerned with feelings, emotions, attitudes, interests, appreciation, value-judgements, self-concept and motivation (Hugo 2001:139). In order therefore to develop students' critical literacy in their tertiary studies, the influence of the affective domain on critical thinking should not be disregarded.

According to scholars, such as Vrey (1984), every individual will develop, after a sufficient number of experiences of success or failure a correspondingly positive or negative attitude. Vrey sees individuals as the centre of their own experiences and personal worlds. Human or personal motivation is thus a product of individuals' endeavours to maintain and develop themselves, being constantly engaged in judging themselves on the basis of their experiences. The self-assurance that accompanies successful experiences would therefore cause individuals to feel competent in the subject concerned, "with the result that they would tackle even the difficult problems in that field with much confidence" (1984:269).

Bamber and Tett (2000:59) also feel that "[a] particular issue for learners who bring life and work experience to their studies is how that experience can be used in an academic context." According to them, emotions and feelings are key pointers to possibilities for, as well as barriers to learning behaviour. According to Katz (2005:104), such changes for the self are necessary for a student to adapt in order to be able to enter "the conversation of the educated." Hugo (2001:142) feels that self-

motivation also plays an important role in the process of becoming academically literate. Interest in a subject therefore can further contribute to enrich the amount, depth and wealth of conceptual learning from a text of own choice. She continues by saying that intrinsic motivation such as involvement, inquisitiveness and social interaction helps students to really comprehend the text, and to use this newly acquired knowledge in problem-solving (2001:140:). Furthermore, through access to reading and literacy students' confidence and self-respect are increased; for example, through critical reading students could develop a personal sense of power over the written word, and in so doing they can develop self-confidence to read with more understanding.

It is furthermore maintained that people must be understood not only in terms of their behaviour and the manipulation of their environment; they should also be perceived in terms of their internal lives and their personal experiences of self and the world (Combs *et al.* 1976:5). Success and failure, related to those aspects of self the person considers most significant, appear to have considerable influence upon the overall perception of self. The self-concept as a discrete entity does not exist – it is an inference which makes it possible for a person to deal with a complex function not directly observable. Combs *et al.* (1976:161) regard self-concept as:

> … the more or less organized perceptual object resulting from present and past observations. The self-concept is the map which each person consults in order to understand himself[/herself], ….

Self-concept is therefore a complex and dynamic system of beliefs an individual holds true about him/herself. The individual is the centre of his/her own experience and personal world. Human or personal motivation is a product of the individual's endeavour to maintain and develop him or herself; however, even in the later stages of adult life, those values may be modified because of the continuing process of socialising. Consequently, even though attitudes have their origin in past experiences they very largely determine people's future responses to social and cultural objects with which they are connected. This aspect will be related in Chapter Six to the participants' responses to the short stories.

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Such psychologised and individualised accounts of student learning reflect only one perception concerning the influence of affective features on academic learning. The influence of social accounts associated with the construct of literacy, however, cannot be disregarded. Lovell (1987:91) states that much of an individual's behaviour would be influenced by the basic underlying values acquired during the early years of socialising in family and peer groups. This relates directly to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1987:117):

> The child is able to copy a series of actions which surpass his or her own capacities but only within limits. By means of copying, the child is able to perform much better when together with and guided by adults than when left alone, and can do so with understanding and independently. The difference between the level of solved tasks that can be performed with adult guidance and help and the level of independently solved tasks is the zone of proximal development.

Diaz *et al.* (1992:127) explain a major premise of Vygotsky's theory as the transformation of basic processes into higher psychological functions. This occurs within the child's social interactions and through the use of culturally determined tools and symbols. This view is reinforced by research done in Australia (Writing Development Continuum 2003:18) which found that

> Children need unlimited opportunities to interact with adults and with other children in their daily lives. They need to interact with others to play, explore, problem-solve, question, discuss and direct their activities. They try out and modify their ideas. As they use language in social situations they refine their language use and learn more about how language works.

2.2.3.3 Socio-cultural dimensions of literacy

The naturally developed literacy of social subjects will be socio-culturally specific. Hasan (1996:394) states that different segments of a society will be literate in different ways, depending on what variety of language they use, for what and with whom. The argument for social literacies thus suggests that engaging with literacy is always a social act. The way in which lecturers and their students interact is already a social practice and affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants, especially the new students and their

positions in relation to power (Writing Development Continuum 2003:9). It is thus not valid to suggest that "literacy" can be "given" neutrally, and then its "social effects only experienced afterwards" (Street 2005:418) (see 2.2.2).

Katz (2005:104) further argues that modern educational systems are heavily implicated in the construction of a new kind of individual self for their customers, since such changes of the self are necessary for a student to adopt, in order to be able to enter the conversation of the educated. The students have to add "secondary discourses" to localised language patterns which are the "primary discourse of a particular community." Katz continues by calling this approach "a narrative pedagogy … which departs from a course of study as students find a direction or activity suggested by their own consensus and ongoing lives" (2005:104).

Research, however, suggests that students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds are at a higher risk of lower achievement on wide scale measures (Kong and Pearson 2003:86). Recent trends in research on students' expectations and conceptions of learning seem to be instrumental in the rethinking of pedagogies and curricula which aim to ensure sensitivity to the "cultural expectations of the recipients of the innovation" (Kasanga 2006:139). If no such sensitivity is shown, it would not be surprising that students from different ethnic origins find it difficult to relate to the new academic culture into which they must integrate. Van Rensburg (2004:217) feels strongly about the restrictive dimensions of a Western inspired academic literacy. He states:

> If one takes academic literacies seriously, if one values the students'
> experiences and the processes they engage in while crafting their written
> products, one has in fact to question the academic discourse of transparency,
> one has to reveal the workings of the written language and the value systems
> behind the works.

It is by way of cultural interaction with more knowledgeable members of a community within specific social, cultural and historical contexts in which all of the participants are striving to make sense of the messages they encounter, either from text or from

each other, that learners access new information (input) and not only through direct stimulation, as suggested by behaviourist theories (1997; Kong and Pearson 2003).

2.2.3.4 Reflections on critical literacy and the Southern African tertiary student

From research done in developing countries such as South Africa it has become clear that a large majority of tertiary institutions have identified similar areas where academic support is required by the new generation of students entering HE. In order to assist the mainly post-colonial black students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, a large number of South African universities have introduced EAP courses to students in their first year as a foundation, with the hope that they would continue to develop academically and become self-sufficient students at tertiary level (Sowden 2003:381); however, fostering self-reliance and critical thinking is a long process and is not achieved by simple language lessons.

The linguistic underpreparedness of ESL students at institutions in South Africa – and by implication Namibia – has been widely researched and documented by a large number of researchers in the field of academic literacy in South Africa. Furthermore, lecturers responsible for introducing students to academic conventions at most universities in Southern Africa experience the same kind of difficulties and frustrations as far as students' readiness for academic studies is concerned as lecturers do at UNAM (Butler and Van Dyk 2004; Chimbganda 2001; Coetzee-Van Rooy and Verhoef 2000; Davids 2003; De Kadt 2003; Fandrych 2003; Hugo 2001; Johl 2002; Kamwangamalu 2001; Kasanga 2006; McGhie 2007; Parkinson 2003; Read 2004; Santa 2006; Van Schalkwyk 2008; Van Wyk 2001; Weideman 2002). These researchers all seem to agree that the academic underpreparedness of university students is reflected in their relatively poor results across disciplines. All kinds of possible reasons for this phenomenon are proffered – the most popular being that students are from disadvantaged educational backgrounds (Kasanga 1999:107). Although this is indisputable and cannot be ignored, such a diagnostic

approach hems possible opportunities for the student to develop autonomy, and does not encourage the blossoming of those latent intellectual abilities that students bring along to university.

It seems further as if the main reason for introducing academic literacy development programmes or bridging courses and other scaffolding mechanisms at tertiary institutions is solely to prepare academically underprepared students for the rigours of mainstream academic studies. The support efforts are thus aimed at facilitating academic literacy development (essentially the rules of the academic game) which is a prerequisite for success at tertiary level (Du Toit 1997:154). This kind of literacy development can be debilitating. Personal experience, as well as research findings, indicates that many students understand learning as only glossing through a text or passively listening to a lecture. Somehow learning is supposed to happen magically with "a quick read and a cursory effort" (Santa 2006:472).

2.2.3.5 The role of language instruction in academic literacy

In order to gain a deeper insight into the difficulties that UNAM ESL students experience in their tertiary studies at an English-medium university, I will discuss CALP and BICS as defined by Cummins (1979; 1980). Cummins proposed a difference between what can be regarded as a conceptually distinct category of conversational competence (basic interpersonal communication skills or BICS), and what can be regarded as academically related language competence (cognitive academic literacy proficiency or CALP). Fluency in BICS does not imply corresponding proficiency in CALP (Cummins 1979:242). Surface fluency (BICS), according to Baker (2006:13), occurs when there are contextual supports and props for language delivery. Face-to-face, context-embedded situations provide, for instance, non-verbal support to secure understanding. CALP is said to occur in context-reduced academic situations where higher order thinking abilities such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation are required. Language is thus disembedded or regarded as context-reduced.

This distinction made by Cummins has been influential and valuable for both policy and practice but was never intended as contextually universal. It has thus come under much scrutiny and has been unfairly criticised for the absence of many components it was never intended to contain. According to Lindberg (2009:6), the idea of rigid compartmentalisation of linguistic skills underlying the division into BICS and CALP was rejected. It was pointed out that interpersonal ability also requires the use of decontextualised language; furthermore, the ability to experiment with oral communication is not unrelated to academic success and literacy achievement. Literacy is thus best seen as an extension of oral communicative competence – a view in agreement with Vygotsky's writings (1978) in which he describes the relation between interpersonal/communicative and the cognitive/representative function of language. Vygotsky describes the ability to use language in the cognitive/ representative function as developed through the interpersonal/communicative function in social interaction.

According to Lindberg (2009:6), it has further been argued that the distinction between different types of language uses, as suggested by Cummins (1979; 1980), downplays the wide range of important ways language is used in academic environments, including "everyday" or "conversational" uses of English in academic tasks. Furthermore, social applications of language can indeed be extremely complex and demanding. Such applications of language remind of the social nature of an academic situation as communities of practice (Wenger 2001) in which certain patterns of discourse and language use are expected from the members in a specific community of practice.

It has also been argued against the assumption of CALP as a universal cross-linguistic competence, transferable to any language (Lindberg 2009:7). It has been claimed that literacy-related 'skills' are rather culture-specific and dependent on the type of literacy schooling exercised in different cultures. Such reasoning is in line with an ideological conceptualisation of literacy or literacies (see 2.2.3.3); this kind of

reasoning is furthermore based on a social, and culturally sensitive, view of literacy practices which vary from one context to another, as advocated by scholars such as Street (2003), and represented in NLS (see 2.2.2) which opposes a view of literacy as a technical and neutral skill.

To eliminate the danger of a dichotomous acceptance of the concepts BICS and CALP, Baker (2006:175) suggests that the following boundaries and limitations of the distinction between BICS and CALP should be considered:

- This distinction has intuitive appeal and does appear to fit the case of children, or even students, who are seemingly fluent in their L2 yet find it hard to cope with the curriculum in that language; however, it only paints a two-stage idea. "A bilingual's language competences are evolving, dynamic, interacting and intricate. They are not simple dichotomies, easily compartmentalized and static" (2006:175).

- The BICS/CALP distinction enables an understanding and explanation of previous research. The distinction between BICS and CALP does not indicate how the two ideas may be precisely defined and accurately tested. "Thus the distinction becomes difficult to operationalize in research" (2006:175).

- Terms such as BICS and CALP tend to be imprecise and become over-compartmentalised, simplified and misused. "These hypothetical terms may unwittingly be regarded as real entities. Such terms may be used to label and stereotype students, especially if BICS is seen as inferior to CALP" (2006:176).

- The relationship between language development and cognitive development is not unequivocal or simple. "Language proficiency relates to an individual's total environment, not just to cognitive skills" (2006:176).

- The sequential nature of BICS first and then CALP is a typical route for L2 learning, but this order is not absolute and there are exceptions.

- CALP relates rather to specific, traditional, school-based literacy practices that can be tested. Such tests favour standard academic language with a bias against speakers of dialects.

- Oral language and interpersonal communication is not necessarily less cognitively demanding than written language. "For example, careful logic, metaphor and other abstract aspects of language occur in face-to-face communication and not just in written language" (2006:176).
- School-based academic/cognitive language does neither represent universal higher-order cognitive abilities nor all forms of literacy practice. "Different sociocultural contexts have different expectations and perceived patterns of appropriateness in language and thinking such that an academic institution is only one specific context for 'higher order' language production" (2006:176).

From the above it seems that the distinction between BICS and CALP helps explain the relative failure within the educational system of many of the L2 learners when mainstreamed. By 2000 Cummins had extended the instructional implications of CALP in terms of cognitive, academic and language components, for example by stating that instruction should be cognitively challenging, using higher order thinking abilities, such as evaluating, inferring, generalising and classifying. The curriculum content should be integrated with language instruction so that students learn the language of specific academic areas. According to Baker (2006:177), critical language awareness should consequently be developed both linguistically and socio-culturally.

Relating to the above, it is clear that the acquisition of academic literacy that is essential for graduate studies is more than the ability to read and write effectively. Over and above these suggestions by Cummins, students need not only build interactive relationships with their lecturers and peers, and develop good research strategies and good writing skills; they also need to "adapt smoothly to the linguistic and social milieu of their host environment and to the culture of their academic departments and institution" (Braine 2002:60).

Instead of concentrating only on the practical application of autonomous literacy skills as far as correct academic writing is concerned, students need to be enabled to

assimilate information in such a way that they can make informed opinions of the content information presented at a tertiary institution. Attention should be focused on developing a student's confidence and abilities to practise critical thinking and self-direction, rather than on honing techniques of note-taking and essay writing (Sowden 2003:383). Most importantly perhaps is that students should know that they play an active role in creating the world (Onukaogu 1999:144).

The truly literate UNAM student consequently needs to be an interpretative, analytic, critical and creative thinker who will be able to connect the contents of any pedagogical curriculum by means of reflective thinking. She/he will collaborate with members of her/his immediate discourse community and, in so doing, become a useful member of any community of learners.

Already in 1933 Dewey (1933:12) distinguished between *reflective thinking* and other operations in which the term, *thought,* is applied. According to Dewey, reflective thinking involves a state of doubt or hesitation, perplexity or mental difficulty in which thinking originates. He regards critical or reflective thinking further as an act of searching, hunting and inquiring to find material that will resolve the doubt, as well as settle and dispose of the perplexity. Paul (1985:37) sees critical thinking as "learning how to ask and answer questions of analysis, synthesis and evaluation" and "the ability to reach sound conclusions based on observations and information." Reflective or critical thinking can further be defined as the ability to analyse, as well as the ability to make decisions, solve problems, judge credibility and recognise assumptions (Pienaar 2001:127). One of the major aspects of critical thinking, however, remains the ability to evaluate statements or arguments put forward by others (2001:128). Enhancing critical language thinking abilities could thus raise the political awareness of individual UNAM students to better understand the society they live in and to better negotiate that society.

Conversely, smothering newly arrived students with terms and terminology of academic conventions in skills-based EAP courses, such as those offered by the

Language Centre at UNAM, results only in alienating students from an African background from the most-widely accepted, albeit Western and even more specific British, academic discourse community. Instead of embracing the new world of academic wealth, students tend to become bewildered and frustrated, feeling inferior and disempowered in an environment that demands high levels of cognitive development.

2.3. Cognitive development in adults

Lakoff and Johnson (1999:11) define cognitive science as "the scientific discipline that studies conceptual systems." It is a relatively new discipline dating from the 1970s. In cognitive science, the term *cognitive* represents any kind of mental operation or structure, such as memory and attention that can be studied in precise terms. All aspects of thought and language, whether conscious or unconscious, are thus cognitive. Cognitive science has discovered that most of human thought is unconscious, in the sense that it operates beneath the level of cognitive awareness, inaccessible in consciousness, and operating too quickly to be focused on. It is not that people are only occasionally unaware of these operations; the operations are actually inaccessible to conscious awareness and control. This means that a person can have no direct control of what goes on in his/her mind.

According to Vrey (1984:158), the intellect has "figural, symbolic, semantic and behaviour content." Activities of the intellect are cognition, memorising and divergent production. These correspond with categories such as differentiation, integration, deduction, induction and generalisation (recognition), memorising, problem-solving and creative thought. Among the intellectual factors included are products formed when individual parts of the content have been affected by the action of the intellect. This action can either be productive divergent thought, which is associated with a result or a product that is new and creative, or reproductive thought, which is recalling or manipulating previous experiences within the conscious (convergent thought). According to Lovell (1987:65), in convergent thinking operations the

information leads either to one right answer or at least to an answer that is recognised as the best or conventional one. In divergent thinking people think in different directions; there are no 'right' answers but often many equally acceptable answers. The quality of the divergent thought is judged in terms of the quality, variety and originality of the responses.

Productive (divergent) thought is a result which is new, while reproductive (convergent) thought is recalling and manipulating previous experiences within the consciousness. According to Very (1984:159), reproductive thought (remembering) occurs throughout the whole course of a person's development. Productive thought can take place when there is nothing for the problem-solver to work on. The creative solution to a problem involves combining previous experiences together in a new way. Gagné's hierarchy of learning (Lovell 1987:65) emphasises that success in solving problems depends on the prior acquisition of a wide variety of knowledge and experiences; therefore, the adult who is expected to solve problems must first be given the chance to acquire the necessary background material, or as Vygotsky (McNamee 1992:287) has stated, "development does not proceed toward socialization but toward the conversion of social relations into mental functions."

For literacy development, this means that language is a socio-cultural construct whose development is highly related to people, as well as their patterns of communication and their use of language "to mediate activities in a day-to-day life" (McNamee 1992:288). A major premise of Vygotsky's theory is that the transformation of basic processes into higher psychological functions occurs, when still a child, in a person's social interactions and through the use of culturally determined tools and symbols (Diaz *et al.* 1992:128). Therefore, for meaningful learning, such as in an academic environment, to take place the learner must already have relevant concepts available within his/her existing cognitive structure to which the new material can be linked (Lovell 1987: 53).

2.3.1 Meta-knowledge, meta-language and meta-cognition

André and Phye (1986:206) state that two types of meta-cognition can be distinguished. Firstly, knowledge about knowledge includes one's own cognitive resources and knowledge about how compatible the demands of learning strategies are with one's own resources. Secondly, knowledge about cognition is stable over time; can be stated by the learner; may not be accurate; is late-developing and thus more complete in older learners. Regulation of knowledge consists of self-regulating mechanisms used by an active learner during an ongoing attempt to solve problems. These activities are relatively unstable; rarely statable and relatively independent of the learner's age. Examples of regulatory meta-cognitive activities are planning one's next move; checking the outcome of any strategies used; monitoring the effectiveness of any attempted actions; testing, revising and evaluating one's own strategies for learning (1986:207). For instance, participation in the fictional world created by novels and short stories provides a platform on which these meta-cognitive activities can be planned and performed.

The importance of existing knowledge as a basis for cognitive development was emphasised already in 1978 by Bartlett with his description of "schemata" (Lovell 1987:53), as he showed with experiments that when new cognitive material is encountered, it is compared with what is already known in the existing schemata. To create meta-knowledge, a meta-language is needed with which to organise personal reflections into a system of explicit rules and principles. According to Sharwood-Smith (1993:170), meta-linguistic awareness is the awareness of language as an object. Meta-language and its associative, meta-linguistics, refer to ways in which language and particularly the language system is seen and exploited as an object of conscious attention. Meta-linguistic awareness may be consciously nurtured during formal education, and refined by means of analytic activities (1993:171). Incorporating refined linguistic operations as employed, for instance, in literature, will not only raise awareness of language as an object but will also exploit language as an object of conscious attention, thus nurturing meta-linguistic awareness in students

who are not normally confronted by the need to reflect on, and understand, meta-linguistics.

Sharwood-Smith (1993:171), however, speculates that it is an open question as to how much conscious awareness of the formal properties of language and, hence, instruction based on inducing this awareness, actually helps the development of spontaneous language use. It is, however, useful to talk of meta-linguistic ability as something that involves a scale of knowledge, ranging from the fairly primitive kind that very young children have, to the cognitive linguistics that the literary scholar and especially the creative writer, needs. In the cognitive view, the purpose of linguistic inquiry is to describe its semiotic function – the symbolic association between meaning and phonological form (Achard and Niemeier 2004:1); thus, to form categories by which to comprehend the world.

2.3.2 Categorisation

Every human being categorises. A small percentage of all human categories have been formed by conscious acts of categorisation. Categories are formed automatically and unconsciously as a result of functioning in the world. Although new categories are learnt regularly, massive changes in the category system cannot be made through conscious acts of re-categorisation; however, through human experience in the world, categories are subject to unconscious reshaping and partial change. The important factor, however, is that the particular nature of human bodies shapes the very possibilities for conceptualisation and categorisation.

Basic-level categories are distinguished from super-ordinate categories by aspects of the human body, brains and mind: mental images, gestalt perceptions, motor programmes and knowledge structure. Lakoff and Johnson (1999:27 – 28) characterise basic level categories by four conditions which can be summarised as follows:

- the highest level at which a single mental image can represent the entire category, e.g., a mental image of a chair could be formed but not a mental image of furniture;

- the highest level at which category members have similarly perceived, overall shapes, e.g., recognition of a chair by its overall shape;

- the highest level at which a person uses similar motor actions for interacting with category members, e.g., motor actions can interact with a chair but not with furniture;

- the highest level at which most of human knowledge is organised, e.g., all knowledge about chairs versus all knowledge about furniture in general.

According to Langacker (2006:44), the "ultimate goal of linguistic description is to characterise, in a cognitively realistic fashion, those structures and abilities that constitute a speaker's grasp of linguistic convention." He continues that a speaker's linguistic knowledge is procedural rather than declarative, and that the internalised grammar representing this knowledge is simply a "structured inventory of conventional linguistic units." Furthermore, it is commonly assumed that "judgements of grammaticality are categorical rather than matters of degree; that figurative language is properly excluded from the domains of linguistic description and that a motivated distinction can be made between semantics and pragmatics." Such assumptions do support the notion of language being self-contained and cognitively autonomous; however, there seems to be very little factual basis for their adoption.

Langacker's conception (2006:45) that "the grammar of a language is merely providing the speaker with an inventory of symbolic resources, among them schematic templates representing established patterns in the assembly of complex symbolic structures" seems a plausible alternative to conceptions of grammar "as an algorithmic device, giving a well-defined class of expression … as output" (2006:44). Such symbolic structures are generally more specific than anything computable from linguistic units alone, and often conflict with conventional expectations (e.g., in metaphor); therefore, assessing their conventionality, or as Langacker calls it, their

"well-formedness" (2006:45), is a matter of categorisation. He concludes by saying that "categorizing judgments either sanction them [symbolic structures – author] as elaborations of schematic units or recognize them as departing from linguistic convention" (2006:45), as in the case of metaphor.

2.4 Concluding summary

Chapter Two has aimed at laying the theoretical foundation for this research project. Subsequently a review of current literature on the phenomenon of FG entry into HE has been given. Since FG entry had been studied and described mainly by researchers in developed countries, for comparison purposes with FG students in Namibia, attention was given in Chapter Two to general concerns regarding FG entry into HE currently present in developed countries.

Since this dissertation aims to explore possible avenues of support for FG students, an academic perspective on aspects of literacy and cognitive development was presented to form the basis for the implementation of a literature programme with students in order to enhance their critical literacy proficiency.

Chapter Three will be concerned primarily with illuminating the use of metaphor and its relationship to thought and language, and the importance of relevance when drawing inferences. It will further discuss the rationale to employ literature in this research project. It will consider specifically literature by African authors written in English, and the ways in which such literature could be employed to enhance the academic and critical literacy of FG entrants at UNAM.

CHAPTER THREE

FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

METAPHOR AND LITERATURE

In Chapter Two the current global phenomenon of large numbers of students from traditionally marginalised communities who venture into HE was discussed. Chapter Two was also concerned with unpacking the concept *literacy* by looking at current versus traditional approaches to both academic and critical literacy. In addition Chapter Two looked at meta-knowledge, meta-language and meta-cognition in the framework of cognitive linguistics. It also addressed the concept of categorisation as a process, and its relation to using and interpreting metaphor in language.

Chapter Three continues with an in-depth discussion of the study of metaphor and its relation to cognition. This discussion is followed by a description of relevance as related to thought. Finally, language in its relation to the rationale for employing African literature in English, as a means of enhancing the potential of FG entrants at UNAM to draw appropriate inferences when studying both literary and academic texts, will be considered.

3.1 Metaphor

Historically, metaphor has been portrayed as colourful language, "aesthetically pleasing but without cognitive import" (Coulson 2001:162). Metaphor was marginalised and treated as a "peripheral phenomenon of little significance to semantics" (2001:197) or for cognition more generally. In traditional approaches to language the meaning of a metaphor is often still reduced to that of a literal statement concerning the resemblance between source and target. Traditional

approaches, however, provide no account of the systematicity evidenced in metaphorical expressions, both at the coarse level of *love is a journey* and in the finer level of systematic mappings that linguists such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1999) have noted between source and target domain elements. Over the last twenty years researchers in cognitive semantics have identified scores of metaphors in every language examined. These metaphors give empirical credence to Lakoff and Johnson's theory (1980; 1999) that metaphor is pervasive and systematic, and plays a crucial role in all human thought when organising conceptual structures.

3.1.1 Background to the study of metaphor

For the last many hundred years mostly European philosophers and linguists have been concerned with the cognitive theory of metaphors. The philosopher Aristotle already suggested in *Poetics* that metaphors were basically expressions of similarity between two conceptual categories (Grady *et al.*1999:88). Kant, Blumenberg and Weinrich are some of the "forgotten contributors" (Jǎkel 1999:21) to the cognitive theory of metaphors. Kant was an epistemologist who worked with metaphor in the course of his attempts to describe human understanding; Blumenberg, on the other hand, was a historian of philosophy who discovered metaphor while reconstructing the history of critical philosophy and scientific concepts; Weinrich, again, was a linguist who resembled cognitive researchers of metaphor the most with his theory of metaphor resulting from the philological-linguistic observation of everyday language. The contributions of these scholars show similarities and concurrences to modern cognitive theorists such as Lakoff and Johnson. Although Jǎkel (1999:23) feels that this comparison may "lessen the originality of the cognitive theory of metaphor a little," it might also indicate that the central issues of the cognitive theory of metaphor are confirmed, since scholars of completely different backgrounds have independently reached very similar results.

Furthermore, despite an age-old and widespread belief that metaphor is a special linguistically retentional device, much research in cognitive linguistics (Gibbs 1999;

Kővecses 2005; Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Johnson 1999) over the past 20 years has demonstrated that metaphor is not merely a figure of speech but it is a specific mental, cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system that influences a good deal of how people think (Balaban 1999; Ibarretxe-Antuňanu 1999; Lakoff 2006; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Metaphors can thus be regarded as systemic interrelations of multiple experiences which map one relatively stable domain to another. The basic process is that a concrete (the source) domain is mapped on to a more abstract (the target) domain (Balaban 1999:131); thus, common metaphors are often made real in discourse form, since something real is constructed by conventional metaphor and thereby made comprehensible or even natural (Lakoff 2006:186). Metaphor involves understanding one domain of experience, e.g., *love,* in terms of a very different domain of experience, e.g., *journeys.* Metaphor can thus be understood as a mapping (in the mathematical sense) from a source domain (*journeys*) to a target domain (*love*); according to Balaban (2006:190), this kind of mapping is tightly structured.

Kővecses (2000:80) states that a target domain could be characterised by a number of source domains. *Love*, for instance, can be understood in terms of metaphors such as a *journey* (e.g., come a long way together), a *building* (e.g., build a relationship) and even *war* (e.g., defenceless to his charms). Both Kővecses (2000) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) agree that a single source concept can characterise many target domains, e.g., a journey can relate to love and to an argument. Thus,

> the scope of metaphor is simply the full range of cases, that is all the possible target domains to which a given specific source concept (such as war, building, fire) applies (1999:137).

3.1.2 Defining metaphor

It is further possible to classify metaphor from two points of view, taking into account the conceptual nature of the domain involved. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) have distinguished ontological, orientational and structural metaphors. Ontological metaphors, like people and animals, highlight a quintessential feature of the source

domain that is attributed to the target. Orientational metaphors, on the other hand, have to do with special orientations such as up and down. Structural metaphors allow the understanding of an abstract concept in terms of a concrete one (Sperber and Wilson 2006:32). For example, in the metaphor *love is a journey* (e.g., My wife and I have come a long way), there is a correspondence between different aspects of both conceptual domains: people on a life journey and love as a journey of exploration by partners, as well as of each other.

Kittay (1987:13) defines metaphor as "a displaced sign" with some transference of meaning. "Metaphor … juxtaposes ideas which are distinct and incongruent; … metaphor does not record the similarity between things but 'creates' the similarity" (1987:17). A metaphorical unit can further consist of one or even more sentences. Metaphor, however, is not only found in language and is not only linguistic, since for example dancing, painting, music and all other expressive media are also metaphorical expressions.

According to Kittay (1987:20), "metaphors are always relative to a set of beliefs and linguistic using which may change through time and place." Therefore, metaphors could be loosely classified as follows:

- Novel metaphors: If there is a cognitively real conceptual mapping in the human conceptual system, then a novel expression would make sense as a systematic extension of that mapping, e.g., in the *Love is a journey* mapping the novel metaphor *driving in the fast lane on the freeway of love* is easily grasped. People may not even notice that it requires a process of interpretation (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:66).

- Idioms: In traditional linguistics idioms were seen as arbitrary – sequences of words that can mean anything at all, e.g., *Absence makes the heart grow fonder*. Their meaning, however, appears to be motivated by the metaphorical mapping and certain conventional mental images (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 67), i.e., the heart is seen ontologically as the quintessential feature of love.

- Poetic metaphors: these are instances of novel poetic language in which ordinary words like *burning desire* are not used in their normal everyday use. The generalisations which govern poetic metaphorical expressions are, according to Lakoff (2006:185), the same as with conventional metaphors. They are not in language but in thought: "they are general mappings across conceptual domains which are central to ordinary natural language; *thus the study of literary metaphor is an extension of the study of everyday metaphor*" [italics inserted].

- Dead metaphors: these are metaphors which are so deeply embedded in the language that they are often regarded as having lost their status as metaphors and are now an inherent part of the linguistic heirloom, e.g., *puppy love*. Many scholars (Lakoff 2006:228), however, do not accept the existence of *dead metaphors* because

> metaphors impose a structure on real life through the creation of new correspondences in experience. And once created in one generation, they serve as an experimental basis for that metaphor in the next generation.
> And
> Interestingly enough, it is possible for a conceptual metaphor to remain alive, while a word initially expressing that metaphor may come to lose its metaphorical meaning (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:124).

An example would be the word *daisy* which developed from the Old English metaphor of *day's eye.* This presumably 'dead metaphor' gave rise to *lackadaisical* via an earlier experimental metaphor *lackadaisy* (*lack a day's eye*) (Collins Concise Dictionary 1999:812)*.*

Metaphors are therefore not mere words and not just a matter of language – the language is actually secondary. The actual mapping is primary, as it "sanctions the use of the source domain and inference patterns for target domain concepts" (Lakoff 2006:192). Lee (2001:7) describes metaphor aptly as "a prime manifestation of the cognitive claim that language and thought are inextricably intertwined."

3.1.2.1 Conceptual metaphor

A number of cognitive linguists such as Kövecses (2005) and Lakoff (2006) suggest that much metaphorical thinking arises from recurring patterns of physical experiences and sensory-motor interactions with the physical world. Gibbs (1999:152) also states that "people clearly also learn conceptual metaphors from their experiences with language." People constantly make subjective judgments about such abstract things as importance, similarity, difficulty and morality, and have subjective experiences of desire, affection, intimacy and achievement. The way these experiences are conceptualised, reasoned about and visualised comes mostly from sensory-motor domains of experience. The cognitive mechanism for such conceptualisation is conceptual metaphor which allows humans to use the physical logic of grasping to reason about understanding.

Conceptual mapping involves, firstly, noticing a shared system of relations that hold in both the source and target domain and, secondly, placing objects from the two domains into correspondence based on common roles in the shared relational structure. In this way, when reasoning one can begin with a partial, structural mapping of components that play similar roles and that later extend the mapping to import novel inferences from the source domain to the target (Coulson 2001:165). A metaphor cannot simply be replaced by the literal truth, since metaphor, in most cases, is used for reasoning (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:60). There may also be no non-metaphorical conceptualisation that is adequate for reasoning about the specific concept. Moreover, not all of the metaphorical entailment may be literally true. Thus, a metaphorical mapping may be apt in some respects but not in others.

According to Gibbs (1999:146), there appear to be two ways in which metaphor might structure conceptual representation:
- The strong view: many concepts are not understood via own representations but by metaphorical connections to knowledge in different domains. In other words, people do not have independent, non-metaphorical concepts of

aspects such as *love* – concepts for *love* are closely connected via metaphorical links to other, truly independent concepts such as that of *journeys*, e.g., *Their relationship is going downhill.*

- The weak view: people have well-developed, independent concepts but these are often metaphorically linked to other concepts with similar structures. In other words, there is a distinct non-metaphorical concept of *love* but this concept has well-established connections to distinct concepts from different domains of experience, like journeys, which are structured similarly in that both source and target domain share similar underlying attributes or relations.

It seems, however, that research in cognitive linguistics does not provide a firm basis for distinguishing between these two possibilities. Scholars such as Kövecses (2005) and Lakoff and Johnson (1999) tend to argue for the strong view. Gibbs (1999:146), however, feels that both the strong and weak views play a major role in people's mental representations of many, particularly abstract, concepts.

Conceptual metaphor thus remains pervasive in both thought and language (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:45) – it is difficult to think of a common subjective experience that is not conventionally conceptualised in terms of metaphor. The way humans conceptualise and describe subjective experience can, however, be explained by means of the integrated theory of primary metaphor.

3.1.2.2 The integrated theory of primary metaphor

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 46 – 47), the theory of primary metaphor has four parts:

- *Johnson's theory of conflation* in the course of learning: For young children non-sensorimotor (subjective) experiences and judgements, on the one hand, and sensorimotor experiences, on the other, are so regularly conflated – undifferentiated in experience – that for a time in their development children do not distinguish between the two when they occur together. During the

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period of conflation associations are automatically built up between the two domains. Later during the period of differentiation children are able to separate out the domain mappings of conceptual metaphor that will lead the same infant later in life to speak of "a *warm* smile" or "a *close* friend."

- *Grady's theory of primary metaphor:* All metaphors are molecularly made up of "atomic" (Lakoff and Johnson1999:46) metaphorical parts called *primary metaphors* which each has a minimal structure and which arises naturally, automatically and unconsciously through everyday experience by means of conflation. In conflation cross-domain associations are formed by conceptual blending. Universal early experiences lead to universal conflations which then develop into universal – widespread – conventional conceptual metaphors of orientation, e.g., *being loved lifts me up and not being loved makes me feel down.*

- *Narayanan's neural theory of metaphor:* According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999:46), the "associations" made during the period of conflation are realised neurally in simultaneous activation "that result in permanent neural connections being made across the neural networks that define conceptual domains." Lakoff and Johnson continue that these connections form the anatomical basis of source-to-target activations that constitute metaphorical entailment. An entailment at the neural level occurs when some sequence of neural activations, A, results in a further neural activation, B. If D is connected to a neural cluster, C, in the network that characterises another conceptual domain, then B can activate C. This then constitutes a metaphorical entailment. The activation of B is a literal entailment; C is "metaphorically" connected (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:47) to B, since it is in another conceptual domain; therefore, the activation of C is a metaphorical entailment.

- *Fauconnier and Turner's theory of conceptual blending:* Distinct conceptual domains can be co-activated and under certain conditions connections across the domains can be formed, leading to new inferences. Such "conceptual blends" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:47) may either be conventional or wholly original. Conceptual blends could thus be the mechanism by which two or

more primary metaphors can be brought together to form larger complex metaphors.

The four parts of primary metaphor thus comprise conflation, integration, entailment and blending. This integrated theory of primary metaphor, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1999:47), has an overlapping implication: people acquire a large system of primary metaphors automatically and unconsciously, simply by functioning in the most ordinary ways in the everyday world of their earliest years. There is no subjective choice in this. Because of the way neural connections are formed during the period of conflation, all humans naturally think, using hundreds of primary metaphors. Primary metaphors are thus part of the cognitive unconscious, acquired via the normal process of neural thinking. When embodied experiences in the world are universal, the corresponding primary metaphors are universally acquired. This explains the widespread occurrence around the world of a great many primary metaphors in contrast to universal metaphors. For Lakoff and Johnson (1999:57) these conceptual universals contribute to linguistic universals, for instance how time is expressed around the world.

Contrary to long-standing opinion about metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (1999:57) further argue that primary metaphor is not the result of a conscious multistage of interpretation. From a conceptual point of view, primary metaphors are cross-domain mappings from a *source domain* (the sensorimotor domain) to a *target domain* (the domain of subjective experience), preserving inference and sometimes preserving lexical representation. The preservation of inference is the most salient property of conceptual metaphor. A person can hardly think of subjective experience and judgement without metaphor. With hard effort to separate out metaphorical from non-metaphorical thought he/she could probably do some very minimal and unsophisticated non-metaphorical reasoning but almost no-one ever does that. Such reasoning would also never capture the full inferential capacity of complex metaphorical thought.

3.1.3 Cognitive processes and metaphors.

Ibáňez and Hernández (2003:24) state that metaphor is not considered a trope of figurative language but rather a cognitive mechanism used for drawing inferences, and to reason about and understand the world. They agree with Lakoff and Johnson (1999) that cognitive operations are accomplished by means of conceptual mappings of knowledge from a source domain into a target domain and are crucial for concept formation and concept understanding. Cognitive linguistics further proposes that language use reflects inherently metaphorical understanding of many areas of experience. Metaphor, in this view, is not just a linguistic device but a central organising factor in language and cognition (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:10). People's intuitions about various source domains map onto their conceptualisation of different target domains in very predictable ways. Gibbs (1999:157) states that

> the embodied nature of metaphorical thought and language use generally
> assumes that people create embodied, metaphorical representations from their
> phenomenological experiences of the body and their sensori-motor interactions
> with the physical world.

The comprehension process in both native and foreign language is strongly embodied by cognition (Ferreira 2008:123). According to Gibbs (1999:153), however,

> what is missing from the psycholinguistic work, and from aspects of the work on
> metaphor in cognitive linguistics, is an explicit acknowledgement of culture and
> its important, perhaps defining, role in shaping embodiment and, consequently,
> metaphorical thought.

This idea is repeated when Kővecses (2005:284) argues that language may be the chief indicator of conceptual metaphors, and that conceptual metaphors may be realised in cultural practice including institutions, behaviour, symbols and artefacts. Cultures may vary in terms of which metaphors are realised in practice or in the degree to which particular metaphors are realised; nonetheless, when conceptual metaphors are expressed in the form of metaphorical linguistic expressions in discourse they may serve culturally distinct socio-cultural functions.

3.1.3.1 The socio-cultural approach of cognition and the use of metaphor

Kővecses (2005:284) says:

> If we think of culture as, in the main, a set of shared understandings of the world, the question of the role of figurative understanding in culture immediately arises. Because our understanding of the world includes both concrete and abstract objects and events, naturally figurative thought should play some role in the case of *abstract* objects and events. […] Cultural models for abstract domains (e.g. our shared understandings of abstract objects and events) are, and can only be, metaphorically constituted.

The environment, the social-cultural context and the communicative situation of groups of people or individuals provide them with experiences that are specific to them. Metaphors are also created by a certain history: either a history of the context (environment, socio-cultural, communicative situation) or the history of the individual. The history of contexts and individuals vary across time, and these variations in history produce variations in metaphors. The kinds of metaphors used also depend on the diverse concerns and interests that govern people's lives. Their concerns and interests may be general; that is "built into" (Kővecses 2005:286) their culture or personal lives. Both influence significantly the metaphors people employ to understand the world around them. The inseparability of body, mind and world, on the one hand, and cognitive and cultural models, on the other hand, is emerging from body-world interaction rather than arising purely from the heads of individual people.

> Metaphor is a kind of tool that arises from body-world which we can 're-experience' in an embodied way, and is not simply accessed from long-term memory, in different ways in different real-world situations (Gibbs 1999:156).

A cognitive model for some complex concepts like *anger* might consequently be more limited than the cultural model which perhaps reflects a widespread model of cognition, distributed across members of a speech community (Gibbs 1999:154). It may further be that certain cognitive/conceptual metaphors have different interpretations for different cultures. For example, in the Western culture the *owl* as source domain would be interpreted and employed in a metaphorical sense related to *wisdom.* In the Namibian context it was found that ESL students from black cultures

would interpret *owl* as representative of *stupidity.* This aspect will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Kővecses (2005:284) states that the conventional metaphorical system of a culture preserves and lends stability to that particular culture. Given that cultures can be thought of as sets of shared understandings, creativity in figurative thought (including metaphor and conceptual integration) can thus provide cultures with the potential of change and new experience, consequently diverging from what might be traditionally accepted as linguistic truths. Many metaphors, however, are "off-loaded" (Gibbs 1999:157) into the cultural world to enable people to better solve problems, make decisions and perform skilled actions in the exact same way that people use paper to solve arithmetic problems. It therefore seems plausible that awareness-raising of metaphoric use in L2, as well as the possible difference in source domain interpretations (e.g., mother tongue: *owl* equals *stupidity* versus L2: *owl equals wisdom*) could aid ESL speakers to recognise linguistic differences between their mother tongue and English.

Non-native speakers' language is, however, often not idiomatic enough because types of social situations are not cross-culturally invariant and non-native speakers do not have access to "conventionalized conceptions" (Ferreira 2008:128). In L2 learning not only the forms of the particular language but also the conceptual structures traditionally associated with those forms need to be acquired by the L2 speaker. While L1 speakers use the principle of salience to process figurative meaning directly without accessing the literal meaning, the L2 speakers usually access the literal meaning first.

Figurative language and figurative competence have traditionally been the focus of interest of cognitive linguists (Coulston 2001; Gibbs (Jr) 1999). This has led to the recognition of the central role that non-literal language plays in everyday communication. It is now generally agreed that, when comprehending verbal communication, people do not respond to the literal content of a figurative utterance

but rather to its intended, implied import (Bromberek-Dyzman and Ewert 2008:1); thus, literal and figurative linguistic competencies in communicative competence are subsumed as opposite sides of one continuum, and thought and language are regarded as inseparable.

3.1.3.2 Reflections on cognitive linguistics, metaphor and literature

It is generally agreed that figurative language does not pose a problem for L1 speakers but it does for L2 and foreign language (FL) speakers. L1 speakers are able to infer meanings from complex texts through metaphor recognition and interpretation inherent to their L1. L2 speakers, on the other hand, often do not possess the language skills to differentiate between the varying nuances of word meanings of the L1. A possible bridging between ESL students' BICS and underdeveloped CALP (see 2.2.3.5) could be facilitated by employing literary texts that are familiar in cultural grounding to that of the ESL learners' when developing their proficiency in critical thinking. It can further be assumed that making ESL students aware of the L2 metaphoric use of language in English literature written by African authors could enhance their ability to interpret metaphors in order to draw appropriate inferences when they read, not only for pleasure but also for academic purposes.

Reading and appreciating literature in all its verbal beauty and intellectual and figurative complexities could thus become the ideal instrument to enhance critical reading in ESL learners. According to Hugo (2003:50), "critical readers should know how to critically analyse print not to believe everything they read." This, however, appears to be a rather narrow definition of critical reading. This definition needs expansion, since critical readers should also know how to start from a position of strategic doubt and to weigh the printed discourse against their own ideas and values, as well as of that of others. To be able to do this, they need to be conversant with all facets of the language of the text. A more than average ability to interpret metaphoric language use in order to draw appropriate inferences could lay the

foundation on which students would be able to verify the validity of the 'strategic doubts' in their thought processes when exposed to L1 discourse.

3.2 Thought and language

As one of the first scholars to investigate the empirical link between language and thought Vygotsky (1896 – 1936) conducted his research in a political time which bears a striking resemblance to post-apartheid Namibia. He formulated the view that man is subjected to the dialectical play between nature and history, between his qualities as a creature of biology and as a product of human culture. In Vygotsky's time, the Soviet Union was building a new environment and the victims of an old regime were indirectly blamed for the old troubles; in post-apartheid Namibia the previously left-out and disadvantaged, especially as far as education and critical literacy are concerned, also are the silent ones still suffering socio-economic, as well as educational neglect. "In order to enjoy the real fruits of change, people require mind, mind that could rise above the circumstances the State had inherited from the past" (Bruner 1986:71). Enhancing the cognitive abilities of FG students will be a stone in the masonry of rebuilding post-apartheid Namibia so that the previously disadvantaged people native to the country will also be able to share equally in the fruits of change.

Language, from Vygotsky's perspective, is "a way of sorting out one's thoughts about things" and "[t]hought is a mode of organizing perception and action" (Bruner 1986:72). All of these, each in their own way, reflect the tools and aids available in a specific culture that can be used to carry out action. Vygotsky (1999:6) sees semantic analysis as the route to follow when one wants to explore the nature of verbal thought, and says:

> There is every reason to suppose that the qualitative distinction between sensation and thought is the presence in the latter of a *generalized* reflection of reality, which is also the essence of word meaning; and consequently that meaning is an act of thought in the full sense of the term. But at the same time, meaning is an inalienable part of the world as such, and thus it belongs in the realm of language as much as in the realm of thought. A word without a meaning is an empty sound, no longer a part of human speech. [italics in original text]

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The inner relation between thought and speech is not a prerequisite, but rather a product, of the historical development of human consciousness. Thought and speech can, however, not be regarded as two unrelated processes. They are either parallel or crossing at certain points and mechanically influencing each other (Vygotsky 1999:210). The meaning of every word is a generalisation or a concept. Since generalisations and concepts are acts of thought, meaning may be regarded as a phenomenon of thinking. Word meaning is, however, a phenomenon of thought only in as far as thought is embodied in speech, and of speech only in as far as speech is connected with thought and illuminated by it. Word meaning is a phenomenon of verbal thought or meaningful speech; thus a union of word and thought (1999:212).

> A word calls to mind its contents as an overcoat of a friend reminds of that friend. The association between word and meaning may grow stronger or weaker, be enriched by linkage with other objects of a similar kind, spread over a wider field, or become more limited (i.e., it may undergo quantitative and external changes), but it cannot change its psychological nature. To do that it would have to cease being an association (1999:213).

Vygotsky (1999:213) continues by saying that it is not merely the content of a word that changes but the way in which reality is generalised and reflected in a word that changes. The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and vice versa. The relation of thought to word undergoes changes in this process, and these changes themselves may be regarded as development in the functional sense. Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. "Every thought moves, grows and develops, fulfills a function, solves a problem" (Vygotsky 1999:218).

> [T]hought does not express itself in words, but rather realizes itself in them

and thus

> [a] thought may be compared to a cloud shedding a shower of words (1999:251).

The transition from thought to word leads through meaning; therefore, in speech there is always the hidden thought or subtext. Aristotle claimed that "spoken words are symbols of affections in the soul" (Sperber and Wilson 2006:5). Modern pragmatics generally indicates that the understanding of any spoken words or

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utterances "crucially involves the ability of an addressee to draw inferences, i.e., to detect what a speaker pragmatically implies on the basis of what is literally said" (Ibanez and Hernandez 2003:23).

3.2.1 Inference

Inference as far as verbal comprehension is concerned involves "the application of central, unspecialised inference processes to the output of specialised, non-inferential linguistic processes" (Sperber and Wilson 2006:66). A person's inferential abilities involved in comprehension can be understood on the strength of two hypotheses:

- the process of inferential comprehension is non-demonstrative: even under the best of circumstances … communication may fail;
- any conceptually represented information available to the addressee can be used as a premise in this inference process: the process of inferential comprehension is 'global' as opposed to 'local'. A local process (e.g., deductive reasoning from fixed premises or auditory perception) is either context-free or sensitive only to contextual information from some set domain. A global process (e.g., empirical scientific reasoning) has free access to all conceptual information in memory (2006:65).

Inference can further be described as "the process by which an assumption is accepted as true or probably true on the strength of the truth or probable truth of other assumptions." It is thus a form of "fixation of belief" (Sperber and Wilson, 2006:68). Sperber and Wilson continue that demonstrative inference consists in the application of deductive rules to an initial set of premises. They exemplify this statement by referring to the theory of relativity which could not have been generated by applying inference rules to the results of Eddington's experiment. Instead, the process of reaching non-demonstrative conclusions is generally broken down into two distinct stages: hypothesis formation and hypothesis confirmation. Eddington's experiment provided the first empirical confirmation of Edison's theory but did not in

any sense imply it; thus hypothesis formation, it is argued, is a matter of "creative imagination." Hypothesis confirmation, on the other hand, can be seen as a "purely logical process governed by inference rules" (2006:68). The soundness of a person's assumptions depends on having cognitive mechanisms which are in line with the physical world to such a degree that the strength of the assumptions tends to match the likelihood that they are true. Sperber and Wilson (2006:69) suggest that non-demonstrative inference as spontaneously performed by humans must be less a logical process than a form of suitably constrained guesswork. If so, it should be seen as successful or unsuccessful, as efficient or inefficient, rather than as logically valid or invalid. The success and efficiency of spontaneous non-demonstrative inference may be enhanced by the meta-knowledge of conceptual metaphors which enrich a person's cognitive abilities.

In communication, conceptual cognitive abilities are important. What visible phenomena are for visual cognition, manifest facts are for conceptual cognition. A fact, according to Sperber and Wilson (2006:39), is manifest to an individual at a given time if, and only if, the person is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representations as true or probably true. A cognitive environment of an individual is a set of facts that are manifest to him/her. To be manifest, then is to be perceptible or inferable. Not only facts are manifest but assumptions are too. "An assumption … is manifest in a cognitive environment if the environment provides sufficient evidence for its adoption" (2006:39). Assumptions can have three types of logical implications:

- trivial implications: these are not directly computed by the human device;
- analytic implications: these are necessary and sufficient for understanding;
- synthetic implications: these have to do with exploiting rather than grasping the information being offered (2006:106).

At each point in a discourse the hearer has in the forefront of his/her attention a different set of assumptions which may never have been processed before and may never be processed as such together again. By working out the synthetic implications

of such a set of assumptions he/she can acquire new information which may be lost for ever when that particular set is dismantled, and the assumptions that constituted the set are either forgotten or stored in separate locations in the hearer's encyclopaedic memory (Sperber and Wilson 2006:87). What makes a syntactic implication syntactic is not the form in which its premises are presented but the nature of the rules used in deriving it. Comprehension thus involves the joint processing of the set of assumptions, and in that set some assumptions stand out as newly presented information being processed in the context of information that has itself been previously processed (2006:118).

For the effective functioning of such a process the assumptions from which it operates need to be in line with that of the source. When in the ESL situation those assumptions are often underscored by a difference in cultural perceptions of phenomena, the inferences appropriate to the linguistic context at hand could not be drawn (see 3.1.3.1); therefore, ESL speakers need to be made aware of how metaphors are employed in texts, and experiment with metaphors themselves, to enhance the process of making appropriate assumptions from information provided.

It seems thus that human inferential success could be attributed to cognitive constraints on hypothesis formation rather than on logical constraints of confirmation. Non-demonstrative inference, as spontaneously performed by humans, might be some kind of constrained guesswork instead of a logical process. Furthermore, Sperber and Wilson (2006:75) accept that the only logical rules spontaneously accessible to the human mind are deductive rules, and these play a crucial role in non-demonstrative inference. Spontaneous inference plays a role even in a scholarly interpretation whereas scholarly thinking is a rather exceptional human endeavour, even for scholars. Students, such as the FG ESL students at UNAM, often still rely primarily on the logical constraints of confirmation rather than on the cognitive constraints of hypothesis formation; they may therefore not be able to draw appropriate inferences from the academic material they are confronted with. This might be one of the main reasons for misinterpretation when reading academic texts,

and thus unsuccessful assimilation of content information conveyed in academic texts by FG ESL students at a university such as UNAM with a Western academic contextual orientation. In order to alleviate the burden of the cognitive constraints of hypothesis formation, students have to work out the consequences of adding an assumption to a set of assumptions that have themselves already been processed. In other words, according to Sperber and Wilson (2006:118), it involves seeing the contextual effects or relevance of this assumption in a context determined, even if only partially, by earlier acts of comprehension.

3.2.2 Relevance

To modify and improve a context is to have some effect on that context. As far as communication is concerned, the addition of new information which merely duplicates old information does not count as an improvement, nor does the addition of new information that is entirely unrelated to old information. The effect that modifies and improves a context is the result of interaction between new and old information. Contextual implications are thus contextual effects. "They result from a crucial interaction between new and old information as premises in a synthetic interaction" (Sperber and Wilson 2006:119). The notion of a contextual effect is essential to characterisation of relevance, and "other things being equal, the greater the contextual effect, the greater the relevance. An assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect on that context" (2006:122).

In order to achieve maximal relevance or the context which would enable the best possible balance of effort against what is to be achieved, an assumption needs to be selected. The relevance of the assumption to an individual thus refers to the relevance achieved when it is optimally processed. For academic purposes individuals (in this project they are students) can only achieve relevance if their CALP (see 2.2.3.5) is well developed and their linguistic world is sufficiently enriched. Abstract and lateral thinking and comprehension will be enhanced if students are able to comprehend not only conceptual metaphors appropriately but also infer

meaning from figurative language employed in academic texts. Their world could consequently be linguistically enriched by their recognition of metaphor, not only in literary but also in expository texts.

According to Bruner (1986:103), "We impose order, and since all is in motion, the order or recording we impose is a way too of imposing alternate stabilities. We delete and supplement and condemn to nonreality everything that exists between C and C#. We deform the given that we took, and create caricature, the caricature itself being principled rather than entirely fanciful. And we do it not only in art but in science". Both what is told and the mode of telling enter into man's conception of what a work of art is about. Wherever one looks at the creation of realities, one will see "the complexity of symbol systems, the dependence of what they create on the discourse on which they are set and on the purposes to which the creation is to be put" (1986:103).

> The cognitive approach to education for the arts must surely be condemned if cognition is contrasted with perception, emotion, and all nonlogical and nonlinguistic faculties; or if education is identified exclusively with lecturing, explaining, and providing texts and verbal and numerical exercises; or if art is looked upon as transient amusement for a passive audience, while science is taken as consisting of demonstrations founded upon observation and aimed at practical progress … Cognition includes learning, knowing, gaining insight and understanding by all available means … Coming to understand a painting or a symphony in an unfamiliar style, to recognize a work of an artist or school, to see or to hear in new ways, is as cognitive an achievement as learning to read and write and add (1986:104).

In the development of cognitive strengths it is thus evident that the study of literature is one of the more easily available means to enhance the learning, knowing, gaining insight and understanding needed by the African student to negotiate successfully in a mainly Western academic culture.

3.3 Literature

Informally literature can be regarded as writing that "pre-eminently reflects in depth and quality some aspect of the human experience, illuminating it from the perspective of a sensitive and intelligent observer" (Pugh 1989:321). The sustained human

interest in stories over the centuries is clear from the rich evidence of the epics, myths, legends and folk tales which have inspired, thrilled and entertained all people since time immemorial. It goes without saying that stories, whether told or written, contribute to the formation of a social conscience and integration into the frame of culturally prescribed norms for both young and old. The reading of literary texts also provides an opportunity for reference testing of own beliefs against the background of a fictitious world. Within the last few decades literature has been broadly regarded in many disciplines as a major way of *knowing*; a focus on interpreting meanings to construct understanding of human action and a complementary cognitive mode to fill a gap in the culture of education (Miller and Legge 1999:11). The value of employing literature not for teaching language structure and vocabulary but for developing critical thinking in ESL teaching is consequently indisputable.

3.3.1 Arguments against the use of literature in language teaching

Since literature is so closely related to the language it is written in, it is surprising that literary texts have been, and maybe still are, regarded by some linguists as not practically applicable in the L2 teaching situation. These linguists unconsciously feel that "literature is too 'hard' for ESL students" (Gadjusek 1988:227). In order to understand the reluctance to incorporate literature into the L2 curriculum, a closer look should to be taken at the historical background of the role that literature played in ESL teaching.

Until the 1920s the primary function of language learning was to give learners access to the philosophical, scientific and literary-cultural heritage of the target language. The reading of literature was regarded as the "capstone of the foreign-language learning experience" (Hirvela 1990:238). Literary texts were studied as literature and students were expected to develop their literary abilities and knowledge through interaction with the texts. Improved language ability was generally just assumed as a by-product. From the 1930s, however, the orientation shifted to developing communicative abilities in contemporary society. Literature became marginalised,

because of the perceived deviant uses of language in literature (Kilfoil 1993:250) when literature was employed to teach, for instance, English vocabulary. Many teachers and pupils also linked literature only to history, the past and to Shakespeare. They perceived it as having very little relation to their immediate world. Teachers also seemed to be stuck in their efforts to formulate their study of literature as a body of knowledge or content (Johl 1993:263). It is therefore understandable that in a post-colonial Africa the teaching of English literature all but vanished from ESL and English foreign language (EFL) curricula. Literature was seen as lacking practical application and benefits (Hirvela 1990:238).

Linguists further argued that literature should be excluded from the L2 curricula because of its structural complexity (Spack 1985:704). McKay (1982:529), for example, says that "[s]ince one of our main aims as ESL teachers is to teach the grammar of the language, literature due to its structural complexity and unique use of language, does little to contribute to this goal." Scholars also warn that literature can be misinterpreted when it is used to teach something else such as syntax. Learners who study literature for the purpose of learning language usage will not develop "an awareness of the way the language is used in literature discourse for the conveying of unique messages" (Spack 1985:705). There may also be a lack of authenticity if the classroom experience is different from reading outside the classroom where the experience is primary. This difference may be due to the accent in the classroom on usage which may then impede the primary experience for the learner (McKay 1982:533).

It has been said (Spack 1982:705) that "to present some-one with a set of extracts and to require him to read them not in order to learn something interesting and relevant about the world but in order to learn something about the language being used is to misinterpret language use to some degree." Conversely, it has been argued that the linguistic difficulties of literature are overstated as readers do not need to completely comprehend everything to gain something from the texts (Spack

1985:704). Actually, literature with its extensive and connotative vocabulary and complex syntax can expand all areas of language use.

It is further reasoned that literature often reflects a particular cultural perspective. On a conceptual level, literature can thus be difficult for students (McKay 1982:529) and, if literature is used to teach culture, it tends to become "a repository of factual data" and the essential "literary nature of the literature" (Spack 1985:705) can be lost. Equally threatening to a non-native reader can be self-disclosure, since readers from different cultures differ markedly in their feelings of what is appropriate in interpersonal encounters. It should be emphasised, however, that in discussions it is not the lecturers' goal to make students bare their souls; lecturers want to encourage students to become free to express what they are willing to share and "to find value in what they have thought and experienced" (Oster 1989:87). Reading literary texts and writing about them demands a "personal investment," as "the self is paramount; books are the arena of self-discovery" (Everson 2005:57). Therefore, since elements such as 'voice', 'authenticity' and 'concrete detail' form the backbone of critical reading in expository writing, it can only be agreed with Oster (1989:87) that students need to be led to see these qualities in everything they read, and to develop them in everything they write.

Although these arguments against the use of literature in the ESL situation are interesting and noteworthy, there is fortunately overwhelmingly strong argumentation which promotes the use of literature in ESL teaching.

3.3.2 Arguments for the use of literature in teaching critical literacy

In contrast to what advocates for the exclusion of literature from language teaching think, many other pro-literature advocates have produced valid reasons for the inclusion of literature in the L2 curriculum. Literature is now being explored in a new pedagogical light. The trend seems to deviate from the days when literature's literary and cultural characteristics informed the core of language teaching; rather,

literature's virtues as a means of improving language proficiency appears to be the current focus of attention (Hirvela 1990:239). Apart from the fact that literature per se is interesting, it also facilitates the integration of the different aspects of language. It offers predictable, yet natural, language and promotes word recognition and the opportunity for authentic reading and writing tasks, even though it may not be grammatically sequenced. According to Hirvela (1990:238), improved language ability is assumed as a by-product in the study of literature, as in literature there is a big range and quantity of linguistic devices that are being used to achieve its aim. He states that

> literature by its nature as an instrument to mirror life, encompasses almost all uses and types of linguistic expression

<p style="text-align: center">and</p>

> literature is an amalgamation of the multitude of language registers and communicative functions which native (as well as nonnative) speakers of a language resort to … . (1996:239)

Furthermore, vocabulary expansion is dealt with when attention is given to word forms and common expressions. Actually, literature will a person's proficiency in a language because "literature will extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary usage and complex and exact syntax" (McKay 1982:529). When pre-reading activities which are aimed at encouraging students to guess word meanings from context are being taught, the more efficient word-attack strategies of using the whole context in decoding the meaning of an unfamiliar word are being provided. In the exploration of a literary text, following pre-reading vocabulary work, new words are used and reused at increasingly demanding levels (Gadjusek 1988:229). Furthermore, the issues and situations that have been explored in a literary text provide the basis for contextualised teaching and unintentional practice of complex sentence grammar. This is particularly relevant in the sharing of poetry with students.

Literature presents language in discourse in which the parameters of the setting and role-relationships are defined. Language that illustrates a certain register or dialect is embedded within a social context. It therefore becomes a basis for determining why a

particular form is used. Consequently, literature is ideal for developing an awareness of language use (McKay 1982:530). Literary discourse corresponds to ways in which "words discharge primarily problem solving functions in generating purposeful, referential questioning" (Gadjusek 1988:229). Whenever people formulate opinions, provide retrospective reports, give concurrent expressive accounts of ongoing experiences or engage in the interpersonal give-and-take of conversations they align with the four basic cognitive modalities,

- They categorise experiences;
- They narrativise through selective retrospection experiences;
- By attending to its flux, they are continually monitoring what is happening in, around and to people;
- By verbal interaction, their experiences would be situated within a framework of different subject positions attributed to other people.

According to Hernandi (2002:29), these operations roughly apply to mental processes distinguished by students of cognition "at the ego-centric awareness of individuals versus their mind-reading attribution of beliefs, feelings and desires to other self-propelled agents."

Furthermore, literature fosters an overall increase in reading proficiency, since reading can be regarded "not as a reaction to a text but as *interaction* [italics used in original text] between writer and reader mediated through the text" (McKay 1982:530). Improved reading proficiency further contributes to a student's academic and occupational objectives. Reading literature also fosters the development of life skills by requiring readers to make the same effort of comprehension when they grapple with difficult situations in the text as they would in real life (Everson 2005:57). Since it is full of real life language in different situations, literature can provide a variety of models of communication. The study of literature thus teaches the ability to interpret discourse which can be applied inside, as well as outside the learning situation, and in a range of language uses both literary and non-literary.

Literature is also a change agent as far as it changes attitudes, and helps to eradicate prejudices. It fosters not only empathy and tolerance but also awareness of global problems (Ghosn 2002:177). Stories, plays and other vehicles of imaginative world-making make people contemplate fictive frustrations and fulfillments. But literary texts do not only entertain the readers. The alternative worlds evoked by literature also tend to awaken the will either to change the world or to change man himself by adjusting the personal being to its transpersonal surroundings (Hernandi, 2002:39). He continues:

> Literary transactions can be serving to expand cognitive, emotive and volitional horizons of human awareness and to integrate people's beliefs, feelings and desires into the fluid mentality required for survival in the increasingly complex social and cultural environments of human organisms.

Gajdusek (1988:231) further advocates the benefits that can be derived from examining the cultural assumptions of a piece of literature as literature assists "to promote greater tolerance for cultural differences" for both the learners and the teachers. Exploration of a literary text with readers from another culture makes both the teacher and the reader aware of cultural differences and is actually "an exercise in cultural relativity" (1988:229) as it is opening up the English L1 speakers' world to ESL African students, and introducing the often Western teacher to the rich, imaginative world of the African idiom. Furthermore, literature can also promote a gradual development of the understanding of the self and the world. It brings insight into the behaviours and feelings of others that is necessary for empathy and conflict resolution. People's disposition to talk about much more than just what happens affords them splendid opportunities to hone their complementary talking and thinking abilities. Hernandi (2002:30) argues that it stands to reason that individuals whose mental abilities "were especially practiced in literary transactions would tend to put the best available literary structures to particularly effective general cognitive and general communicative use as well." Literature may thus work to promote a greater tolerance for cultural differences in both the ESL learner and the ESL teacher, and it may promote students' own creativity, since the end goal of studying literature is not only the admiration of literature; it is more a "transfer of imaginative energy from the literature to the student" (McKay 1982:531).

Since today's students interact with many more sources of information than in previous generations, they have to access and assimilate information critically from an intellectual standpoint. When reading from a critical stance readers use their background knowledge to understand relationships between their ideas and ideas presented by the author of the text. The reader thus becomes more than a code-breaker, meaning maker and text user; he/she also assumes the role of critic. To a student who comes from a traditional type of education system geared mainly on practical courses and one that encouraged memorising, seeing "through other eyes" (Oster 1989:56) can be new and sometimes a threatening experience. If lecturers want to encourage in students the liberating art of seeing the world from different perspectives or moving to critically analysing their worlds, a study of literature seems to be the ideal vehicle to develop the necessary cognitive competencies. In other words, the aim should be for readers to gain "the power to envision alternate ways of viewing the author's topic," and readers exert that power "when they read from a critical stance." (McLaughlin and DeVoogd 2004:52). Readers are not only reading the words and the text but they are "reading the world" (2004:53) and understanding the text's purpose; they will consequently not be manipulated by it, as they comprehend beyond the literal level and think about the functions of the
 text.

Reading from a critical stance requires both the ability and the deliberate inclination to think critically about information sources; in other words, to analyse and evaluate and meaningfully question their origin and purpose, as well as to take action by responding to alternative perspectives. The goal should be for readers to become text critics in everyday life. They need to comprehend information sources from a critical stance as naturally as they comprehend from aesthetic or emotional and efferent or factual stances.

Although it could be argued that literature per se would perform these functions, in view of Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (see 2.2.3.2), it

seems a legitimate argument that presenting ESL FG students at UNAM with the cultural familiarity encapsulated by African authors in their own work written in English, it would provide the scaffolding (see 2.2.3.4) FG students need to enhance their often rudimentary critical literacy proficiency in understanding higher level linguistic concepts, such as metaphor, to draw appropriate inferences. African literature in English has in practice thus the added advantage of presenting familiar metaphor in a well-known context.

3.3.3 The value of English literature by African authors for African students

It is evident today that the number of non-native English speakers worldwide by far exceeds the number of native speakers. In this context, much communication in English involves increasingly non-native speaker/non-native speaker interactions. For instance, Jennifer Jenkins, Professor of English Language at the University of Southhampton remarked:

> When I go to international conferences, where English is the focus, I am very often in the minority because I am a native speaker (Clem June 21, 2008).

Therefore, for language to be authentic in its routine pragmatic functioning, it should be localised within a particular discourse community (Alptekin 2002:61). In 1985 Chinua Achebe, the renowned Nigerian author, defined his goals as a non-native English African writer as follows,

> Here, then is an adequate revolution for me to espouse – to help my society regain its belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-denigration. And it is essentially a question of education in the best sense of the word. Here, I think, my aims and the deepest aspirations of my society meet […] I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery from which the first European's acting on God's behalf delivered them. Perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure. But who cares? Art is important but so is education of the kind I have in mind (Gikandi 2001:71).

In an attempt to define African literature after the Conference of African Writers of English Expression in Uganda, 1962, Achebe (1965:92) said that African literature was

Creating writing in which an African setting is authentically handled or to which experiences originating in Africa are integral.

This definition, however, might prove to be too inclusive, as novels such as *Heart of Darkness* by the Polish author Joseph Conrad would thus also fall under the term *African Literature.* I want to share my voice rather with Achebe (1965:17) when he says:

> Every literature must seek the things that belong to its peace, must in other words, speak of a particular place, evolve out of necessities of its history, past and current and the aspirations and destiny of its people.

Unlike other literary and critical traditions which have attempted to resolve their "boundary disputes" (Desai 1993:4), scholars of African literature have cherished the fluidity afforded by a field of study which they could define as narrowly or as broadly as they wished. African literature has consequently come to be accepted as a minor appendage in the mainstream of English literature. In his Grinzane award acceptance speech Ben Okri (2008:2) said:

> So many literatures have flowed into the river of African literature that to appreciate literature properly one must look […] at the literature of the whole world. African literature is not a literature in isolation but in constant dialogue with its culture, with itself […] the literature and living history of the world. […] It comes from the deep souls of Africa and it dances with the literature of the world.

According to scholars such as Achebe and Mphahlele (Desai 1993:6), the use of European languages as legitimate media of African literature is, firstly, that the nature of the newly-formed post-colonial state in Africa was such that a great number of mutually incomprehensible languages were being spoken in a single state. This would consequently mean an ethnic instead of national literature. Secondly, English is not a purely Western language – although it may embody a worldview, it is capable of being appropriated and Africanised.

> We can begin to equate language and literature with national ethnic and moral consciousness. With the rebirth of national ethnic consciousness, with the introduction of the values of a pluralistic and open society, there comes a need to introduce literature written in English which explains cultural experiences of non-Anglo groups who now express their culture and value systems in English language (Schwartz 1987:7).

As writing in English by African authors often expresses non-English cultural experiences and meanings, such literature redefines the "semantic and semiotic

potential of a language, making the language mean something which is not part of its 'traditional' meaning" (Pugh 1989:322). Students studying English in another culture can thus observe how English is affecting them, and also how they and other new speakers are affecting the language. They could become acquainted with not only the current literary works of African authors writing in their rich ethnic idiom and metaphor in English but also with the development of African literature, particularly that written in English.

3.3.4 Reflections on literacy, critical thinking and literature in action

Hutchings (2006:235) states that development of critical thinking abilities "is an important part of being able to transform knowledge." Students who are able to reflect critically are able to engage in higher levels of thinking and analysis. They become active learners who critically review their own assumptions and presuppositions and who could thus take on new perspectives of concepts or situations. Language courses which aim to promote learner autonomy need to incorporate means of transferring responsibility for aspects of the language that the learners process (such as setting goals, setting learning strategies and evaluating progress) from the teacher to the learner (Cotterall 2000:110). Cognitive apprenticeship supports learning in a domain by enabling students to acquire, develop and use cognitive tools in authentic domain activity (Frindt 2002:221).

Researchers seem to be realising more and more that there is no one path to critical thinking and literacy but that the best approach would be to think of "multiple literacies" (Hugo 2003:47). Hugo says that it appears to be a world-wide phenomenon that many learners do not become literate at school, and continue to struggle with basic literacy at tertiary level. She furthermore observes that in the Southern African context there are many students at tertiary level whose levels of literacy, including language abilities and reading abilities, are not in line with the academic demands required by their studies. Personal experience with and observation of students at UNAM, especially FG students hailing from rural areas in

the country, indicate that the same situation is prevalent in Namibia. To find a meeting point between these students' acquired but basic BICS and the level of CALP (see 2.2.3.5) demanded when drawing inferences and comprehending expository academic texts, it is proposed that employing literary texts, with all their linguistic and structural richness, may bridge the huge divide between a history of poorly resourced schooling and the cognitively demanding tertiary learning for FG students.

It further needs to be pointed out that exposition and literature may be viewed as overlapping segments of a continuum, since the problems that literature poses for ESL students and the teaching solutions may equally apply to and facilitate more critical work with expository texts as well (Gadjusek 1988:228). Gadjusek (1988:230) explains that expository prose, which is highly context-reduced in the literal sense is characterised by many contextualising devices such as introductions, transition words and sentences and even complex grammar structures. The same distance exists between writer and audience in literature as in expository writing; however, the techniques for contextualisation are different. In literature they are more consistently implicit. In reading literature it is assumed that, since there is no access to the physical world outside the text, each line is meant to interrelate with the others to create an internally coherent meaning. The reader is therefore immediately engaged in procedures of interpretation, negotiating meaning and setting about making sense of expressions by referring them to other parts of the relevant text (discourse) in which they occur.

Consequently, literature makes a highly interactive demand upon the reader. When refining the ability to interpret content in the way described, it will hone students' ability to interpret expository texts more effectively. The choice of those literary texts to be used in developing critical literacy should therefore meet adequate literacy standards and help students to become more in touch with themselves by establishing a common bond with the rest of humanity. It should reassure them that they are not the only ones to suffer their problems, and it should make the world

knowable to them by telling the truth. Without being didactic, it should further affirm and reaffirm those values that keep people hoping and that give young people the strength to continue to grow.

Literature should, however, not be studied through formalist criticism tied to technological terminology and complex symbolism but rather be taught as an exploration of meaning. Spack (1985:720), for instance, says that something new can be learned about a literary work each time it is examined and each time students share their unique perspectives. Rather than limiting the focus of literary study to either language usage or cultural content, literature should be viewed as "an inquiry into the way a language is used to express a reality other than that expressed by conventional means" (Spack 1985:705). The students' aim should be to learn how the language system – the structures and vocabulary of English – is used for communication. The study of literature should develop a "sharper awareness of the communicative resources of the language being learned" (1985:705).

If the expectations of the lecturer are such that he/she would encourage a deep and critical approach to learning, it is likely that students would respond correspondingly. Students should not only be shown how to be academically literate by providing them with a set of rules and guidelines; the lecturer should rather be seeking to apply what is new to what the student already knows and understands. Simply providing access to under-prepared students is not enough. Universities have a responsibility to also ensure "epistemological access to the processes of language construction" (Van Schalkwyk 2008:231). Literature written by African authors in English reflects innovative imagery and language construction which could provide the necessary access to the African L2 student.

Finally, I can only agree with Hirvela (1990:238) that a reassessment of literature will allow ESL instructors to examine more effectively the question of how to serve those learners who are currently marginally helped by ESL methodologies more effectively. A careful look at literature can produce new methodologies that are more amenable

to support these learners. The possibility of a limited role for literature within wide-angle, process-oriented, capacity-defined ESL courses will by their nature require teaching/learning materials of a broader linguistic and conceptual bent. Literature may just be an ideal source for such materials.

Literature need not become the focus but, in keeping with literature's evolving pragmatic status within ELT (that is, in an instrumental, language-based context), literary texts can perform the role of "handmaiden" (Hirvela 1990:243) to the nonliterary aims of the practical ESL pedagogy at hand. Students need to be "fair, analytical, open and non-dogmatic" (Oster 1989:87). In fine-tuning such abilities, Oster (1989:90) says that one can hone abilities which can be transferred to the reading and comprehension of anything – literary texts, non-literary texts, speeches, conversations or events. Consequently, incorporating literary study in ESL teaching can help foster academic proficiency, since it can minimise the threat of confronting the unknown and encourage taking risks, both in reading and in writing in academia.

3.4 Concluding summary

Chapter Three was concerned firstly with the concept of metaphor as explained by research conducted by different scholars. It further looked at the relationship between thought and language as described by Vygotsky (1999). A discussion of inference in the theory of relevance by Sperber and Wilson (2006) formed the rationale for the inclusion of the literature programme introduced in this project. Therefore, an in-depth look at the study of literature in language teaching, as well as in the enhancing of critical literacy was presented in Chapter Three.

To augment the description of the theoretical foundation of this project, Chapter Four will give a detailed presentation of the theoretical foundations that underlie the research design and research methodology employed in this project. It also describes the qualitative data collection techniques, as well as the instruments employed to collect the quantitative data for this empirical study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

RESEARCHING FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY

In Chapter Three literature concerning metaphor and its use in language was reviewed. The relationship between thought and language, as discussed by Vygotsky (1999), and concepts, such as inference and relevance as discussed by Sperber and Wilson (2006), were presented. The issue of relevance as a rationale for the introduction of African literature in English into a course designed to support students at UNAM in general communication skills in English was argued. An in-depth look was also taken at arguments, both those against the use of literature in language teaching and those for employing literature in enhancing critical literacy proficiency in tertiary education. Finally, literature, and specifically African literature in English as it relates to this project, was presented to the reader.

Chapter Four is concerned with the theoretical foundations on which the research design and methodology employed in this project are based. It pays attention to the case study design, as well as the different data collection instruments and techniques employed in this project. It finally gives a brief indication of the data analyses that will be described in detail in Chapters Five and Six.

4.1 Different research approaches

A binary distinction was traditionally made between empirical (quantitative) and rationalist (qualitative) research designs. More recently, though, it has been argued that the distinction is "simplistic and naïve" (Nunan 1999:3). Those who draw a distinction, however, suggest that quantitative, or positivist, research is obtrusive and

controlled, objective, generalisable, outcome oriented, and assumes the existence of "facts" which are somehow external to and independent of the observer or researcher. Qualitative research, on the other hand, assumes that all knowledge is relative. It further assumes that there is a subjective element to all knowledge and research, and that holistic, ungeneralisable studies are justifiable (1999:3), especially when researching human phenomena.

The research approach taken in this project is a mixed method approach. In order to justify this approach, a brief review will be given of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, as well as their strengths and limitations. An attempt was made to incorporate as far as possible the strengths of both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches in this project, and to limit through triangulation as many as possible of the weaknesses present in each. First of all, these research approaches will be positioned historically.

4.1.1 Postpositivism

Positivism in the search for truth and knowledge, as established by Auguste Comte, is regarded as a form of empiricism. Positivism rejects metaphysics and theology, and holds that experimental investigations and observations are the only sources of substantial knowledge (Collins Concise Dictionary 1999:1155). Positivism asks questions about the theoretical perspectives or philosophical stance that lies behind the methodology in question (Creswell 2003:4). Therefore, logical positivism holds that the only meaningful statements are those that are analytic and that can be tested empirically.

Post-positivism refers to the ways of thinking that came after positivism. It challenges the traditional notion of the absolute truth of knowledge and recognises that researchers cannot be "positive" about their claims of knowledge when studying the behaviour and actions of humans. Post-positivism further refers to the philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes.

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The problems studied by post-positivists reflect a need to test or verify and refine data so that the world can be understood. Consequently, the scientific method, the accepted method of research by post-positivists, suggests beginning with a theory, collecting data which either support or refute the theory and then making the necessary revisions before additional tests are conducted. This approach could, however, be regarded as too narrow to encompass the complexity of human behaviour, and alternative approaches in research design may offer an opportunity to delve deeper in search of knowledge.

4.1.2 Alternatives to a positivist research approach

Quantitative research was the generally accepted paradigm in educational research in the early 1980s. During this time quantitative and qualitative purists both argued that their approach was superior and that the two approaches should not be used together, due to differences in the worldviews of the philosophies associated with them (Johnson and Christensen 2004:30). The debate between qualitative and quantitative researchers seems to be based upon the differences in assumptions about what reality is and whether it is measurable. While positivistic science usually asserts the experiential mentality, emphasising the discovery of universal rules and deductive explanations that rely on value neutrality and quantifiable precision, naturalistic ethnography forsakes generalisations in favour of the image of contextuality and inductively built quantitative description and theory. Phillips (1990:48) states that

> …one of the values of naturalistic ethnography is its potential to generate theory that may challenge unwarranted preconceptions or conclusions on the parts of researchers. It is also important to recognize, however, that beneath such distinctions, *naturalistic ethnography often constitutes an extension of rather than a break from positivism.* [italics used in original text]

Table 4.1: Alternative bases for interpreting social reality

Comparison dimensions	Conceptions of social reality	
	Objectivist	*Subjectivist*
Philosophical base	Realism: the world exists and is knowable as it really is. Organisations are real entities with a life of their own.	Idealism: the world exists but different people construe it in very different ways. Organisations are invented social reality.
The role of social science	Discovering the universal laws of society and human conduct within.	Discovering how different people interpret the world in which they live. (Individuals acting singly or together) Interpretation of the subjective meanings which individuals place upon their action. Discovering the subjective rules for such action
Basic units of social reality	The collectivity: society or organisation.	Sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world and behaviour within it.
Methods of understanding	Identifying conditions or relationships which permit the collectivity to exist. Conceiving what these conditions and relationships are.	The search for meaningful relationships and the discovery of their consequences for action.
Theory	A rational edifice built by scientists to explain human behaviour.	The representation of reality for purposes of comparison.
Research	Experimental or quasi-experimental validation of theory.	Analysis of language and meaning.
Methodology	Abstraction of reality, especially through mathematical models and quantitative analysis.	Conflicted. Governed by the values of people with access to power.
Organisations	Goal oriented. Independent of people. Instruments of order in society serving both society and the individual.	Given diverse human ends, there is always conflict among people acting to pursue them.
Prescription for change	Change the structure of the organisation to meet social values and individual needs.	Change the people or change their values if you can. Cohen and Manion 1989:11

Before a decision can be made about a specific research design, or even when deciding on the mixing of empiricist and rationalist thought as far as research methodology for a specific study is concerned, it is necessary to compare and assess both the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms.

4.1.3 A quantitative research approach

During the late 19[th] century and throughout the 20[th] century quantitative research strategies were those that invoked postpositivist perspectives such as true and quasi-experiments, as well as correlational studies. More recently, quantitative studies involve complex experiments with many variables and treatments. They also include elaborate structural equation models that incorporate causal paths and the identification of the collective strength of variables, hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, as well as the testing of theories (Creswell 2003:13). Data are thus collected on predetermined instruments that will yield statistical data (2003:18).

A deductive approach is typically used in quantitative research because the focus is generally on hypothesis testing and theory testing. It is also sometimes said to be confirmatory because researchers attempt to confirm their hypotheses (Johnson and Christensen 2004; Newman and Benz 1998). Researchers, adhering to the tradition of quantitative research approaches, strongly consider the question of generalisability in experimental studies, as they see the goal of science as being able to generalise findings to diverse populations and times (Schofield 1990:201). In hard reality, however, complete generalisability and replicability may prove to be a myth, since even true experiments conducted with diverse populations need to consider the human element as a constant and possibly elusive variable.

4.1.4 A qualitative research approach

The qualitative researcher prefers to study the world as it naturally occurs, without manipulating it as an experimental researcher would (Johnson and Christensen 2004:360). Qualitative methodologies are consequently "approaches that enable researchers to learn at first hand about the social world they are investigating by means of involvement and participation in that world through a focus upon what individual actors say and do" (Hitchcock and Hughes 2001:12). Should they, however, opt to additionally quantify the frequencies and compatibility of different actors' views, it will inevitably lead to validity and confirm the reliability of the collected research data.

Furthermore, two sides to qualitative research can be distinguished. To meet the exigencies of the social situation being studied, freedom is needed to explore creatively the best way to approach a specific scenario. On the other hand, the researcher must be prepared to account carefully for every move made. These two sides represent "the judicious balance between *taking the opportunity* to encounter the research setting while *maintaining the principles* of social science" [italics used in original text] (Holliday 2007:8). Adhering to that kind of balance will enable the researcher to negotiate effectively around loopholes, opened up when haphazardly collecting information that may fit into an overall framework in the qualitative exploration of a certain phenomenon.

Qualitative research is often misunderstood as being one single, clearly defined approach. It is rather a set of interpretative practices which privileges no single methodology over any other. As a site of discussion, qualitative research is difficult to define. It has no theory or paradigms that are distinctly its own. Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own. Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative content, discourse, archival data, phonemic analysis and even statistics to describe, rather than to interpret. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989:26) describe qualitative research therefore as "ultimately a frame of

mind; it is an orientation and commitment to study the social world in certain kinds of ways."

4.1.5 Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research approaches

In order to make an informed decision about the most appropriate research design to employ in this project, I first studied both qualitative and quantitative research approaches in all their dimensions. I looked at corresponding and differentiating characteristics, the strengths and limitations of both designs, as well as validity issues in research.

4.1.5.1 Characteristics

The characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research designs as described by scholars, are listed in the table below to illustrate the different ideological approaches.

Table 4.2: Characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research design

Quantitative research	Qualitative research
It is systematic and follows clear procedural rules for the design of the study.	It primarily employs an inductive research strategy.
It is logical and should exhibit step-by-step progression of the study.	It usually involves fieldwork and the product of this approach is highly descriptive.
It is tangible research based on the collection of data in the real world.	The researcher can process data immediately, can clarify, summarise as the study evolves and can explore anomalous responses.
The types of data are numerous but they should be similar, since they must be quantifiable.	The total context can be considered and what is known about the situation can be expanded through sensitivity to non-verbal aspects.
	The researcher is the primary instrument

Any independent researcher can reproduce the study under similar circumstances and obtain the same result.
 	
It is reductive as it should be able to explain the confusion of facts presented to the researcher.
 	
    (Adopted from Nunan 1999:9)
	for data collection and analysis; results are not really replicable.
	
	The key concern is to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspective and not from the researcher's.
	    (Adopted from Meriam 1998:6 – 8)

4.1.5.2 Strengths

The strengths of each of the two research designs can be tabled as follows:

Table 4.3: The strengths of quantitative and qualitative research design

Quantitative research	Qualitative research
It tests hypotheses that are constructed before the data are collected.	It is guided by philosophical tenets.
It tests and validates existing theories about how and why phenomena occur.	It does not adopt a conceptual framework that prescribes the substantive direction of an evaluation *a priori.*
Research findings are generalised when data are based on random samples of sufficient size.	Data emerges from the evaluators' engagement with those who have first-hand experience.
It is replicable on many different populations and sub-populations.	Qualitative evaluations expect a plurality of experiences and hence diversity.
This research paradigm is useful for obtaining data that allow quantitative predictions to be made.	The nature and form of this diversity will not be determined in advance.
The researcher may construct a situation that eliminates the influence of many confounding variables.	This research paradigm is useful to describe a diversity that cannot be meaningfully explained by perspectives external to the context.
Data collection is relatively quick and provides precise quantifiable numerical data.	Data collection deals in words and meanings, aims to maximise understanding of events and facilitates the interpretation of data.

The research results are relatively independent of the researcher.	This approach draws both the researcher and the participants in the research closer together.
This kind of research appears to have higher credibility with people in power.	This kind of research has potential to capture more of the human dimension of education than does the quantitative approach.
It is useful in studying large numbers of people. (Adopted from Johnson and Christiansen 2004:411)	This kind of research places individual actors at the centre, focuses on context, meaning, culture, history and biography. (Adopted from Flinders and Mills 1993; Hitchcock and Hughes 2001; Soltis 1990)

4.1.5.3 Limitations

Neither the quantitative nor the qualitative research design seems to be all-encompassing and each one will have limitations when employed to research a phenomenon in-depth. These limitations regarding the two approaches are presented below and serve as a summary of possible constraining outcomes when employing either one of the research designs exclusive of the other.

Table 4.4: The limitations of quantitative and qualitative research design

Quantitative research	The theories the researcher uses might not reflect the understandings of local constituencies.
	The researcher might miss out on phenomena occurring because of his or her focus on theory or hypothesis testing rather than on hypothesis formation.
	The knowledge produced may be too abstract and general for application of specific local situations, contexts and individuals.
	Because the experimental design requires

	very tightly controlled conditions, the richness and depth of meaning for the participants may be sacrificed.
	The fixation with objectivity may appear to be an elusive goal as biased judgement may even sometimes be applied.
	(Adopted from Johnson and Christiansen 2004; Newman and Benz 1998; Phillips 1990)
Qualitative research	If only one case is studied it is difficult to maintain falsifiability and generalisations become impossible.
	There seems to be a continuum of positions between those using case study from those who wish to retain the criteria of validity, reliability and generalisation and others who do not wish to abandon such criteria for the aims of qualitative enquiry.
	If numeric evidence as the basis for research is rejected the researcher is left with primarily subjective judgements.
	Such research could easily be regarded as simply a rhetorical basis for retaining existing prejudices. (Adopted from Gorard 2001; Hitchcock and Hughes 2001)

The supposed distinction between qualitative and quantitative evidence appears essentially to be a distinction between traditional methods of analysis rather than between underlying philosophies, paradigms or methods of data collection. To some extent, all methods of educational research deal with qualities, even when the observed qualities are counted. Conversely, all methods employed to analyse personal attitudes and perspectives use some form of number, for instance the Likert scale. Patterns of the qualitative study are by definition numbers, and the things that are numbered are qualities; therefore, I agree with Gorard (2001:6) who aptly states,

"'Quantitative and qualitative evidence refers to false dualism, and one [a dualism – author] that as researchers we would be better off without."

The truth value of research thus lies in its ability to show coexisting binaries and coexisting opposites (Newman and Benz 1998:46). Qualitative and quantitative methods may cross in particular situations. According to Newman and Benz (1998:31), what is not negotiable, however, is the overall linear connection between question-methods-truth value. Newman and Benz continue by saying that while it is necessary to accept that design decisions are 'emergent,' in good qualitative research the researcher's thinking is not emergent as the researcher's thinking about the conceptual linking of question-method-truth value must be linked, defensible and pre-determined. I cannot totally agree that the researcher's thinking should not be emergent. As far as procedure is concerned the researcher does have to remain focused on his/her initial research question or questions, the research design, the method and his/her stance towards the truth value. Thinking, however, encompasses more than that. Delving deeper into the research problem will inevitably open unforeseen avenues that need to be investigated and incorporated into the research findings to present a holistic picture. If this is not done, the research project may remain a clinical rendition of hypothesised truths, and thus compromise the validity of the results even more seriously.

4.1.6 Validity issues in research

In quantitative research, validity is concerned with the "extent to which the material collected by the researcher presents a true and accurate picture of what is claimed is being described" (Hitchcock and Hughes 2001:105). In qualitative research, the researcher follows where the data patterns take him/her in constructing a theory. Qualitative research may thus present an "'alternative' view of the 'truth' – one 'bound to human caprices'" (Freebody 2003:37). When considering the intangibility of truth, it seems a near impossibility to capture what Hitchcock and Hughes have called the "true and accurate picture." Subjecting the truth to "human caprices" also seems to

muddy the waters of scientific truthfulness. I therefore consider the combination of qualitative and quantitative research approaches into a mixed method approach as an opportunity to broaden the scope of my investigation resulting in a fuller and more responsible rendition of the total context of the researched situation. I believe that the validity of this research project will be justifiably reinforced through the employment of a mixed methods research approach.

4.2 Mixed methods/qualitative-quantitative continuum

Crucial to the objectivity of any inquiry – whether it is qualitative or quantitative – is the critical spirit in which it has been carried out. The presence of a critical spirit suggests that there can be degrees of objectivity. At one end of the continuum are inquiries that are objective because of the great care and responsiveness to criticism with which they have been carried out. Inquiries at the other end of the continuum are stamped as 'subjective,' in that they have not been sufficiently opened to the light of reason and criticism. Phillips (1990:35) regards most human inquiries as probably located somewhere near the middle.

Newman and Benz (1998:20) further argue that "[i]f we accept the premise that scientific knowledge is based upon verification methods, the contributions of the information derived from a qualitative (inductive) or quantitative (deductive) perspective can be assessed." In this way, each approach adds to the body of knowledge, as it builds on the information derived from the other approach. Neither the qualitative research philosophy nor the quantitative research philosophy encompasses the whole of research. Newman and Benz feel that "both are needed to conceptualise research holistically" (1998:20), since the qualitative-quantitative continuum is strengthened scientifically by its "self-correcting feedback loops" (1998:21). This in essence can be regarded as the premise of a mixed methods research approach. In this project, quantifiable data were retrieved from participants' responses to two questionnaires (see Addendum C), the standardised TALL (see 1.4 and 2.2.3), as well as from their test and examination results and their class

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attendance records. The qualitative data were derived mainly from interviews (see Addendum D), observations, entries in a personal journal, as well as written assignments of the participants.

Even though it does appear as if quantitative research continues to dominate social and behavioural science, science is both positivistic and naturalistic in its assumptions. According to Newman and Benz (1998:16), two fundamental epistemological requirements are made of the researcher. He/she should clearly and openly acknowledge the assumptions made about what counts as knowledge. Then consistency in those assumptions and the methods that derive from them should be maintained, since in research, knowledge and understanding are inseparably linked. For example, in an effort to gain knowledge by understanding the phenomenon of FG entry into tertiary education in the Southern African context certain assumptions were made about the demographics of the Namibian FG student. I assumed that, since the Namibian FG students were ESL speakers and had managed to gain relatively acceptable BICS but were direly lacking in CALP (see 2.2.3.5), academic and cognitive support, by means of complementing existing foundation courses in English communication, may enable them to adjust more easily to the demands of an English-medium university with a predominantly Western academic background. Consequently, the following questions prompted my decision to research the development of critical literacy in FG entrants at UNAM:

- How does the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM compare with that of FG entrants in developed countries?
- What is the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM?
- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in FG students at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

In the course of answering the questions I aimed at providing an in-depth description of FG students' developing abilities to interpret metaphoric language use in English,

in order to draw appropriate inferences. Since this project involved comparing different variables, as well as in-depth probing, to understand the phenomenon of FG entry into HE mixed method research with its holistic approach, as well as triangulating different data collection instruments and techniques, seemed to be the only justifiable way of going about gathering information that would contribute to understanding and knowing, through the self-correcting feedback loops that Newman and Benz (1998:21) described.

4.2.1 Strengths of the mixed methods research approach

Increasingly researchers such as Creswell (2003) and Johnson and Christensen (2004) have proposed that there is little difference between qualitative and quantitative inquiry. These scholars feel that bad work of using either approach is equally to be deplored; and good work using either approach is still – at best – only tentative. The good work in both cases will, however, be objective in the sense that it has been opened up to criticism, and the reasons and evidence offered in both cases will have withstood serious scrutiny. The works will have faced potential refutation, and insofar as they have survived, they will be regarded as worthy of further investigation (Phillips 1990:35). Another way of putting it is that in all types of inquiry, should the goal be to reach credible conclusions, there is an underlying epistemological similarity, namely the discovery of new information.

The fundamental strength of mixed method research, according to Johnson and Christensen (2004:162), is that a mixed methods approach provides an excellent way to conduct high-quality research. It ensures that the data collected have "complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses" (2004:50). I have found that the qualitative descriptions in this project which developed mainly from information elicited during the interviews corroborated quantifiable data collected in the questionnaires. Furthermore, quantitative data were often explained and enhanced by observations and information gleaned from discussions, both informally and in scheduled interviews, with the participants in the project.

4.2.3 Limitations of the mixed methods research approach

It can be difficult for one researcher to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research, especially if two or more approaches are expected to be executed concurrently. The researcher also has to learn about multiple methods and approaches and has to understand how to mix them appropriately. Mixed method research is also more expensive and more time consuming. For example, in this project I was dependent on a standardised test, the TALL that had to be bought from another university. Should this test be employed with a larger number of participants, it would constitute a huge financial constraint, especially if research is conducted as advocacy and not funded by a sponsor. Furthermore, since the test results of both TALL 1 and TALL 2 were analysed by the test designers, it constituted a fair amount of lost time before the analyses were available for interpretation.

Furthermore, some of the details of mixed method research still remain to be worked out by research methodologists. These are for example problems of paradigm mixing; how to qualitatively analyse quantitative data and how to interpret conflicting results (Johnson and Christensen 2004:414). People furthermore seem to have pre-existing expectations of research outcomes. It is therefore important for researchers to be aware of what biases they have. Only through awareness can one control for bias in the data-collection stage (Newman and Benz 1998:24). In order to control bias in this project, I kept a personal journal. In this journal I grounded myself and my position as researcher in this project continually through reflection and introspection.

Another way of minimising the limitations posed in mixed methods research, according to Johnson and Christensen (2004:423), is to make use of triangulation which seeks convergence, corroboration and correspondence of results obtained from employing different research methods.

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4.3 Triangulation

Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning but it can also mean verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. Since it is acknowledged that no observation or interpretation is perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the case is being seen (Stake 2006:37). Even though in this research project I was the only observer, second and third perspectives and more than one method of data collection were used as means of triangulation.

4.3.1 Functions of triangulation

In a research project triangulation serves to check carefully to decide how much the total description warrants generalisation. By attacking areas of inquiry from different angles, I collected data in this project which allowed confident generalisations of certain aspects of the investigated picture. The qualitative element underlying much of the quantifiable data ensured that the triangulation informed such generalisation; however, in order to conform to the tenets of triangulation, I decided to follow advice given by Stake (2006:37) and posed the following questions:

- Do the conclusions generalise across other times of day, other times of the year, other years?

  In this project a first questionnaire (see Addendum C) formed part of the data collection instrument. The questions containing much quantifiable data ensured that the profile of FG students at UNAM who consented to be participants in this project can be generalised to other students in the same category, even over successive years. Should the same instrument of data collection (the first questionnaire employed in this project) be employed that part of the research process which relies on questionnaire items could thus be successfully replicated.

- Do the conclusions generalise to other places?

  I considered literature by a large number of scholars and researchers concerning students in the South African context (Butler and Van Dyk 2004; Chimbganda 2001; Coetzee-Van Rooy and Verhoef 2000; Davids 2003; De Kadt 2003; Fandrych 2003; Hugo 2001; Johl 2002; Kamwangamalu 2001; Kasanga 2006; McGhie 2007; Parkinson 2003; Read 2004; Santa 2006; Van Schalkwyk 2008; Van Wyk 2001; Weideman 2002). All of them seem to agree that the academic underpreparedness of university students is reflected in their relatively poor results across disciplines; I therefore assume that the conclusions drawn from this project investigating students at UNAM can be generalised to a large extent to the South African context as well.

- Do the conclusions about the aggregate of these persons generalise to individuals?

  When for instance the demographic profile of the FG students at UNAM, computed from data collected by the first questionnaire conducted with the participants in this project, was probed in more depth during the interviews it indicated a close relationship between that of the general UNAM student population and the individual participants in this research project.

- Do findings of the interaction among individuals in this group pertain to other groups?

  Since the make-up of the group of students who participated in the study does not seem to differ from any other class groups at the Language Centre at UNAM during the period of this project, it can safely be said that the interaction among the individuals in this group pertained to other similar groups of students attending courses at the Language Centre in 2008..

- Do findings of the aggregate of these persons in the study generalise to a population?

  At the beginning of 2008 when the study commenced, a survey was conducted to establish the number of FG students attending the different courses at UNAM's Language Centre. It was found that the majority of students at that

time were FG students (see 1.1.2). The sample group of participants in the study is therefore highly representative of the total population of UNAM students attending courses at the Language Centre in 2008.

4.3.1 The value of triangulation

Triangulation encourages flexibility and can add some depth to the analysis. It can further potentially increase the validity of the data and, consequently, the analyses made of them (Hitchcock and Hughes 2001:180). In this project I found that the mixed methods approach allowed me the freedom to take up immediately, by means of another complementary data collection instrument or technique, those aspects arising from data collected by one technique or instrument that needed clarification. For example, it was initially not clear from the questionnaire answers why students were unhappy with the information they had received about UNAM prior to registering. During the personal interview they were encouraged to elaborate on the reasons why they were not satisfied. These elaborations provided a wealth of insight and understanding concerning the practical implications of misinformation and also of the naivety of FG students as far as the demands and requirements for participation at a tertiary institution are concerned. I can only agree with Stake (2006:36) that triangulation sometimes helps the researcher recognise that the situation is more complex than it was thought to be.

Another advantage of triangulation is that the more findings between different measuring instruments correspond, the more the researcher will be confident about his/her findings. The use of triangular techniques will help to overcome the problem of method-boundedness. In this project data collected by means of a quantitative method could immediately be supported and verified by data collected qualitatively. This proved to be an advantage as far as time issues and continuity were concerned. It also provided the opportunity to immediately investigate unforeseen areas of inquiry that were opened up by previous data collection. Therefore, I can relate closely to what Hitchcock and Hughes (2001:270) say about triangulation:

[A]s long as a new construct has the single operational definition that it received at birth, it is just a construct. When it gets two alternative operational definitions, it is beginning to be validated. When defining operations, because previous correlations are many, then it becomes reified.

When certain preconceived assumptions in this project were challenged my initial gut-feeling was to doubt the quantitative results. The in-depth exploration of such findings through studying of audio-taped conversations and journal entries not only confirmed some of these results but also brought other dimensions to them and illustrated the deeper issues and perceptions behind them.

Triangulation can furthermore be a useful technique where a researcher is engaged in case study. According to Cohen and Manion (1989:277),

The advantages of a particular technique for collecting witnesses' accounts of an event – *triangulation* – should be stressed. This is at the heart of the intention of the case study worker to respond to the multiplicity of perspectives present in a social situation. All accounts are considered in part to be expressive of the social position of each informant. [italics used in original text]

This represents the qualitative element; however, it also needs to show that specific viewpoints are held by more than one informant and could be generalised to the group studied. Choosing a case study design aided this project in representing, and representing fairly, these differing and sometimes conflicting viewpoints.

Anderson (2001:131) further advocates that triangulation also helps to eliminate bias, and can help detect errors or anomalies in the discoveries made by the researcher. It may, however, not completely eliminate bias but it could underscore elements of bias and help to put them into perspective. Therefore, "with proper triangulation it will be difficult to refute conclusions which follow logically from multiple data sources" (2001:150).

4.4 Research design and data collection

In determining the research design appropriate for this project, I felt that post-positivist assumptions often imposed structural laws and theories which were too

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rigid (Creswell 2003:9). Such a research design would not fit the marginalised individuals I had decided to investigate and for whom I intended to advocate an action agenda in order to support their tertiary learning.

4.4.1 Research design

When integrating quantitative and qualitative research methods in a case study design, one needs to consider the extent to which each method can bring a useful approach to the research topic, and the extent to which the shape of the discipline should be changed. According to Todd and Nerrlich (2004:236), while one approach still directly challenges the other, it remains questionable to say that both contribute equally.
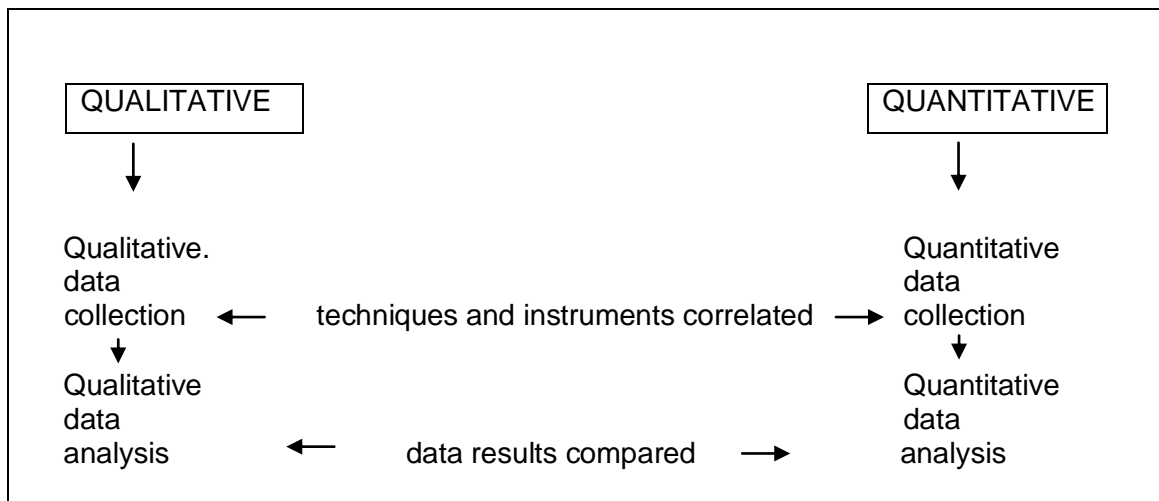
Figure 4.1: Concurrent triangulation strategy

The model of a concurrent triangulation strategy that I adopted for this case study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently in an attempt to cross-validate and corroborate the findings in the research project. It was assumed that the weaknesses inherent within one method would be offset to a large extent by the strengths of the other. Although the qualitative and quantitative data collection was concurrent, in practice the priority leant towards the qualitative approach. The results of the data collected and analysed by both the qualitative and the quantitative

methods will be integrated during the interpretation phase of the project. The qualitative data elaborated and verified much of the quantifiable information and provided a fuller picture than would have been presented when only either a quantitative or a qualitative approach was adopted in this case study.

4.4.1.1 Introduction to case study

In essence the term *case study* refers to the collection and presentation of detailed, relatively unstructured information from a range of sources about a particular individual, group or institution, especially including the accounts of the subjects themselves (Hitchcock and Hughes 2001:318). Freebody (2003:82) defines the distinctive feature of a case study as being not so much its source of data or pre-set procedures for its collection but rather its focus on attempting to document the story of a naturalistic-experiment-in-action. A case study includes

> ... the routine moves educators and learners make in a clearly known and readily defined discursive, conceptual and professional space (the 'case'), and the consequences of those people's actions, foreseen and otherwise, for learning and for the ongoing conduct of the research project.

The case study as a research design was found apt for this research project, since the progress of a specific, identifiable group of participants was followed. It therefore involved more than merely measuring pre- and post-intervention performances. It involved a holistic approach to the progress of the group as a total entity, as well as the progress of individual participants in the group.

A typical case study is further characterised as a concern with the rich and vivid description of events within the case which could provide a chronological narrative of events within the case, as well as an internal debate between the description of events and the analysis of events (Hitchcock and Hughes 2001:317). A focus upon particular individual actors or groups of actors and their perceptions, as well as a focus upon particular events within the case, demands the integral involvement of the researcher. It furthermore provides a way of presenting a case which is able to capture the richness of the situation. Since this project involved an educator-as-

researcher, I, as the researcher, became an indisputable part of a research project which was fuelled by those theoretical propositions I had developed over a fairly extensive period of contact with FG ESL students. These propositions were concerned with the underlying causes of the difficulties FG ESL students experience with cognitive academic and critical literacy proficiency at an English-medium academic institution.

4.4.1.2 Validity in the case study design

Usually a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved (Meriam 1998:19). Validity is considered an advantage of case studies because of their compatibility with reader understanding as they are generally regarded as sources that occur "naturally" in everyday life; the invalidity of one set of data can also be checked by conflicting or supporting results from other sources as a kind of triangulation (Newman and Benz 1998; Stake 2006). The direct access that the researcher has to the participants provides a sense of familiarity and openness which encourages the sharing of information that might not have been so readily available when conducting an experiment. For example, when allowing the case to develop and obtain a life of its own, I found that interpretation of data gradually came to rely less on the subjective stance of the researcher and more on the internal dynamics of the case itself.

According to Bassey (1999:75), issues of external validity are not meaningful in case studies; the alternative to reliability and validity is trustworthiness, or in other words, "the ethic of respect." This "ethic of respect" not only applies to the research process but more specifically to the participants in the process. I therefore felt compelled to honour the personal stance of participants towards their stories rather than to manipulate information they gave as cold scientific, and thus replicable, data. When, for example, a mature student readily accepted the fact that he had to walk in excess of 5 kilometres to UNAM and back every day as an absolutely normal part of his day,

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I had to refrain from regarding the physical distance of students' living quarters from UNAM as an impediment to their potential success at university.

Stake (2006:86) states that case-study methodology has potential for increased validity as one of its strengths because multiple data-collection techniques are used. The data collection instruments and techniques employed in this project will be described later in this chapter. To increase validity in this project further, the information collected was verified by looking for similarities in other research studies on FG entry done in developed countries, and the subsequent interpretations of experts.

4.4.1.3 Strengths of a case study research design

Case study data are paradoxically strong in reality but difficult to organise; however, the case study allows generalisation about an instance and from an instance to a class, as its strength lies in the attention to the subtlety and complexion of the case in its own right. This research design recognises the complexity and embeddedness of social truths by carefully attending to the social situation. I believe that my case study did represent something of the discrepancies and conflicts between viewpoints held by the participants. The best case studies are consequently capable of offering some support to alternative interpretations.

Furthermore, case studies, considered as products, may form an archive of descriptive material, sufficiently rich to admit subsequent support to alternative re-interpretations; thus, case studies are "a step to action" (Bassey 1999:33), as they present research or evaluation data in more publicly accessible form.

4.4.1.4 Limitations of a case study research design

Stake (2006:13) feels that too much emphasis on original research questions and contexts can distract researchers from recognising new issues when they emerge.

Conversely, too little emphasis on research questions can leave researchers underprepared for subtle evidence supporting the most important relationships. Many inexperienced case researchers, wanting to be open-minded and attempting not to force the study to be about their own interests, begin observations without a plan. To be sensitive to the meanings of activities as perceived by different people researchers should anticipate what some of the perspectives might be. It is not easy to find a perfect middle ground between under-anticipating and over-anticipating but a researcher should expect that good, hard thinking about the relative importance of research questions will increase the relevance of observations.

A totally bias-free stance is not possible in any situation where people interact with one another. It is further necessary to keep in mind that bias will be operating in a binary way between researcher and participant; it is consequently important for the researcher to be aware of his/her own subjective stance, and to allow further for the subjectivity of the participant in the research project. Integrity and honesty in collecting data and reporting the findings, while admitting a personal stance, will enhance the researcher's credibility as an alternative to how reliability and validity is envisaged in scientific research. The data collection for this project stretched over a full academic year. To assuage the fear that particular circumstances and perceptions might be forgotten, I kept a personal journal in which I jotted down important observations and perceptions throughout the course of the project. In order to maintain honesty and integrity, these journal entries were cross-referenced with data collected by other instruments and techniques.

4.5 Data collection

The data collection instruments employed and the data collected for this project will be described in detail in Chapters Five and Six. Since both quantifiable and qualitative data were collected concurrently the description of the instruments and techniques used are given below.

4.5.1 Questionnaires

I decided to employ two questionnaires (see 1.4). An initial questionnaire, consisting of mainly closed questions, was administered at the commencement of the project to obtain much of the quantifiable data concerning the profile and demographics of the FG entrants participating in the research project. This was followed up by another questionnaire closer to the end of the project, in which the open-ended questions elicited personal responses which were of a more subjective nature. The first questionnaire extracted information that enabled me to sequence the project into specific themes that needed clarification and follow-up probing. By means of triangulation through observation, interviews and journal-entries, information gained from the questionnaires was thus verified or elaborated upon and clarified where obscure. The second questionnaire afforded the respondents an opportunity to reflect upon their own positioning in the academic environment after one year's attendance at UNAM. It was also intended to establish the level at which these participants in the project were able to do self-assessment and introspection, after being exposed to exercises in critical thinking for one academic year.

Data collected by means of questionnaires themselves are usually more amendable to quantification than discursive data such as field notes and observation journals or the transcripts of oral language. Nunan (1999:143) warns that the construction of valid and reliable questionnaires is a highly specialised task, and there are a number of pitfalls that need to be avoided by the researcher. Therefore it was decided to pilot the first questionnaire employed in the study on another group of students at the Language Centre at the beginning of 2008. With the assistance of a qualified statistician, revisions were made to ensure not only the clarity of the questions but also the quantifiability of the data thus collected.

Questionnaires are usually employed only once at the commencement of a research project. In this project I decided to conduct two separate questionnaires surveys with the participants. The first questionnaire was intended as an introduction to the

research project, not only for the researcher but also for the participants. By ensuring the anonymity of participants' answers, as well as the relative harmlessness of the questions in the questionnaire, I further aimed at reassuring the participants in the project that they were in a safe environment, and that their integrity would not be abused during subsequent data collection for this project. The follow-up questionnaire later in the project elicited answers of a more reflective nature from the participants.

4.5.1.1 Strengths of the questionnaire

Questionnaires are not restricted to a single research method, and can be used to collect data with multiple research methods. I found the questionnaire also valuable as a data collection instrument, since both quantifiable, as well as qualitative data, could be collected simultaneously. This duality enabled me to broaden my perspectives and to bring more depth to some of the numerical data retrieved.

I agree with Johnson and Christensen (2004:164) that the questionnaire is a very versatile tool in educational research. Furthermore, since certain questionnaire items are quantifiable and others of a more qualitative nature, the questionnaire becomes a convenient instrument of data collection in a mixed method approach.

4.5.1.2 Limitations of the questionnaire

The compilation of the questionnaire is inherently bound to the research questions; therefore, should questionnaire items deviate from aspects related to the research question/s, the collected data may give a distorted view of the participants' views. The researcher also needs to be aware of the trap of asking leading or pointless questions. In this project such pitfalls were circumvented by piloting the first questionnaire, and by following up the first questionnaire with personal interviews which concentrated on the elaboration of respondents' views concerning specific issues raised in the questionnaire. Due to the descriptive nature of the responses

required in the second questionnaire, I did not pilot it first on another group of students. I did, however, consult a colleague who worked through the questions in this second questionnaire with me before I distributed it among the participants. I further sought to triangulate these data with data retrieved through both the quantitative instruments and the qualitative techniques of data collection employed in the rest of the project.

I further remained aware that if questionnaire items were not very carefully phrased the participants could feel affronted by offensive language; furthermore, ambiguous questions could lead to misinterpretation by the respondents and thus the giving of useless information. In order to prevent this from happening, the first questionnaire was not only piloted on another group of students but I, as the researcher, solely administered both questionnaires, and could consequently clarify problem questions for respondents where necessary. To further ensure that respondents did not feel inhibited when answering questions of a personal nature, they were asked to identify themselves only by student number and signature (as consent for me to use personal data collected in this project). They were only asked to do so in the very last sections of both the questionnaires.

Another possible limitation is that questionnaires could be too long and contain too many questions; such questionnaires may not be received positively by participants and the full scope of information may not be given to the researcher. To circumvent this problem, I decided to make use of two separate questionnaires at different stages of the research project.

Despite the fact that the questionnaire has limitations, I found it an effective data collection technique especially in laying the foundation of the research project for both the researcher and the participants in the project.

4.5.2 Interviews

In order to triangulate mainly the quantifiable data collected by means of the first questionnaire, personal interviews were conducted with the participants to gather information that could not be directly observed (Newman and Benz 1998:67). Partially structured interviews, designed to collect more or less the same data from each respondent, were consequently conducted, since, as a research strategy, the interview is regarded as having the potential to provide more complete and accurate information than other techniques. Its 'naturalness' lends validity to the information obtained; however, Newman and Benz (1998:68) warn that much still rests on the quality of the interviewing process that the researcher employs. I found that, in the semi-structured interview, the same themes could be addressed with all the participants (see Addendum D). This contributed a great deal to the validity and integrity of the information gained.

Holstein and Gubrium (1997:113) state that interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives. Interviews are special forms of conversation. The narratives that are produced may be as truncated as forced-choice survey answers or as elaborate as oral life histories but they are all constructed *in situ*, as products of the talk between interviewer and participants. All knowledge is obtained from the actions undertaken to obtain it. I treated interviewing as a social encounter in which knowledge was constructed. I further respected the decision of six of the participants in the project not to attend the interview sessions. Since I regarded the interviews as not merely a neutral conduit or source of distortion (1997:114), it became instead a site of, and occasion for, producing reportable knowledge itself.

The goal in presenting researched data from interviewed participants is to show how the interview responses were produced in the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent, without losing sight of the meaning produced or the circumstances that condition the meaning-making process. The analytic objective of

this project was not merely to describe the situated production of talk but to show how what was being said related to the experiences and lives being studied. It was intended not only to categorise information gained in this way as relevant to the research project but also to give an individual identity to the case investigated.

To be a 'good listener,' the interviewer does best to present him/herself as someone who is neither firmly entrenched in the mainstream nor too far at any particular margin. Understandably, it was difficult to maintain a position of neutrality throughout the interview process, especially as most of the students regarded me naturally as a person they could confide in. It was thus with this in the back of my mind that I attended to the individual bits of story, in order to complete the bigger picture. Miller and Glasner (1997:113) feel that "[u]ltimately though, it is not where the interviewer locates him/herself that is of greatest relevance to interviewees … interviewees' principal concerns focus upon what will become of the interview." Those concerns extend beyond matters such as protection of confidentiality. Interviewees want to know what becomes of their words. The participants in this project were adamant that their stories were representative of many of those of their colleagues, and that it was of great importance that their stories be heard. They did not, however, respond to the interview from a position of need but rather from a position of pride and acceptance of their debilitating current situations, in order to reach the ultimate greater goal of success in tertiary studies.

When writing up findings from interview data, I attempted to document the meaning-making process. With ample illustration and reference to records of talk, I wanted to describe the complex discursive activities through which my respondents produced meaning. The goal was to explicate how meanings, their linkages and horizons were constituted both in relation to and within the interview environment. This report therefore does not summarise and organise what the interview respondents said; it rather deconstructs the respondents' talk to show the reader both the hows and the whats of the narrative dramas conveyed, which increasingly mirror the interview

society, the FG entrant at UNAM. I consequently quoted interviewees' responses to questions verbatim.

4.5.2.1. Strengths of the interview as a data collection technique

Interviewees sometimes respond to interviewers through the use of familiar narrative constructs rather than by providing meaningful insights into their subjective views (Miller and Glassner 1997:101). Cultural stories are, however, based in part on stereotypes (the "collective story" which gives voice to those who are silenced or marginalised in the cultural story). One of the strengths of qualitative interviewing is therefore its capacity to access self-reflectiveness among interview subjects, leading to a greater likelihood of the telling of collective stories. For example, one of the 'stories' investigated in this project was the living conditions of FG students while they are attending UNAM. Whereas the questionnaire reported that the majority of students resided with 'relatives,' the elicited elaboration on this theme in the subsequent interviews provided the many prismatic dimensions of the phrase "residing with relatives."

When employed as a source of triangulation, the interview has considerable value. For interviewers in the interactional tradition, interview subjects construct not just narratives but social worlds. Those researchers, who aim to understand and document others' understanding, choose qualitative interviewing because it provides them with a means of exploring the points of view of their research subjects, while granting these points of view the culturally honoured status of reality. I found that if research *per se* is regarded as an attempt to gain knowledge, being allowed by the interviewees to see their social world through their eyes was probably one of the greatest advantages of the interview as an instrument of data collection in this project.

4.5.2.2 Limitations of the interview as a data collection technique

While most researchers acknowledge the interactional character of the interview, the technical literature on interviewing stresses the need to keep that interaction strictly in check. I remained aware while conducting the interviews that the interview conversation was a potential source of bias, error, misunderstanding or misdirection; thus, a persistent set of problems to be controlled. According to Holstein and Gubrium (1997:113), the corrective is simple: if the interviewer asks questions properly, the respondent will give the desired information. I found that the interview process did provide me with the opportunity, when encountering bias or misunderstanding, to redirect by means of additional questions or asking for explanations or elaboration of the points made.

Holstein and Grubium (1997:116) find that regardless of the type of interview, there is always an image of the research *subject* lurking behind persons placed in the role of interview respondent. In traditional approaches participants are basically conceived as passive *vessels of answers* for experiential questions put to respondents by interviewers. Furthermore, according to Miller and Glassner (1997:99), positivists have as goal "the creation of the 'pure' interview – enacted in a sterilized context, in such a way that it comes as close as possible to providing a 'mirror reflection' of the reality that exists in the social world." It is evident that this position can be critiqued in terms of both its feasibility and its desirability. On the other hand, radical social construents suggest that no knowledge about a reality that is 'out there' in the social world can be obtained from the interview, because the interview is obviously and exclusively an interview between the interviewer and the interview subject in which both participants create and construct narrative versions of the social world. The problem with looking at these narratives as representative of some 'truth' in the world is that they are context-specific, invented to fit the demands of the interactive context of the interview, and reproductive of nothing more or less. In this research project it was experienced as a real challenge that the interview was 'subject bound', since the data collected by this technique were meant to triangulate information received in the

questionnaire. In defence it needs to be said that even ordinary conversations are often subject-bound and the information extracted from such discourse will not really be regarded as being forced.

In the qualitative interview process the coding, categorisation and typology of stories result in the telling of only parts of stories rather than presenting them in their wholeness. When the researcher's own subjectivity is added, the emerging picture might indeed be skew. Numerous levels of representations occur from the moment of 'primary' experience to the reading of researchers' textual presentations of findings. This includes the level of attending to the experience, telling it to the researcher, transcribing and analysing what is told, and the reading of the final report; however, I have found that people organise their personal biographies and understand them through the stories they create to explain and justify their life experiences. Participation in a culture furthermore includes participation in the narratives of that culture, as well as a general understanding of the stock of meanings and their relationship to each other. Miller and Glassner (1997:104) caution that an interviewer who presents him/herself as either too deeply committed to these interests and that credo, or as clearly outside of them, restricts which cultural stories interviewees may tell and how these will be told. When the researcher becomes observer-as-participant in the case study, it is natural that a higher level of involvement with the participants will be present. I feel that my honesty in admitting this involvement not only to myself, but also to the report readers, may actually add to the depth of the case studied.

4.5.2.3 Validity of the interview as data collection technique

From a traditional standpoint, the objectivity or truth of interview responses might be assessed in terms of reliability (the extent to which questioning yields the same answers whenever and wherever it is carried out) and validity (the extent to which enquiry yields the 'correct' answers). When the interview is seen as dynamic, meaning-making is constructed. While interest in the content of answers persists it is

primarily in how and what the active subject or respondent, in collaboration with an equally active interviewer, produces and conveys the active subject/respondent experience under the interpretative circumstances at hand. One cannot simply expect answers on one occasion to replicate those on another, since they emerge from different circumstances of production (Holstein and Grubium 1997:117). Similarly, the validity of answers derives not from their correspondence to meanings held within the respondent but from the ability to convey situated experiential realities in terms that are locally comprehensible.

Limitations to validity exist when the subjective bias of an interviewer affects the interpretation of the data in ways that misrepresent the subjects' reality; interviewer bias is consequently often seen as the "major weakness" of this method (Newman and Benz 1998:68). These invalidations may, however, be more likely with the unstructured interview than with the structured or partially structured interview as conducted in this project. Furthermore, by categorising interview information into specific themes, I made provision for the quantifiability of much of the data collected. Through triangulation of concurrently collected data by means of, for example, observations and answers to specific questionnaire items, the interview as part of the triangulation contributed to the validity of the corpus of data collected for this project.

4.5.3 Observation as a data collection technique

Throughout this research project observation was employed as a means of triangulating data collected through other instruments rather than as a collection technique on its own. Observation can be defined as the watching of behavioural patterns of people in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest; therefore, the observer needs to be as unobtrusive as possible so as not to affect what is being observed (Johnson and Christensen 2004:186). Observation is an important way of collecting information about people because people do not always do what they say they do. "It is a maxim in the social and behavioral sciences that attitudes and behavior are not always congruent" (2004:186).

While conducting observations, the researcher can take on a variety of different roles, each with its strengths and possible weaknesses. In this project the role of observer-as-participant was adopted. The participants were fully aware that they were part of a research study. While a possible disadvantage of the observer-as-participant role is that it is more difficult to obtain an insider's view it appears to be easier to maintain objectivity and neutrality. Johnson and Christensen (2004:189) regard it as not surprising that the participant-as-observer and observer-participant styles of observation are the most commonly used by researchers.

4.5.3.1 Validity of observation as a data collection technique

A limitation of observation as a data collection technique may be that, as observers adapt to their role as participating members of the group, they may become increasingly blinded to the peculiarities they are supposed to observe. As friendships with the members of the group develop, an observer is likely to lose objectivity and accuracy in rating things as they are. All these validity concerns affect both the participants and the observer. Despite these pitfalls, Newman and Benz (1998) state that there is validity in using observation as a research method when studying certain phenomena, such as non-verbal behaviour. Observation is regarded as a "highly appropriate" (1998:59) technique, as it designates a first priority to the observer's understanding of the participant's point of view.

Using observations only for studying those phenomena that are appropriate to the research method increases validity (Newman and Benz 1998:60). Although it is difficult not to become fully immersed in the group as an observer-as-participant, the validity of data gained by means of observations can be strengthened if the observer continually grounds him/herself by revisiting his/her own definition of the role initially adopted, and by triangulating data by means of observations with data collected by other techniques. Due to the subjective nature of this project, observation was an important source of knowledge formation. Since I kept a personal journal throughout

in which I recorded my personal fear of possible biases, and in which I constantly attempted to realign my focus this technique of data collection contributed to the triangulation present in the data collection instruments and techniques.

4.5.3.2 Strengths of observation as a data collection technique

According to Creswell (2003:186), during observations the researcher can record information as it is revealed, and unusual aspects can be noticed during the observation. In this project, for instance, observations made while the participants were reading aloud the character roles in the play they were studying opened up and elaborated further problem areas concerning the UNAM ESL FG entrants' proficiency in English. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six. Such observations consequently became focuses of further areas of inquiry and elaboration and thus contributed to triangulation of data collected.

Observation is further useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for participants to discuss. Although many students in this project, due to their cultural upbringing, were hesitant to reflect negatively on the quality of the English they were taught by their high school teachers, through observation of their working English, I recognised first-hand a number of linguistic problems which illustrated the poor secondary teaching of English as a language of communication they had received at secondary school level, and the corresponding debilitating effect it had on their academic language proficiency.

4.5.3.3 Limitations of observation as a data collection technique

A number of limitations of observation as a data collection technique have been described, and first time researchers especially would do well to heed them. One limitation is that researchers may be seen as intrusive, and 'private' information may be observed that the researcher cannot report. The researcher may not have good attending and observation skills. Certain participants may present special problems

in gaining rapport (Creswell 2003:186). Human observers are subject to influences, such as fatigue, boredom and learning processes. Therefore, it may be a good idea to use more than one observer (Johnson and Christensen 2004:237). Concerning the observer-as-participant stance that was taken in this project, it was not possible to involve another observer in the project. In order therefore to counter-act a too personal, and thus possibly biased approach to quantifiable data, a colleague peer-marked the participants' final examination essay, which was employed as another source of data in this project, and which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six. In this way I attempted to verify my own impression of the written work of the students by means of the impartial assessment by my colleague of the same participants' work.

That a number of difficulties can arise through prejudice and possible stereotyping by the researcher is undeniable. Objective observation therefore demands a disciplined approach by the observer in order to gain data that can contribute towards the full dimensions of the research project. Due to its subjectivity and potential bias, data collected by observation need to be regarded as subordinate and only complementary in triangulating data collected by other techniques. The observations in this project were never meant to constitute tangible data but served only to confirm or reject impressions gained through analysing mainly quantifiable data, and to indicate further avenues of investigation where necessary in the project.

4.6 Data analysis

The mass of data collected for this project needed to be analysed and subsequently organised. I do appreciate that the data collected were "already different to the social reality they were taken from" (Holliday 2007:92). Because this is the case, I intend to demonstrate explicitly how the studied social reality had been constructed, by submitting to emerging patterns of data, and by engaging strategically and creatively with the complexities of realities that go beyond the initial design. Since I agree with Holliday (2007:93) that reporting the responses of each participant as a set of

individual results inhibits the emergence of independent realities, I took a thematic approach in which all the data were taken holistically and rearranged under themes running through the totality of the programme. Such a thematic appraoch is regarded as "the classic way to maintain these principles" (2007:94).

4.6.1 Data analysis in mixed methods research

Since the approach I adopted in this project was a mixed methods design, analysis occurred both within the quantitative and qualitative approach, as well as between the two approaches. Where appropriate, I conducted quantitative analysis on qualitative data and/or performed qualitative analysis on quantitative data. Words and themes were thus converted to numbers and quantitative scales to categories based on numeric scales as suggested by Johnson and Christensen (2004:425).

In the data analysis I further included descriptions of the validity checks of both quantitative and qualitative data and the accuracy of the qualitative findings. As far as the quantitative data analysis is concerned, this includes the validity and reliability of the instruments employed in the project, as well as the threats to internal validity. As far as the qualitative data analysis is concerned, I clarified the strategies that were used to check the accuracy of the findings. This consequently included triangulating data sources, member-checking and detailed descriptions as suggested by Creswell (2003:221).

4.6.2 Data analysis of quantitative data

In the analysis of the quantifiable data, a variety of instruments such as attitude scales, results from surveys, statistics on file or measurements of performance were employed. These are described in detail in Chapters Five and Six.

4.6.3 Data analysis in qualitative research

My approach to this project was holistic but I did not ignore the parts of the whole because an analysis of the parts was essential to an understanding of the whole project. The final report consequently includes rich and holistic descriptions of the study group, as well as verbatim quotations from members of the group where appropriate, to illustrate conclusions drawn from the raw data.

As I relied to a great extent on interview data as far as the profile of the FG students was concerned, and on observations as far as the development of their critical literacy was concerned, I triangulated my own observations with other data sources to corroborate my findings from data collected by either quantitative instruments or qualitative techniques. I examined the context in which the participants were situated in order to describe the particulars of the physical and social settings, including the time, place and situation in which the study was conducted. I consequently became more aware of the relationship between the context and the observed behaviour. This will serve to assist the readers of the report to know where and to whom they can apply these research results.

4.7 Ethical matters

Although the research project was primarily undertaken to serve as the empirical foundation for this dissertation, the rationale behind it was furthermore to investigate the current student profile of FG entrants at UNAM. I was throughout the research project aware of the fact that I was working with people and not with cold data. I maintained a position of respectful distance from the participants and allowed them to tell me their story.

Before commencing with the project, I had a serious discussion with the class group of ULEG students whom I identified as a possible group of participants. The students were not only informed of the study and the context of the data that would be

collected but they were also questioned as to whether they regarded the project as valid and whether they thought there was a specific need to demarcate and characterise the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM. Each of the participants indicated willingness to become part of the project and they indicated their consent by a signature at the end of the first questionnaire (see Addendum C). During the course of the project six of the participants indicated that they did not feel comfortable to attend the personal interview, an issue that I respected. In the second questionnaire especially some of the participants who did not feel at ease with the more personal questions posed were reassured that if they do not answer questions, no harm would have been done, either to the project or to their own image, as those data were never related to individual participants but were quantitatively addressed and interpreted.

 Furthermore, before commencing with the project in 2008 I obtained the consent of the Director of the UNAM Language Centre to do the investigation with one of the ULEG class groups (see Addendum G). At that stage the ULEG course was still known under its old acronym of UCG. The Director was kept informed of the progress made throughout the project and he endorsed my work both through goodwill and through reference to the research in Language Centre meetings.

4.8 Reflections

As the thematic structure of data analysis and presentation is very different from the structure that governs data collection in more traditional approaches, my aim in the data collection process of this project was to reflect as honestly as possible those influences I brought to such thematic analyses of the data collected. I did this through on-going examination of my own motivation as captured in my personal journal. The themes employed in the analysis of the data themselves, although emergent, were certainly also influenced by questions or issues (Holliday 2007:97) that I brought to the research from my original preoccupations. A process of cross-pollination, however, emerged in the course of the project, as new insights gained through the

data collected, especially by means of qualitative techniques, informed and aligned previous preoccupations with the emergent structure of the project as it progressed.

In retrospect, it is difficult to imagine that either a quantitative or qualitative research design alone would have allowed me to capture the richness of this case study in which I employed a mixed methods research approach.

4.9 Concluding summary

In Chapter Four the rationale for employing a mixed methods research approach when conducting research in a case study was given by comparing the strengths and limitations of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches with that of a mixed methods research approach. A discussion of triangulation introduced the different techniques and instruments that were employed to collect the empirical data in this project. Finally a brief look was taken at the measures of data analysis employed, in order to interpret the quantitative data and to describe the case by means of the qualitative data collected.

In both Chapters Five and Six the data collected in this case study will be analysed and interpreted in accordance with the themes that were identified. Chapter Five comprises a detailed description of the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM. These findings are related and compared to findings by international scholars of FG students in developed countries. Correspondences and discrepancies between FG entry in developing countries and FG entry in developed countries will also be illustrated.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

THE CURRENT SITUATION AT UNAM

Chapter Four described the research process of decision-making concerning the design of this research project, the rationale for decisions made, as well as how these decisions were executed. To conclude the chapter, an overview of the data analysis process was provided.

Chapter Five records the analysis and interpretation of the data which explain and define distinguishing characteristics of FG entry at UNAM in more detail by setting out findings extracted from collected data. The data thus collected and analysed will be interpreted against the background provided in Chapter Two of studies that had been conducted to describe the profile of FG entrants and students in developed countries. Areas of overlap and of difference will be identified and discussed.

In order to analyse comprehensively and interpret data obtained in this research project, it is necessary to revisit the rationale that initiated this investigation. One of the questions that prompted my decision to research the development of critical literacy in FG entrants at the UNAM is as follows:

- How does the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM compare with that of FG entrants in developed countries?

In order to answer this question, I decided to conduct a case study with a group of students who attended the ULEG course (see 1.1.1) at the Language Centre at UNAM in 2008. Firstly I wanted to establish and describe the demographic profile of FG ESL students attending UNAM; subsequently, I wanted to study their levels of

academic and critical literacy, not only on entering tertiary education but also their progress and development throughout their first year of academic studies. I therefore supplemented the normal content of the ULEG course with a programme in English literature written by African authors. This should act as the basis for enhancing students' understanding of metaphor in English to enhance their abilities to draw more appropriate and critical inferences from academic texts. This programme will be discussed in depth in Chapter Six.

This research project thus spans four main areas of research. The first area was concerned with the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM. The second area of research was the investigation of FG entrants' levels, not only of academic literacy, but also of their abilities to employ critical thinking in academic situations. The third part of this project comprised a programme in African English literature which focused mainly on awareness-raising of the existence and use of mainly structural but also ontological, poetic and some orientational metaphors (see 2.4.2), in order to enhance students' ability to draw inferences (see 3.2.1), when studying academic texts or while attending academic lectures. It was deemed necessary to concentrate on this fourth area of awareness-raising of the use of metaphor in the English language, as I became increasingly aware over an extended period of teaching first year ESL students that students' answers to comprehension questions reflected that they often did not draw appropriate inferences (see 1.2) or correctly understood the finer nuances, particularly the use of metaphor (see 3.1), in academic texts. In this chapter I will present an in-depth discussion of the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM as represented by the participants in this research project. The analysis and interpretation of the data collected to illuminate the last three areas of enquiry will be discussed in Chapter Six.

It is mainly in answering the third and fourth research questions that the true nature of the mixed methodology employed in this project emerged. In order to obtain relevant data, I collected both quantitative, as well as qualitative data, concurrently although the balance leant towards the qualitative. In order to triangulate (see 4.3)

the data collected I employed a variety of data collection instruments and techniques (see 4.5).

Quantitative data were collected by means of certain of the items in the two separate questionnaires that participants completed (See Addenda C). I furthermore employed the same TALL [1] (see 1.4 and 2.2.3) at the beginning of the year, as well as at the end of the year, to compare the students' scores. The available sample is copyright protected. The TALL, as well as the data collected by this instrument, will be discussed in depth in Chapter Six. I also collected information about the class attendance of each student. Much of these data were employed to establish the students' academic and critical literacy levels at the beginning, during and at the end of the project.

The qualitative data were collected through interviews and observations. A number of questionnaire items, especially in the second questionnaire, also revealed qualitative data. I further analysed two written assignments that I had given to the participants. In those assignments personal views concerning specific issues of campus life were elicited. Those data will be described later in this chapter. I also enlisted the assistance of a colleague to assess the examination essays of the participants in order to corroborate, or not, my perceptions of their performance. This will be discussed in Chapter Six. As a means of self-reflection I kept a journal in which I recorded my own perceptions and motivations in this project. Throughout this chapter and the next I will report these reflections as documented in the journal to illuminate my personal stance towards the project at different stages in the process of investigation.

5.1 The First-Generation entrant at the University of Namibia

Before I commenced this project, I conducted a survey with 100 ULCE students in 2007 (see 1.1.2). 50% of the students indicated that both their parents had never

[1]. http://www.up.ac.za/academic/humanities/eng/eng/unitlangskills/eng/per.htm

attended formal schooling at all, 50% of the remaining students reported that the highest qualification of one or both of the parents was Grade 12 and the rest ranged between Grade 5 and Grade 10. 51.5% of this total group of students also attended university for the first time themselves. It consequently was evident that the large majority of students attending UNAM fell in the framework of FG entry into HE.

From the survey it was clear that apart from the demands made by the academic environment, the FG entrants often had to live in conditions and environments that were not at all conducive to tertiary studies. I realised that to really understand the plight of these students, it would be necessary to undertake an in-depth study of the current general profile of FG entry at UNAM. It is important that university authorities should be informed of the existence, as well as the special profile and requirements of this group, and it is a very large group, of UNAM students. I thus invited the FG entrants in one class group of ULEG (see 1.1.1) to become participants in this research project.

The issues pertaining to the facilitation, or not, of FG students' entry into HE led to the questions in the first questionnaire that I conducted with the participants in this research project. I further investigated some of the issues raised by studies conducted in developed countries regarding FG entry into HE. The work done specifically by Penrose (2002), Pike and Kuh (2005) and Thomas and Quinn (2007) was employed as the framework of the first questionnaire in this project.

The participants completed the first questionnaire after the purpose and scope of the research project had been discussed with them and they had indicated their readiness to participate in the project. On Monday, 7 April 2008, they assembled as prearranged for a class period and completed the questionnaire that I handed to them. I clarified the questions where needed to ensure that the information given was in correspondence with the specific question. The second questionnaire was distributed on Monday, 11 October 2008, after arrangements had been made with the participants to complete it at the beginning of one of their scheduled ULEG lecture

sessions. This second questionnaire comprised some closed questions but was more concerned with the participants' own reflections towards the end of their first year at university. The open-ended questions allowed them the opportunity to give personal comments which were descriptively analysed.

The quantifiable data retrieved from answers given in the first questionnaire were expanded and elaborated upon in the personal semi-structured interviews (see Addendum D) conducted with the participants. Six of the participants opted not to attend these interviews. To increase the validity of the qualitative data obtained from the interviews, I committed myself to the listener-as-observer position in the interview. Furthermore, in order for the participants to tell their stories themselves, I have made use of verbatim quotations of their spoken, as well as written, comments as retrieved by the different collection instruments and techniques employed in this project.

To facilitate my discussion of the FG student at UNAM, I identified a number of themes which I will discuss under the following subheadings in this chapter.

FG entry into and continuation in HE

- Demographic profile of participating FG entrants

- Financial barriers to successful entry and continuation in HE

- Value of education for FG entrants

- Living conditions of FG entrants while attending university

  - Accommodation

  - Transport

- FG entrants' sense of belonging to the university

  - Participating in academic associations and societies on campus

  - Attitudes towards the social environment of the university

  - Relationships with lecturers and peers in the academic environment

  - FG entrants' levels of confidence

  - FG entrants' perceptions of their futures

- Parents/families' attitudes towards the FG entrant

- Family structure of FG entrants

The data that provided the information employed in the discussion of the FG Namibian entrants' profile as represented by the participants in this project and categorised in the themes mentioned were obtained by means of the following data collection instruments and techniques:

Table 5.1: Summary of data collection instruments and techniques used: The FG
entrant

Demographic profile of participating FG entrants	Questionnaire 1: B 1, 2, 3, 4 Questionnaire 2: 2, 10, 13
Financial barriers to successful entry and physical persistence in HE	Questionnaire 1: A 10, 11, 13 Questionnaire 2: 1 and 3 Interview question: 4
Value of education for FG entrants	Questionnaire 2: 15 Interview question: 6
FG entrant and the sense of belonging to the academic culture	Interview question: 5a and 5c Questionnaire 2: 15
Participation in academic associations and societies	Interview question: 5b
Attitudes towards the social environment of the university	Questionnaire 2: 15, 19, 20
Relationships with colleagues and lecturers in the academic environment	Class assignments: - First year students and stress - The UNAM dress code
Levels of confidence concerning success	Questionnaire 1: A 14 Questionnaire 2: 17 and 18
FG entrants' perceptions of their futures	Interview questions: 7 Questionnaire 2: 16
Parents/families' attitudes towards the FG entrant	Questionnaire 1: A 12 Interview question: 6a
Family structure of FG students	Questionnaire 1: B 3 Questionnaire 2: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12
Living conditions of students while attending university - Accommodation - Transport	Questionnaire 1: A 8 Interview question: 5 5a 5b

As a post-modern concept, HE is becoming globally less the exclusive domain of the more affluent members of societies and more the world explored by members of a society previously left behind as far as education opportunities were concerned. This is not only the situation in developing countries but also in developed countries where much room is being made for previously educationally marginalised groups.

FG entry into HE has thus become a new and expanding field of interest for a large number of scholars (Bui 2005; Leathwood and O'Connell 2003; Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006; McConnell 2000; Pascarella and Terenzini 1991; Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005; Richard *et al.* 1990: Thomas and Quinn 2007; Zwerling and London 1990).

From the studies conducted, it appears that FG students in developed countries attend mainly Community Colleges and that they are usually from a minority group of the student population. Consequently their barriers to successful tertiary education are related to a large extent to affective factors such as isolation and problems with acculturation and anticipatory socialisation (McCarron and Inkelas 2006: Pike and Kuh 2005). Whereas the FG students in developed countries at Community Colleges and other tertiary institutions are thus studied and treated as minority groups by the scholars interested in their profile, in Namibia, a developing country, the situation seems to be completely reversed. Only a small percentage of the students at UNAM are CG students, thus, forming the minority group. The CG students in Namibia are usually in the privileged position of being able to attend tertiary institutions in South Africa or even abroad – often the alma mater of their parents.

In my undertaking to research the FG entrant in the Namibian context of HE, I was cautioned from the beginning of the project by what Thomas and Quinn (2007:65) had said about FG students:

> Ultimately First-Generation entry is contradictory and indeed a conflicted position which represents a crossroads for the family from one mode of being outside university into one where the family is both inside and outside, drawing from memory to negotiate and make sense of the situation.

Therefore, when researching FG entry into HE I heeded the warning to guard against a deficit model (Thomas and Quinn 2007:62) of FG entry in which these students would be posited as lacking. This warning remained uppermost in my orientation towards this project as I was handling and analysing the data collected in this project.

To establish what percentage of the UNAM students are FG, a survey involving all the students attending classes at the Language Centre at the beginning of 2008 was conducted. Of the approximately 1100 students who attended courses at the Language Centre in the first semester of 2008, 1078 responded. The survey was intended to establish the numbers of FG and CG students in each of the three foundation courses offered at the Language Centre (see 1.1.1).

In the ULEA course it was found that the previously registered students in this course numbered 86 FG compared to 65 previously registered CG students. This already indicated that most of the FG students did not have the required minimum marks for English in a previous year at UNAM to be enrolled for this course on entering the institution, and they most probably had to complete the ULCE course first.

In the ULCE course it was found that of the previously registered FG students 110 were enrolled for the ULCE course compared to 23 CG students, also previously registered. These students did not manage to score above a C-symbol for English in their school-exit examinations and could thus not qualify for the ULEA course. This further indicated that they had to do the ULEG course in a previous year because of their low marks in English.

In the ULEG course there were also 46 FG students who were previously registered at UNAM compared to the 12 CG students who were also previously registered. As often occurs with FG students, due to a myriad of complications and difficulties in their study careers, they might have had to leave the university to return later as mature-age students.
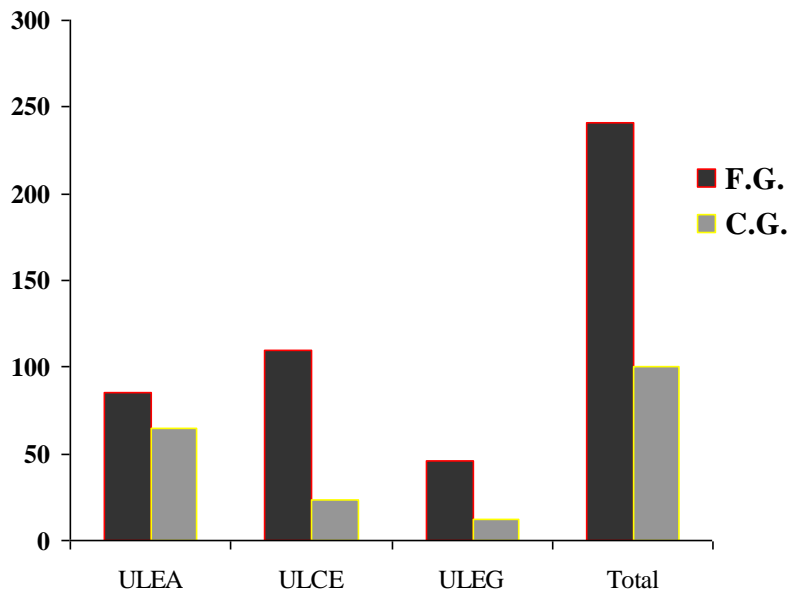
Figure 5.1: Distribution of FG and CG students at UNAM in 2008

When the data concerning the FG entrants attending courses at the Language Centre in 2008 were analysed, it indicated that in the ULEA course 145 FG entrants, compared to 219 CG entrants, were enrolled. This high number of CG entrants underscored the assumption that CG students most probably came from better resourced urban schools as they had to have scored high marks for English at school-exit level to be able to join the ULEA classes.

In the ULCE course there were 118 FG entrants compared to the 97 CG entrants. From this data it was clear that the low marks in English of the FG entrants forced them to first do this elementary course before advancing to the EAP course.

When the numbers for the ULEG group were compared, it was found that there were 124 FG entrants compared to the 65 CG entrants in the ULEA course. It was a clear indication that this large number of FG entrants, of whom many were school-leavers, had not achieved the minimum marks for English and had to take the year course in General Communication before advancing to the two other semester courses. The

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relatively small number of CG entrants indicated that the CG entrants probably attained better marks in English at the end of their school careers. This would place them immediately in a more advantageous position at the beginning of their tertiary education.
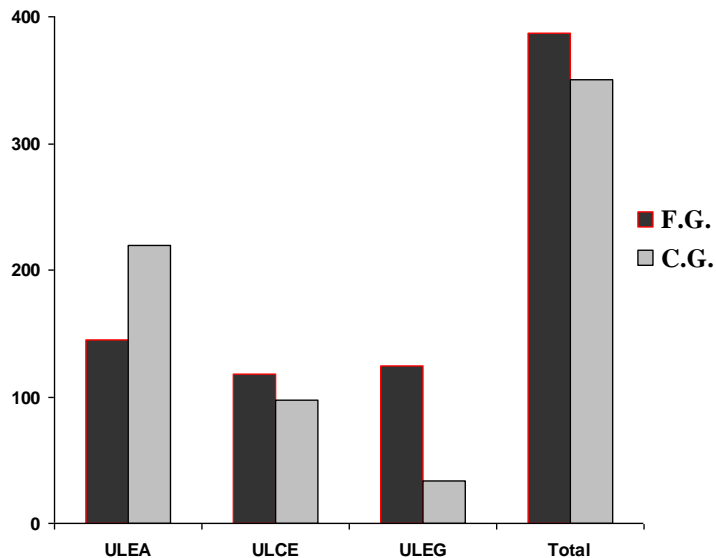
Figure 5.2: Distribution of FG and CG entrants at UNAM in 2008

From the above graphs it is clear that most of the students enrolled in the compulsory foundation courses at the Language Centre were FG. It can therefore be assumed that most of the students who attend UNAM are FG students, as well as FG entrants. I consequently decided to take an in-depth look at the academic literacy proficiency of a group of FG entrants at the Language Centre of UNAM attending the course which had the highest rate of FG enrolment, namely the ULEG course.

The data analysed in the first part of the research project indicated that the FG entrant at UNAM had a very particular profile; consequently, in analysing the profile of FG entry per se, each particular participant actually became a case in his/her own right. The responses by the students, both in the interviews, as well as in written exercises, cited in the rest of this chapter aim to offer an additional dimension to the profile of the UNAM FG entrants as they shared something of themselves, either

knowingly or unknowingly, through their words and actual behaviour. Citations from their interviews and writing exercises alone, however, cannot do justice to the multi-dimensional perspectives that colour the profile of the UNAM FG entrant. I report what was said and written with the view of illuminating the colourfulness of the complete picture of FG entry in the Namibian tertiary context as painted by this particular group of FG entrants in this research project.

5.1.1 Demographic profile of participating FG entrants

The class group employed in this project consisted of 42 students of whom 31 were FG students but only 24 were FG entrants. From data collected by means of the two questionnaires and personal interviews, I was able to establish a number of distinguishing features that characterised the profile of FG entrants at UNAM as it presented itself through the group of 24 FG entrants who agreed to participate in this project.

In the Namibian context a large number of the students who enter HE as the first in their families were often raised by someone other than the birth parent or parents, often in cases where one or even both of the birth parents are still alive. These older responsible generation are mostly grandparents or guardians, and they themselves were more often than not deprived of formal schooling. Therefore, in order to encompass the complex dynamics of the extended family relationships of Namibian FG entrants I decided to adopt the following as a working definition to determine who could be regarded as an FG entrant at UNAM:

> First-generation students are those for whom, the responsible older generation (not necessarily birth parents) has not had any opportunity to study at university at any stage of their lives (Thomas and Quinn 2007:51) (see 2.1.1).

In their study Thomas and Quinn did not make a difference between FG students and FG entrants. My interest, however, is focused on those students who enter the often mysterious world of HE and who are not only novices as far as HE is concerned but who are also pioneering a domain from which their families were previously excluded.

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The group of FG entrants thus identified consisted of fifteen female and nine male students. Eleven of them were younger than 20 years of age while eight were between 20 and 25 years of age. There were also five mature age entrants, three males and two females, who had interrupted their professional careers to attend university on a full-time basis. Two of the male mature age entrants were from Botswana. They were on staff development programmes and were sent by the Botswana government to UNAM.

Of the participants who responded to question 10 and 13 of the second questionnaire, 62.5% indicated that they were the first in their immediate family to attend any tertiary educational institution. The fact that family members had not attended tertiary institutions had a cumulative effect – firstly, being uninformed and naïve about tertiary education, they were thus not able to advise the FG entrant on matters concerning HE; secondly, family members without tertiary qualifications would more often than not by default belong to the working classes (Penrose 2002; Thomas and Quinn 2007) with lower income (McConnell 2000; Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005) and would consequently be restricted in the financial support they could provide to the family member who was a FG entrant into HE (see 2.1.2.2).

Contrary to findings in studies done with FG students in the United States (Knighton and Mirza 2002; Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McConnell 2000; Thomas and Quinn 2007), it did not appear as if the Namibian FG entrants had to reassure their families that they had invested wisely, since the families seemed pleased that their children had entered HE; they also encouraged them to a large extent. It furthermore appeared that, unlike FG students in developed countries, the Namibian FG entrants did not have more personal income than CG students. Like FG students in developed countries, Namibian FG entrants also seemed to be concerned about their actual lack of money and concerns about debt, as well as their comparative lack of money in relation to friends not in HE (Thomas and Quinn 2007:78) or even more affluent students on campus. Their financial status will be discussed later in this chapter.

Furthermore, due to the continuing difficulties that UNAM experiences in receiving full payments of registration and tuition fees from students, UNAM has developed a strict "pay before you stay" policy to ensure payment of fees from students. Students are thus required to put down certain monies at specific periods during the academic year, first of all to be accepted as students and, secondly, to be permitted to write examinations. The price structure for undergraduate studies at UNAM is as follows:

Table 5.2: Price structure for undergraduate studies at UNAM

	NAMIBIAN STS	SADC STS	NON-SADC STS
Registration Fee (annual fee)	N$ 420.00	N$ 420.00	N$ 420.00
Tuition Fee (deposit only)	N$ 3500.00	N$ 3500.00	N$ 6900.00
Hostel Fees (per semester – payable up front)	N$ 5360.00	N$ 5360.00	N$ 8836.00
International Student Levy (annual fee)			N$ 500.00
Min. Deposit Payable: Non-Hostel Students	**N$ 3920.00**	**N$ 4420.00**	**N$ 7820.00**
Minimum Deposit Payable: Hostel Students	**N$ 9289.00**	**N$ 9780.00**	**N$ 16650.00**

[1]

These prices do not include tuition fees of which the amounts vary among the different modules and different degree programmes. The price structure might compare favourably with many other universities, and may even be regarded as very low. It needs, however, to be kept in mind that Namibia is a developing country where HE is one of the priorities of the current government, and thus heavily subsidised. When the financial circumstances of the current HE entrants were investigated, it became evident that they still experienced extreme difficulties in raising the minimum amounts of money required to permit attendance at institutions of higher learning.

5.1.2 Financial barriers to successful entry and continuation in HE

The availability of funds is a universal determiner of participation in HE; therefore, questions 10 and 11 of the first questionnaire, questions 2, 3 and 14 of the second

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[1] The US$ equivalent of the N$ was on 21 July 2008: US$ 1 @ N$ 7.96.

questionnaire, as well as question 4 of the interview questions, probed the participants in this project about their financial status at the commencement of their tertiary studies, as well as their financial prospects for the continuation of their studies. Of the participants 20.8% reported that they did not experience money constraints either on entry into or in their ability to continue their studies; the rest of the participants, however, stated that one of their biggest concerns as students was money constraints. These findings concur with what researchers have found in developed countries (see 2.1.2.2). At least three of the UNAM participants had registered previously but remained at home for one or even two years in order for their families to save money for the tuition fees since, according to one participant, "in the years before it was not right financial."

Concerning the people responsible for paying their registration and study fees the following information was obtained:

- 41.7% of the participants reported that their parents – either both or in some cases only one parent – were responsible for their registration fees and the subsequent payment of university expenses. One participant reported that a brother was responsible for the payments as her single mother was unemployed.

- Although another participant's mother was unemployed and the father disabled, these birth parents were still the ones responsible for financing her studies. A number of students gave their parents or guardians' occupations as "sole trader," "vendor," "cultivating and selling mahangu" or even as "unemployed." This indicated a severe lack of financial capital, not only in enabling entry into tertiary education, but also for the student's ability to continue his/her studies.

- 20.8% reported that some distant relative, also called "sponsor," was responsible for financing their studies. These relatively distanced familial relationships contributed to the FG entrants' insecure position at university. This aspect will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

- 12.5% reported that they had bursaries or scholarships.

- 12.5% reported that they had study loans, since there was a family member who was prepared and able to provide collateral for the loan.

- 12.5% (three mature age entrants) were financing their own studies; one with the help of her husband, as well as a full-time job as waitress at the Country Club in Windhoek, and one by means of bartering with cattle. The third mature age gentleman was single and had previously saved money, as well as sold his car to finance his studies. Towards the end of the year he also took up full-time employment while still attending as many classes as possible.

Compounding the situation in which many of the UNAM students in general had severe difficulties in securing money for study purposes, many of these participating FG entrants also came from homes that were poorly resourced financially; they were thus further limited in providing for their subsistence while at university. Only very few could rely on sustained financial support to provide for their daily living expenses while they were attending university. Information given in question 3 of the second questionnaire further illustrated the dire financial circumstances of the FG entrant. When asked about the money earned by the people responsible for raising them:

- 9.5% regarded the income as enough;

- 57% as very little;

- 33.3% as not enough.

Even though it is clear that the responsible older generation were themselves poor, the participants, however, indicated that they did receive financial support even, as in one student's case, when it was the monthly pension of a grandmother. As far as their families' financial support was concerned participants reported as follows:

- 27.2% regarded their families' financial support as excellent;

- 45.5% said the financial support was fair;

- 27.2% said the financial support they received from their families could be regarded as not very good.

As far as their ability to persist financially in HE was concerned, 20.8% of the participants reported in the interviews that they did not experience real financial difficulties. Four of them were mature age entrants of whom two were sent to UNAM by the Botswana government. Another participant had worked for one year after completing Grade 12 as a supplementary teacher in a rural school and had saved her salary to pay for her studies. She also acquired a government loan. Two further participants had also acquired government loans, since they had somebody who was prepared to supply collateral to secure the loan. A number of the other participants reported that they were not able to secure a government loan, because there was nobody to provide any security for the loan.

A large number of the students, however, stated in the personal interviews that it was hard for them to cope financially, and some of the common difficulties that they experienced were that:

- they often did not have taxi fare and could thus not attend classes;
- they depended on friends for text books and made copies – this was not a satisfactory situation, as friends sometimes forgot to bring the books, and they also knew that it was illegal to copy text books;
- they struggled when they had to ask their relatives for money to pay for urgently required books and study guides, since these relatives were sometimes reluctant to give money or told them to wait until the end of the month (summarised student responses).

Some of the participants indicated that financial constraints might even have a further negative influence on their ability to continue their studies in 2009. For example, in order to secure continued scholarship funding for 2009, one participant had to pass certain Mathematics modules necessary for the prescribed course she received the scholarship for. Since she was struggling with those modules, she feared that she might not obtain examination admission in them and that that would negatively influence her scholarship funding in future. Her ability to continue her university career would thus be severely compromised. Another participant realised that if he

was not able to secure money for his future studies, he might have to leave but he aptly summed up during the interview what most of them felt when saying that "even if I suffer for three years, I know I will be better after three years." These hardships concur with what Leathwood and O'Connell (2003:603) found in their study, namely that students may be recorded as having been excluded, for example for tuition fee debt, in one year, "only to find them returned at a later stage." Despite the very sensitive nature of information regarding their financial positions, the participants did not have objections to share this information with me, as the researcher, or with the readers of this report.

Research in developed countries (Inman and Mayes 1999; Read *et al*. 2003; Richard *et al*. 1990) has indicated that FG students may have more disposable income but are still from poor families and are in debt as university students. These FG students, however, intend to earn a degree and remain until reaching their goal (Connor 2001; Inman and Mayes 1999), and they indicate strong beliefs in their abilities to "better themselves" (Connor 2001:212) and not only study to be eligible for a better job. The UNAM FG entrants who participated in this project indicated similar attitudes towards HE. Their attitudes towards their studies could be related to what Connor (2001:211) found with FG students in developed countries who were interested in "studying a particular career" and who showed a "desire to acquire a higher qualification for a specific job/career." Inman and Mayes (1999:6) found that students intended "to earn a degree and to remain until reaching that goal."

In this project the findings concerning the participants' attitude to their studies in relation to the little disposable money they had was similar to the findings concerning FG students in developed countries. Furthermore, even though the FG entrants at UNAM in general appeared to suffer because of the very little disposable money they had, they seemed to put high value on becoming educated.

5.1.3 Value of education for FG entrants

The value that Namibian FG entrants put on HE differed markedly from the views of FG students in developed countries. It appears that in developed countries the notion among FG students is in general that HE education will mainly provide a secure entry into the market place (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003; Lee *et al.* 2004; McConnell 2000; Thomas and Quinn 2007). When exploring the reasons why the participants in this project decided to enrol at UNAM for tertiary studies, the following was found: one of the participants stated that her parents "forced her to come," and another student stated that it was his own choice to come to UNAM; 62.5% of the participants, however, stated that the main reason they decided to pursue tertiary education was to improve their knowledge. Contrary to findings in developed countries, only a mere 29.2% of the Namibian FG entrants reported in question 15 of the second questionnaire that their decision to enter HE was "to get a well-paid job" (see 2.1.2.3).

When the value that the participants put on HE was further pursued in the personal interviews in question 6 a large number of the participants said that it made them feel very proud to be university students. One participant stated with much pride that he was the first person in the family to pursue HE while the others in his family just "fell pregnant or ended up on the streets." For him "to be a student had to stay away from all those bad things (presumably pregnancy, unemployment – author); had to keep concentrating on your studies and then forget. Just like in a war, you have to fight to win the game." Further statements regarding how FG entrants valued their university education were as follows:
- "To become someone in future"
- "To become independent"
- "Helping your parents"

FG entrants into HE might, however, through a lack of intimate knowledge of the workings of academic institutions and a general naivety of the level of cognitive

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engagement required, have too grandiose a career design before entering HE. This was indicated in studies done in developed countries (McConnell 2000; Pike and Kuh 2005; Thomas and Quinn 2007) to have a largely negative effect on the value that many disillusioned FG entrants put on HE (Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006). Most of the participants in this project were also not able to follow their career path of choice and were advised to change their courses; however, they adjusted well to their new career options. This aspect will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six. Participants seemed further to have come to value HE education even more, after they had become practically involved in the academic discourse community and understood the possible career paths that their study courses offered.

5.1.4 Living conditions of FG entrants while attending university

Students living at home may have different expectations of HE. According to Thomas and Quinn (2007:78), they tend to see university as an extension of secondary education and have little concern about aspects outside attending university lectures, since it "may be because their social networks exist outside the university." As has been established already none of the participants in this project were attending university while still staying in the homes they had grown up in. The majority of them came from distant rural areas and had to find accommodation for the duration of their stay in Windhoek while attending the university.

5.1.4.1 Accommodation

In order to investigate the effect that accommodation in Windhoek had on the participants' emotional, as well as intellectual well-being, I collected data from question 8 in the first questionnaire and question 5 of the personal interview. From the twenty-one responses received, concerning participants' living conditions while attending university, the following information was gained:

- 4.8% was accommodated in one of the residences on campus.

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- 9.5% resided with close family members such as either a sibling or a close cousin.
- 23.8% had made alternative living arrangements. One of the three male mature age participants was staying with friends, while the two male participants from Botswana were sharing accommodation. The two female mature age participants both had their own homes which they shared with their children. One was a divorced lady while the other lady was in practice also a single mother, since her husband was a teacher at a school approximately 1300 km from Windhoek, and only returned home during holidays.
- 62% reported that they were residing with members of their extended families.

Although 50% of the participants reported in the interview that their living conditions were fair, 33.3% indicated that they were not residing under ideal circumstances. The mature age participants had all achieved a large level of independence and seemed to cope well with their circumstances. The one participant who was staying on campus only complained about the cramped space in his room and the difficulty of providing his own meals, since there was a communal kitchen with only stoves but no refrigerators available. The hostel students received only breakfast and had to provide the other meals themselves.

Those participants who were staying with a sibling or a cousin close to their own age seemed to be experiencing their accommodation more positively than participants residing with a much older sibling. One of the participants, residing with an older brother, reported that his coming to UNAM was unplanned. He had not applied for admission before, since he could not consider it financially. As his Grade 12 marks were good enough for admission, he decided to apply, and was accepted by UNAM. It appeared, however, that the brother he was staying with in Windhoek showed resentment towards having to supplement the younger brother's government loan. Their present accommodation was shared by a number of his other brothers, of whom some were unemployed and clearly did not share the value of tertiary

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education. It was almost impossible for this participant to study at their home, and he opted to leave for UNAM at five in the morning and stayed till the library closed at ten in the evenings. Over weekends he also returned to the UNAM library or "somehow I go to the nearby libraries" (verbatim quotation of student's statement). Despite these very difficult personal circumstances, he was absent from class only 0.06% of the time during the year; he furthermore showed the most overall growth, as well as the biggest improvement in TALL 2. The TALL 1 and 2 will be discussed in detail n Chapter Six.

One of the female participants reported her living conditions as follows, "cause it's like, you know, we are living in this shebeen (a venue of informal liquor trading – author) and sometimes there's noise; you can't really lead a quiet life and there in Katutura there is a lot of noise, you can't even cope." She solved this difficulty by staying as long as possible in the UNAM library every day. "I normally leave at 4:30. my class come out, even at 2 o'clock. I leave at 4:30."

Another participant described his accommodation as follows, "I am staying at Okuriangava on the outskirts outside Windhoek; that side, on the way to Okahandja (approximately 15 km from campus – author). And first I was staying with my relatives but not very close relatives. So I just shifted from there. There was some couple of problems. Now I am staying with a friend. I'm paying monthly." When asked how he felt about his current accommodation, he continued, "Not very good 'cause sometimes when I come to school and I go back home, I get the accommodation. Sometimes he told me 'you must go find yourself a place to sleep because now I am having a friend that's coming.' Just like that. So I have to beg the person again. So later-on they accept me just to sleep. Every day when I come back to school where can I sleep? I don't really have a nice place to sleep. I don't have a fixed accommodation."

One of the female participants described the relative with whom she was staying as follows, "I'm staying with my aunty … she's a kind of person that really don't

understand … school. She really don't understand. Sometimes she used to complain 'you're just wasting the money' and all that stuff." Another male participant reported that "Well, I am staying in Katutura where no-one wants to stay. …I'm just staying with my mother's brother. ... I am struggling for food… to pay electricity and water." He indicated that he would like to stay on campus "but the problem is the fees. I cannot afford to pay it."

Apart from the fact that many of the participants grew up in extended family groups in isolated rural communities and were deposited at sometimes seemingly unwilling relatives, they also had to travel far to attend classes at UNAM. The university complex in Windhoek is situated in the extreme southern part of the city, while the suburbs where most of the participants were accommodated are in the extreme northern part of the city. 83.3% of the participants reported that they had to travel in excess of 5 km to the university every day. Only 12.5% stated that they stayed between 3 and 5 km from the university complex, while only one participant was residing on campus.

Apart from the cost implications that living far away from campus had, it also compelled FG entrants who came from protected and contained social environments to learn to negotiate the complex network of public and private transport to enable them to arrive in time on campus and reach home again safely in the evenings.

5.1.4.2 Transport

When asked in question 8 of the first questionnaire what means of transport they were employing, 45.8% of the participants reported that they were making use of the extended network of taxis that service the student population at UNAM. 29.2% said that they were making exclusive use of the municipality bus service. This implied certain time constraints, as they had to leave the campus already at about 17:00 to catch the last buses back to the townships. One participant was travelling to university with the lady with whom she was residing as this lady was a UNAM

employee. The two gentlemen from Botswana who secured themselves a residence about 3 km away from UNAM opted for walking. They did not find it strange, as they reported to be used to walking long distances.

Although many of the participants originally reported in question 8 of the first questionnaire that they made use of taxis, they qualified those statements in question 5b of the interview. Many of them had by then made arrangements with taxi drivers to pick them up and drop them off every day for a monthly fee that they had negotiated beforehand. One mature age lady paid her taxi fees once a year in the form of a cow. Other participants tried to make use of taxis, only if they failed to "catch a hike" with somebody. Many of them opted, as they became more streetwise, to travel by municipal bus in the mornings which cost only 50% of the taxi fare. Should they need to stay at UNAM too late to take the last bus, they would then make use of the more expensive taxis.

It appeared that the transport network provided by the taxis and municipal buses worked well. Only two participants said that they had to walk far to reach the taxi rank and one stated that it was dangerous for her to walk from the taxi rank back home in the evenings. One of the mature age single mothers indicated that in order to get her daughter to school every morning, "I must look for a car to take her to school, to the best school. That school is in town and I stay in Katutura (approximately 7 km from the Windhoek central business district – author) and I have to pay the car that will take my child to school everyday. But I pay that yearly. I have just calculated the money for the month for 12 months and then I pay the car or something. And then I have to pay my taxi every day from school to home … . Every morning I have to walk because if I get a taxi where I stay it is N$15.00 to UNAM and to go back it is N$ 7.00. So I have to go where there is a bus stop or taxi rank. …   One kilometre."

Practical impediments to easy access to HE, such as insecure accommodation and transport problems, did, however, not appear to influence the participants' desire to continue and complete their studies at UNAM. It further appeared, contrary to what

has been reported of FG students in developed countries, that the FG entrants at UNAM experienced a sincere sense of belonging to the academic culture of the university (see 2.1.2.3).

5.1.5 FG entrants and the sense of belonging to the academic culture

Studies concerning students in developed countries indicate that FG entrants seem to perceive the different faculties at university as only concerned with students' development and training, and they are thus less likely to develop relationships with faculty members and other students (see 2.1.2.3). FG entrants in developed countries often appeared to be shocked by the lack of supervision and guidance they observe at the tertiary institution and thus experience anxiety by not knowing what is expected in assignments, how to structure academic writing and what the examination standards are (Leathwood and O'Connel 2003; Pascarella and Terenzini 1991; Thomas and Quinn 2007). They consequently seem to be less satisfied with the campus environment (Inman and Mayes 1999; Leathwood and O'Connell 2003; Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005). This manifests in little academic engagement such as visiting the library (Pike and Kuh 2005:10). It could thus be assumed that the discomfort of those FG students in developed countries is embedded in a broader feeling of isolation in the university setting (Penrose 2002:440).

In Chapter Two the importance of FG entrants' sense of belonging to the academic culture was described (see 2.1.2.3). I wanted to establish to what extent the Namibian FG entrant suffered the same sense of isolation and of not-belonging to the academic discourse community of the tertiary institution of their choice as students in developed countries were reported to experience. I thus posed question 8 of the first questionnaire and followed up with a discussion in the interview, in conjunction with question 5, as well as questions 19 and 20 of the second questionnaire. It was deemed important to gain an insight into the way the Namibian FG entrants positioned themselves in the academic environment that they had entered. It should be kept in mind that for many of them it was even the first time that they had ever

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been in the capital city. They were thus both social strangers and also strangers to a mainly Western academic culture that differed largely from their traditional upbringing and previous contact with education.

When compared to studies done in developed countries (Bui 2005; Duggan 2004 – 2005; Inman and Mayes 1999; Leathwood and O'Connell 2003; Lee *et al.* 2004; Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006; McConnell 2000; Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005; Richard *et al.* 1990; Thomas and Quinn 2007; Zwerling and London 1990), it is clear from the data collected in this project that the Namibian FG entrants had a very different experience as far as participation in their academic environment was concerned, and that those features of academic life that might lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion were different from what was reported of FG students in developed countries. These findings can be related to the findings of Van Schalkwyk (2008:177) in her study with students at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. She found that the perceptions students have of their own abilities and their expectations for university were closely linked. The students in her study also appeared to reach university with inflated opinions of their academic proficiency. She states, "One common denominator for the group however is the fact that the Grade 12 results placed them in the lowest percentile of students at the university." She found however that "[a]s the year progressed, it became clear that many of these perceptions and expectations in terms of what they could achieve were unrealistic." She however found students, including under-prepared students, who did display persistence and determination in their studies. According to Van Schalkwyk (2008:237), "this points to the agency and intrinsic motivation of the students who either in spite of, or because of, their experiences were still determined to be successful."

5.1.5.1 Participating in academic associations and societies on campus

One of the ways to investigate the degree to which FG entrants adapted to the academic culture of the university was to enquire during the interviews in question 5b

about their participation in those clubs and associations (Lohfink and Paulsen 2005; McCarron and Inkelas 2006) established by students for students on campus at UNAM. Four of the twenty-four participants stated that they had joined clubs or associations. One was the ladies' soccer club and one student played volleyball for the university, as well as for the Namibian volleyball team. The other two participants had joined culture clubs such as *Otjiuana* for Otjiherero speaking students and *Nekwa iyatsima* for Oshiwambo speaking students.

Many of the other participants said in the interviews that they did not join such societies because of financial reasons, insufficient knowledge about them or that they were scared to compromise the time they had available for academic work; however, quite a large number showed interest, and had made attempts to join but were frustrated with the fact that they had not received any feedback on enquiry about certain associations and clubs. Most of them expressed a desire to participate in the social and cultural activities offered at UNAM in their second year.

Studies done in developed countries (see 2.1.2.3) indicate that the minority groups of students at Community Colleges rarely join academic societies at their institutions, mainly because they feel that those societies only cater for the majority groups of the student population. Consequently, their feelings of isolation and disappointment with the tertiary experience are compounded. This is clearly not the case at UNAM. Apart from the mentioned academic societies and sports disciplines offered to UNAM students, the university hosts an annual cultural festival to promote intercultural awareness and social and academic integration. That the participants in this project did not join societies can thus mainly be contributed to fact that much of the university experience was new, and that they were initially still on the periphery, looking in, before integrating totally into the academic culture of UNAM in their subsequent years of study. Not belonging to academic and social societies in their first year did not influence their attitudes towards the social environment negatively.

5.1.5.2 Attitudes towards the social environment of the university

Since attitudes are, however, not easily measured quantitatively, I mainly resorted to observations and interpretations of the participants' discussions of issues raised in given assignments and class activities to determine and describe their attitudes towards the social environment of the university.

For a qualitative description of participants' reflections on some of the issues pertaining to their new environment, two class assignments were given. In the first one they were asked what they regarded as the main causes of stress among first-year students at UNAM. Although the assignment was meant to extract factual information, I cannot refrain from quoting an observation in my personal journal about their presentation of the information here. This aspect will be taken up again later in this dissertation.

> I was surprised by their essay writing skills. Some really wrote good introductions and even tried to write concluding paragraphs. The level of language used was pleasingly high. I even detected one or two original metaphors. Well, I was happy.

According to the general viewpoint in these assignments, it appeared that money was probably the biggest cause of stress. This corresponded with information obtained in the questionnaires and the personal interviews (see 5.1.2). The participants mentioned mainly difficulties with the little disposable money they had which prevented them from "joining" the UNAM population as far as for example dress code was concerned; however, such money concerns were most probably a general concern for the majority of students at UNAM and were not exclusive to FG entrants. The social aspect of a lack of money seemed to point to a strong sense of solidarity that developed among students at UNAM, and it did not negatively affect their attitudes towards the academic environment. On the contrary, sometimes the concept of sharing was taken to the extreme; for instance, one of the female FG entrants reported that when she had no place to stay, she was allowed to "squat," albeit illegally, with a friend on campus and that sometimes three of them would share a single bed at night.

The lack of disposable money affected participants rather generally in a way consistent with financial discrepancies that in any case exist between ordinary social classes. A common comment that was made was that "[s]ince students also want to look smart, they easily get influenced and some tend to do the wrong things as a result," because "if a guy saw somebody putting on those cheap clothes they sometimes shouting and laughing" (comments by one of the female participants). Therefore, peer pressure made "people do […] things just to please other people or to fit into certain groups." As far as certain fashions were concerned, it was said that "some of them may not intended to put on some of those dressing but the life in the campus will force them to do so." It was also frequently mentioned that some of the UNAM students would lie to their parents or sponsors about money they apparently needed for study material, in order to be able to compete with more affluent and fashion conscious students.

Another point that was also frequently made was that some students on campus resorted to becoming involved with "sugar daddies" and "sugar mummies" who would assist them financially in exchange for sexual commitments. It was further mentioned by many of the participants that some of the female students would even resort to prostitution to help address money shortages, in order to maintain a specific life style as prescribed by peers. In post-modern times where sexual liaisons are in general more fluid and openly conducted, the issue of bartering with sexual favours is not a unique phenomenon, firstly, to FG entrants and, secondly, to UNAM students in general. If the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection and resulting debilitation, and often death, are, however, considered, it reflects very negatively on a society where the youth disregard danger to their health and emotional well-being in order to compete with the more affluent in society.

Other causes of stress among first years that the participants mentioned were as follows:

Table 5.2: Broad categorisation of students' responses

Financial difficulties	"the parents are struggling to pay for their children inorder to get an opportunity to enter the examination" "some students are performing well in their school work but in the middle of the year parents fail to pay the examination fees." "you will be quite sure that your bursary or loan have been approved but to realize that it is still lacking behind and registration is on. Seeing that others proceed easily this eats your inside."
Lack of family support	"personal social issues … like parents' divorce; a student being HIV/AIDS infected; witchcraft obstacles from neighbours, boy-friends and girl-friends break ups." "In some cases parents donnot try to talk and analyse the problems with their childrens"
Transport problems	"Most of the taxi driver they does not like to drive to UNAM unless such student will pay a double amount." "We appreciate that the government is paying for our tuition fees but the worse thing is they fail to maintain us in term of transport and accommodation."
Accommodation	"Most students prefer to stay on campus where crime is rare and there is enough space and time to study without disturbance from outside comparing the students living in Katutura (township where most students stay – author) with those on campus, there is a huge difference in their performances concerning school work." "A lot of students hardly cope with the environmental accommodation, either by being under harsh harassing family treatment whereby their human dignity is unrespected, for example some students live in shebeens places are overcrowded with bars and clubs that always spoil their studieng dynamic."
Lack of academic experience	" … students who come to the university, they have no experience in academic work at tertiary education." "Most of all, the time-tables are printed out in code formats which always give students hard time and headaches." "During registration. Some do take advantage of those who do not familiarize or don't know the procedure to be followed when registering."
New teaching/learning experiences	"Every lecturer has his/her own way of teaching methods and each of them give assignment at their own specific time"

	"the mark of test and assignment are the one will permit you to write the exam this will cause stress because they (the students – author) had never been in the situation before."

"The first year students always find themselves unbound to rules." |
| Peer pressure | "[Students] may end up involve in groups of peers that they did not suit them. they may end up involved in sexual relationship simple because they need emotional gratification."

"the high influence of peer pressure by friends and university coligues."

"Students seat down during free time and compare their life styles to one another other students are rich and some are poor meaning jelousy develop among the poor ones and they end up stressing."

"A student might perform poor in a test compare to a friend, he may feel inferior than other students." |

These quotations from participants' responses indicate high levels of stress among FG entrants but also among students at UNAM in general. There seems, however, to be very little discontent with the academic institution per se. As the assigned task that elicited these responses was given as an open-ended task, participants themselves could determine the issues that they felt caused the highest levels of stress among students. Since not one of them addressed the academic quality of the institution and its lecturing staff, it can legitimately be assumed that the participants were positively inclined to the rigors and demands of the university as an institution of higher learning.

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To elicit the participants' responses and consequently their reflected attitudes towards certain social trends at the UNAM campus, participants were asked to elaborate further on the existing dress-code of students. Many participants mentioned that they felt uncomfortable with the way that especially young black female students would expose their bodies in the clothes they wore, since it was contra to the cultural

backgrounds they came from. "Our female wear long dresses that do cover their feet. They should look as African ladies be proud of their culture."

Although by and large the participants had had no major problems with the way they or their peers dressed, many of them stated that the dress code for university students should be formal ("official clothes"), in order to portray their professionalism ("like tomorrow leaders"). Participants even suggested that a course in professional dressing should be offered to first year students or even that "there should be some rules and regulations with UNAM students, because it will cause more pain others who are poor." In general, however, the conclusion can be drawn that for most of the participants "dresses doesn't matter, as long as you know the reason why you are at university."

Their comments about the way they felt about how UNAM students dressed reflected the strong influence that cultural traditions had on their mindsets. It appeared that both male and female participants would wish female students to dress more conservatively. Students from rural areas may thus have to adjust to much more than the Western-dominated academic culture when they come to the urban area, as they have to accept mores and standards that may go against their own upbringing (see 3.3.2). This aspect of cultural differences and their effect on critical thinking will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

5.1.5.3 Relationships with lecturers and peers in the academic environment

One of the features that seem characteristic of FG entry into HE, as mentioned in the literature compiled of studies conducted in developed countries, is the discontent and isolation that FG students experience in the academic environment of their institution of HE (see 2.1.2.3). This seems to be one of the major reasons why FG students fail to continue their studies and drop out before completing their courses of study. My observations of UNAM students in general over a number of years, however, never created the impression that they felt excluded from the academic discourse

community they had joined. In order to verify my subjective impression of how FG entrants perceive the academic environment they had joined, I pursued this avenue of investigation further in question 5 of the personal interviews I conducted with them.

Relatively few of the participants indicated a positive reaction to the academic environment when they first entered UNAM. Those who did, said they felt "proud," "comfortable" and "not nervous" but rather "excited" as they had "waited so long" and they felt "lucky to be at UNAM" as it was "the most place I ever wanted to be." They regarded it as "a time to put more effort and work hard to reach my goal," and that they had "reached another level of learning." It was also good to "know and meet people from different backgrounds." Most of the participants who experienced the entry process in a positive way, did have either previous contact with UNAM or had a brother or cousin on campus who had helped them to integrate more easily into the system.

Most of the participants, however, experienced their entry into HE as stressful "due to the new environment." They reported that they felt "uncomfortable," "confused" and like "strangers" and "outcasts," "lost" in a "new world" as for many of them it was "the first time away from family." It was described as "horrible" because of the inability to "attend the course of my choice" or because they "did not know how to use the library," "how to speak English" or "how to use technology." It was also difficult to organise themselves in order "to catch the bus or taxi" to campus. Participants also mentioned feelings of "loneliness" because of "no friends" and they "could not cope with many new faces." Especially the older participants expressed feelings of "inferiority," as "some time I felt like humiliated because some students were look more economic fit, especially those of my age" or "because I saw some students cuming with cars at the university while I struggled to get money for taxi"; however, this particular participant felt that "as days passed, I started realizing that its normal because we come from different backgrounds."

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Feeling forlorn and strange is not a prerogative of FG entrants. All students, I presume at all universities, will experience initial feelings of isolation. These feelings of forlornness and isolation that the participants in this project experienced, might however, have been compounded by the sense of bewilderment many of them experienced in the new physical and social environment outside the academic environment they also had to cope with. The difference between their initial feelings of forlornness and the subsequent feelings of belonging they experienced later in their first year of academic studies, as will be discussed later, contrasted starkly with attitudes recorded by researchers of FG students in developed countries (see 2.1.2.3).

When questioned in the interview question 5a and questions 19 and 20 of the second questionnaire concerning their feelings and perceptions about their place in the university society, both at the beginning and at the end of their first year, only one participant expressed some negativity; however, her statement actually reflected an insight into the differences in learning styles between secondary and tertiary institutions of learning when she said, "Lecturers never get serious at beginning of year and rush at the end, they do not care whether you understand or not."

In general participants' attitudes towards the academic environment at UNAM had changed dramatically from the beginning of 2008 to the end of the year, and it was clear that they felt safe and accepted in the academic community of their university. The answers given in response to question 20 of the second questionnaire illuminated this dramatic change in attitude: "UNAM had changed me" as I "realized I can achieve through hard work." Participants felt that they had "grown up" and knew "whats good and whats bad," as well as how to "respect myself and others." They had "self-esteem and put it in practice." They reported that they had "gained experience that was absent in my life" and "improved" and "gained more knowledge and new ideas," as well as "good communication in English." "No more shyness" was experienced and there was an ability to "handle problems in life or even help a colligue solve problems."

Further answers to question 20 of the second questionnaire indicated that participants had "made friends and stud[ied] with friends," knew "how to react to peers," were "active and free in public" and their "mental and physical attitudes ha[d] totally changed"; they therefore felt that they were "performing better than at school" and were "a different person than in Gr. 12." They "socialize[d] well," and had even "learnt about township life" and "learned how to respect people." It seemed that they had "totally changed from how I viewed campus life," as after about one year "the place is familiar." They regarded themselves as "successful student[s]" who were "focused", "punctual and committed" and, in short, "you are like you are at your own home."

When judged on a superficial level, it could be assumed that these FG entrants had become well-adjusted and that this should be reflected in their subsequent academic performance; however, attitude, confidence and motivation are interrelated and together form a foundation that will influence a student's pursuance of academic success. I wanted to investigate the difference between confidence of perceived academic success, when the FG entrants arrived at the university, and their levels of confidence, after they had been assessed professionally by their lecturers and were confronted with their own levels of academic achievement at the tertiary institution.

5.1.6 FG entrants' levels of confidence concerning success

Thomas and Quinn (2007:86) reported that poor choice of a career has a negative impact on the level of commitment and motivation that students felt for the programmes of study that they eventually enter. Thomas and Quinn further reported findings that when the students in their study had realised that they were in the wrong course, many of them did not enquire about other options; they were thus stuck with their choices. This further dented their confidence in their own abilities to progress in subsequent years of study.

To establish how the participants in this project were assessing their own levels of confidence, I distributed the first questionnaire to them at the beginning of the year before they had written any tests or completed assignments in which their performance was objectively assessed by their lecturers. In question 14 participants were asked how they would rate their own ability to succeed at university. They had to respond by indicating which of the provided answers they regarded most suitable for themselves.

The information regarding their own assessment was re-elicited in the second questionnaire in question18, which they completed later in the year. Their changing attitudes are tabled as follows:

Table 5.3: Levels of confidence concerning own academic success

	MARCH 2008	OCTOBER 2008
Excellent	13	2
Good	9	12
Average	2	9
Not very good	0	1
TOTAL	24	24

Of the participants who regarded their potential for academic success as excellent at the beginning of 2008, only one still thought his changes were excellent at the end of the year. Nine of the participants regarded their potential for success at the end of the year as good and three as average.

Of the nine participants who thought they had a good chance of success at the beginning of the year, one predicted towards the end of the year an excellent chance of success in her/his studies, while five regarded their success rate as average. Only two of the participants remained convinced that the chance to succeed in their studies were good. The one participant who regarded her chance as not very good was one of the participants who had to take a course different to what she had envisaged before registration. She was struggling very much with the mathematics

subjects of the course, to such an extent that she feared that she might not achieve exam admission in them. One of the two participants, who initially regarded their success as average, thought his chances were good at the end of the year, while the other participant still regarded her chances as average.

On entering the university the participants in this project thus seemed to have inflated perceptions of their own levels of academic achievement, probably because they were regarded as the best learners in their classes at school. When confronted with the reality of academic demands, their perceptions about their own academic proficiency were tempered. This situation is by no means unique to FG entrants. It can be assumed that all students, FG as well as CG, go through this process where a reality check will deflate their confidence in their own abilities somewhat. Van Schalkwyk (2008:230) states that also in South Africa, "having been granted access to the university, the students are then confronted with the rules and norms of the academe, the conventions of the discipline and the expectations of the lecturers." She found in her study that, since the academic community represented a site of power that was dominant, most first-year students initially perceived it as impenetrable. The largest number of participants in this research project, however, regarded their potential for success after six months at university still as either good or average and only one indicated fear of failure.

It was evident, though, that the participants were neither over-whelmed by the academic demands made on them nor under-whelmed by their own potential to succeed. Their perceptions about themselves had become more realistic. These readjusted perceptions of their own potential to succeed may correspond with what Penrose (2002:458) wrote about her perceptions of the first-world FG students in her study, concerning their levels of confidence after the euphoria of becoming a tertiary student had waned a little:

> Perhaps FG students' lower self-assessments reflect a greater understanding of the distance between their family discourses and those of the academy, a difference more visible from their outside position than from the relative insider perspective of students who come from college-oriented households.

In order to assess the validity of such a statement in the Namibian context, it is necessary for future research to investigate what exactly are the factors that contribute to building up or breaking down the levels of confidence of FG entrants. This element of realistic positioning was, however, observed in this project when the participants had to reflect on their own futures, particularly when they were asked in the interview what they would do after completing their under-graduate studies.

5.1.7 FG entrants' perceptions of their own futures

When interviewed, the participants indicated in answers to question 7 of the interview that despite the debilitating circumstances that they experienced at university, they were positive about the outcome of their studies and "positive that it will go well." They had real future plans. A few stated that, although they were struggling, they knew "some few days later it would be ok." The future would "be different from living now," and "I'm just planning to be some-one in future by starting to work hard." Many of the participants, who were not able to take the courses they originally planned on doing at university, said that they would complete their current courses and would then either return to do what they originally intended to or find employment and then become part-time or distance-learning students. The reasons why participants were not able to follow their career path of choice will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

For many participants some of the driving forces behind their intention to continue their tertiary studies were clearly philanthropic, as "I wanted to do, at least, ja, to do something for the environment," and "one day to look after myself and my kids and actually also my brothers and sisters" or "to look after my family and work for them." Naturally, egocentric aims were also mentioned, such as "I just want to have my own house, my own car, my own family. Then I will be settled. My own job."

From observation it appeared that in this first year of tertiary studies most of the participants were still strongly attached to their immediate family ties. Even though the older responsible generation themselves never participated in tertiary education

they obviously valued HE enough to make huge personal sacrifices to support the FG entrants participating in this project.

5.1.8 Parents/families' attitudes towards the FG entrant

When questioned in question 12 of the first questionnaire about the emotional support FG entrants received from their parents or immediate families, the following was reported.

Table 5.4: Emotional support FG students received from family members

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	NO OF STUDENTS
Excellent	11
Fair	7
Average	3
Not very good	3
TOTAL	24

It appeared from answers that the majority of the participants experienced a fair amount of emotional support from their family members. They stated that their parents felt "proud" and felt "pleasure" in having a child who studied at university and therefore "keep on suffering" themselves. The parents wanted them to "study hard that we can get something from you" and "you must come that we enjoy your fruit."

Five of the six participants who indicated that the emotional support they received from their families were either average or not good all were raised either by a guardian, grandparents, an aunt, a sister or a single mother. The sixth participant had attended a post-secondary college to improve her Grade 12 results in 2007, in order for her to achieve the required number of points to enter the university. In discussions with her, it was clear that she felt distant from her family, and had developed a separate life for herself already in the time before she entered the university. The mature age participants reported much support and encouragement from their

families who saw them as role models because they were pioneering and opening up a new territory for other family members.

It is evident from studies done in developed countries that FG students often hail from large working class families and that family boundaries are fluid; the extended rather than the core family appears to be the norm. According to what they found in their study of FG students in ten developed countries, Thomas and Quinn (2007:52) stated that

> Different ethnic groups have different ideas of who might be included in their family – these families can be fluid. Looser family relationships are a reality and need to be taken into account.

In the African tradition the extended family concept is also the accepted norm for a majority of the population groups in Namibia. The extended family concept undoubtedly offers many advantages to its individual members but it can also disempower specifically younger members of the family. To investigate how FG entrants at UNAM may be affected, the family structures of the participants in this project were investigated in questionnaire 2 items 7 – 13.

5.1.9 Family structure of FG entrants

Thomas and Quinn (2007:86) stated aptly:

> Family is a fluid construct. Our participants were expectedly heterogeneous, coming from a range of family structures: including families with two parents, single-parent families, step-families, families headed by elder siblings, families where both parents lived outside the household, and they often interpreted families in terms of extended networks of relations."

When I compared data collected from the CG students who were also members of the ULEG class of participants for this project it indicated that they grew up in what is conventionally regarded in the Western tradition as a core family, namely with one or both of their parents and only their siblings by birth. All domestic resources thus could be shared by a relatively smaller number of people. The reverse would be true, namely that in extended families the same size cake of domestic resources would inevitably have to be cut into very much smaller slices. This, by default, would

necessarily have a negative impact on available financial resources and quality time spent with the responsible older generation.

The family composition of the FG entrants in this project was probed in depth by question B 3 of the first questionnaire and in the second questionnaire in questions 1, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12. The information gathered was analysed as follows:

- 16.7% of the participants were raised by both their parents.
- 16.7% of the participants were raised by their mothers alone.
- 7.9% of the participants were raised by their fathers alone.
- 37.9% of the participants were raised by people other than their birth parents. Three of these participants were raised by their grandparents even though, in all three cases, both their parents were still alive. Two schooled while residing with a sister; one still had both her parents and the other participant's mother had passed away. Two of the participants resided with their aunts while still at school – of one both parents were still alive and of the other only the mother was still alive. One participant grew up with a guardian although both her parents were still alive.
- 20.8% were mature age participants who all were parents themselves.

Table 5.5: Number of siblings

NO OF SIBLINGS	STUDENTS
1 – 3	6
3 – 5	4
5 – 10	7
More than 10	5
TOTAL	22

* Two of the participants did not feel comfortable to divulge this information

One of the mature age participants reported that she had more than 10 siblings only on her mother's side, while another mature age participant reported that she had more than 30 siblings. The third mature age participant did not feel comfortable to divulge information about his family structure and the other two mature age participants were from Botswana. It does, however, appear as if these mature age

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Namibian participants belonged to the traditional family structure of polygamy which was fairly common still in the previous century in Namibia, a situation which resulted in large families. Although this system was conducive to subsistence farming as is still practised in most of the rural areas in Namibia, it does have a negative impact on ventures that are economically competitive. Since tertiary institutions are in the end also businesses, the ability to purchase an opportunity to participate in HE would thus be largely out of reach for people who live in such large family groups in subsistence farming communities.

Of the responses received by the participants in answer to questions 8 and 12 in the second questionnaire, 50% further indicated that they belonged to what is traditionally accepted as a large family, consisting of more than five or six siblings. Also those participants who reported that they were not raised by their birth parents mostly grew up in very large households. It needs to be emphasised that I do not consider that hailing from a large family or household constitutes a lack that needs to be remedied, or even that members of large families are emotionally and intellectually deprived; however, in the light of the fact that these FG participants in the project grew up almost exclusively in rural areas where amenities such as water and electricity supply were limited, it goes without saying that organising and running a large household, involves delegating a myriad tasks to individual members, often to the younger members, of the household on a regular basis. Where much time has to be spent daily in organising the availability of water for use by every member of the household and where the opportunity to study or even only read extensively is restricted to the daylight hours, the disadvantages that these FG entrants experienced, compared to members of urban core households, are obvious.

Of the twenty four responses to questions 1, 5 and 6 of the second questionnaire concerning their accommodation before entering UNAM, the following analysis was made:
- 80.9% of the participants grew up in villages in the rural areas of Namibia;
- 12.9% of the participants grew up in villages in the rural areas of Botswana;

- 4.1% of the participants were raised in smaller towns far remote from the capital;

- 4.1% of the participants grew up in Windhoek.

And

- 57.1% of the participants reported that the houses they grew up in were supplied with electricity while 52.4% said that they did not have electricity supply to their homes;

- 33.3% of the participants had running water in their homes while 61.9% had no water connection points inside their abodes. One participant did not venture any information about his/her circumstances.

It is thus clear that the total sum of the educational disadvantages of the FG entrants cannot be laid at the door of the government, and more specifically the education department alone; socio-economic factors, as well as tradition and culture, are also contributing to the fact that the FG entrant might not be academically well-equipped enough for the rigors of tertiary study. They thus need academic support to bridge the divide between their secondary school academic experiences and the demands of the tertiary institution.

Table 5.6: Number of people in households

PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD	STUDENTS
1 – 5	4
6 – 10	7
more than 10	8
TOTAL	23

* one of the participants did not feel comfortable to divulge this information.

Since the majority of the participants were not necessarily raised by their birth parents, as established above, they still had to share their accommodation with a number of other people who might be siblings and close or distant relatives. This situation compared closely with findings of Thomas and Quinn (2007) in their research concerning FG entry into tertiary education in ten developed countries.

5.2 Reflections on FG entry at the University of Namibia

One of the conclusions that reinforced my interest in FG entrants at UNAM, and how to enhance their critical literacy, was that the complete picture given by studying their profile indicated a kind of *double (probably multiple) jeopardy*. Coming to university from a fairly secluded and isolated traditional environment, these FG entrants did not only have to cope with those adjustments university students normally have to. They also experienced severe financial barriers and survival hardships. Their situation was further compounded by the fact that they were all ESL students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, and the level of working English they brought to tertiary education appeared to be still only on a basic BICS level and not supported by the required higher levels of CALP (see 2.2.3.5) to adapt smoothly to the demands of a largely urban academic culture such as that of UNAM.

These FG entrants did have the potential to be successful in their studies at university. They seemed to have realistic expectations of themselves and seemed further to have set achievable goals for themselves. They also appeared to be confident and the majority of them were content with the courses they were enrolled for, albeit not necessarily their first choices. They seemed to have integrated well into the social environment and also did not feel isolated from the academic discourse community of UNAM.

5.3 Concluding summary

In Chapter Five I drew an in-depth profile of the Namibian FG entrants in HE, as illustrated by a group of 24 willing participants in this research project. Attention was given to their financial potential to pursue tertiary studies. Their responses to the academic environment of their choice were discussed. Specific areas that were investigated were their sense of belonging to, and participation in, the social, as well as academic discourse community of UNAM. Their levels of confidence in their own

academic potential were compared and discussed in relation to their perceptions of success in their future careers.

An in-depth look was also taken at their family structures and the effect that that had on the FG entrants' ability to join the academic community and physically persist at the tertiary institution of their choice. The attitudes of the responsible older generation and other family members to FG entrants' participation in HE were also investigated. Finally the living conditions of the FG entrants while studying at UNAM were studied and related to their overall intellectual and affective well-being as tertiary students.

The information gathered and employed to describe the FG entrant in Chapter Five, will constitute the background in Chapter Six against which the following research questions were investigated and interpreted by means of further data that had been collected as part of this research project:

- What is the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM?
- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in First-Generation students at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

CHAPTER SIX

FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

ACADEMIC LITERACY, AFRICAN LITERATURE AND THE USE OF METAPHOR

In Chapter Five the first research question posed in this project was addressed and a detailed analysis of the data collected to describe the FG entrant at UNAM was given. The rationale was to explore to what extent the profile of Namibian FG entrants corresponded with that of FG entry in developed countries as described by different researchers. It became evident from the data analysis that the FG entrant at UNAM has a markedly different demographic profile from FG entrants and students in developed countries.

To further explore the specific profile of the FG entrant at UNAM, I addressed the following research questions in Chapter Six:

- What is the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM?
- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in First-Generation students at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

In Chapter Six I will therefore provide data and findings concerning the participants' academic and critical literacy proficiency on entry at UNAM. I will also assess the development of their critical literacy proficiency throughout the year, as established after comparing their scores in the TALL 1 and 2 (see 2.2.3) that I conducted with this group of participants. These tests will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

That discussion will be followed by an in-depth description of the intervention programme of African literature in English that I introduced, in order to raise the

participants' awareness of the use of metaphor. The rationale for employing literature in a course concerned with the development of academic and critical literacy proficiency, as well as the choice of specifically African literature in English, will be defended by means of findings from data collected.

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I will firstly look at the level of CALP (see 2 2.3.5) of the FG entrants at UNAM and will discuss the relevant findings from data collected. Since a survey conducted at the beginning of 2008 (see 5.1) indicated that the large majority of entrants at UNAM were FG, the findings can be generalised to the FG entry cohort at UNAM of 2008.

6.1 FG entrants and critical literacy

In order to establish the level of critical literacy that the participants in this project brought to university, as well as the development of their critical thinking during the ULEG course in 2008, relevant data were collected by means of the following instruments and techniques:

Table 6.1: Summary of data collection instruments and techniques: FG entrants and critical literacy

FG entrants' English at secondary school	Questionnaire 1: A 1, 2, 3, 5 B 1 Interview question 1 a
FG entrants' English on entering UNAM	Interview question: 1b
Academic literacy levels	TALL 1 TALL 2 Class attendance records Observations
Academic development in 2008	CA marks ULEG term tests 1, 2, 3 Examination marks Observations Entries in personal journal

6.1.1 Language proficiency at entry into HE

Namibia is a large country which is sparsely populated by a diverse non-English speaking population as feeder groups for UNAM. Since Namibia gained its independence, English has been designated as the official language, consequently also the language of instruction in educational institutions. As English is largely still a foreign language in the distant rural areas of the country, contact with English in those areas is largely limited to that of a medium of instruction in schools, and very few opportunities for communication in English exist outside school. Currently, even the majority of English teachers in rural schools display limited academic proficiency in English and often teach English by means of the vernacular. Students from such poorly resourced school backgrounds consequently have low levels of BICS, as well as CALP, in English when entering the university (see 2.2.4).

The geographical situation in Namibia furthermore has a defining influence on the academic preparedness of students who want to enter HE. The majority of UNAM students come from the extreme northern regions of Namibia. For many of the participants in this research project it was not only pursuing HE that was a new venture; it was also the first time they had ever been to the capital city of the country. Data collected of the 24 participants in this project by means of question 2 of the first questionnaire indicated that:

- 70.8% of the participants had matriculated in secondary schools in rural towns;
- 12.5% of the participants had matriculated in larger towns in Namibia;
- 8.3% of the participants had matriculated in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia;
- 8.3% of the participants had matriculated in the rural areas of Botswana.

Entry into HE is furthermore traditionally associated with school adolescents who, upon completing their school careers, immediately enter the tertiary institutions of their choice. Where in affluent societies adolescents currently often afford themselves a "gap year" of exploration before entering HE, it did not seem to be the case among the participants in this project. None of them reported the desire or the

opportunity to take a year off for self-exploration. They often, however, entered HE after a gap between completing their school careers and joining a tertiary institution (see Table 1 below), mainly because of financial constraints (see 5.1.2).

The school-exit marks in English of the participants in this project were investigated by question 3 of the first questionnaire. Only 12.5% of them indicated that their mark was a C-symbol (the equivalent of 50 – 60 %) and 87.5% reported that their final mark was a D-symbol or below (the equivalent of 50% or below). The interruption of an education which was in most cases, for a variety of reasons, not on par with that offered in most urban, well-resourced schools would have further compromised the academic and critical literacy proficiency these entrants brought along to HE.

Question 1 in section B of the first questionnaire explored the ages of the students. This was compared to their student numbers which indicated the year in which they registered for the first time as UNAM students. When these two sets of data were compared the following was found.

Table 6.2: Ages of FG entrants and year of registration

		2008	BEFORE 2008
YOUNGER THAN 20	Males	1	
	Females	6	4
BETWEEN 20 AND 25	Males	1	4
	Females	2	1
ABOVE 25	Males	3	
	Females	2	
TOTAL		15	9

Of the 24 FG entrants in this project 37.5%, although registered previously, only entered UNAM in 2008 as first year students. One of the factors contributing to why the participants entered HE after time had lapsed between their school exit and their commencement of HE appeared to be that they might have managed to collect the registration fees in a specific year but were not able to collect the rest of the money needed for their studies (see UNAM price structure – 5.1.1). They would thus keep their registration until they had collected the money to pay the rest of the

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fees before being allowed to join UNAM. Two of the participants reported in the interviews that they were "just hanging around" in their rural villages or at their homesteads until they had collected the money needed for entering university. Another two participants reported that in the time before they could afford to come to UNAM they had "helped out" (in other words, "taught" – author) at their previous schools – one participant received a small financial incentive and the other one did not.

According to the answers given to question 1 of the first questionnaire, 21% of the participants had matriculated before 2000 and were mature-aged entrants who had interrupted their employment to join the university in fulltime study programmes. These entrants also experienced a huge lapse of time between their involvement in studies at school and the recommencement of studies at tertiary level. This period of little involvement with active academic studies was clearly not conducive to the sustaining and further development of the academic and critical literacy proficiency levels they had acquired while at school.

6.1.2 UNAM FG entrants' levels of English proficiency on entry

The participants in this project were asked to assess their own proficiency in English in question 4 of the first questionnaire right at the beginning of 2008.

Table 6.3: Participants' assessment of own proficiency in English

LEVEL OF PROFICIENCY	ENTRANTS
Excellent	3
Fair	16
Average	5
Not very good	0
TOTAL	24*

*Not one of them regarded his/her level of proficiency as not very good.

When participants had to assess the quality of English teaching they had received at school in question 5 of the first questionnaire, their responses were varied. It is clear that at least some of the participants did not blame teachers for their own

proficiency being "fair" rather than "excellent," whereas only one participant thought his/her teaching was not good.

Table 6.4: Participants' assessment of the quality of the English taught at school

QUALITY	ENTRANTS
Excellent	9
Fair	9
Average	5
Not very good	1
TOTAL	24

In order to add depth to these quantitative data, they were triangulated with data retrieved by question 1b of the personal interviews which took place when the participants had been at university for already four months. At least 37.5% of the participants stated that the English teaching at their school was not of a high standard. The one mature age participant said that when she had matriculated, Afrikaans was still the country's official language; English was only taught as a second language and all other subjects were also taught in Afrikaans. The mature age participants also stated that currently, even in their work places the lingua franca was mostly still Afrikaans and their contact with English, even as a medium of communication, was restricted.

Some of the comments made in the interviews concerning the quality of the English teaching they had received can be tabled as follows.

Table 6.5: Participants' comments concerning the quality of English taught at school

NEGATIVE REMARKS	
Contact with English as a subject	"The English was not very efficient. It was just like stuff were in Grade 8." "Át my high school that English was just like basic." "The English teaching at our school was not really that professional 'cause, let me say, in our Grade 12 we were taught by teachers from the colleges. They were not from the university."

	"The quality was not that good, for example, … when I was at school our English teacher sometimes he will not teach in a language that you supposed to be taught … but sometimes he'll end up using his own vernacular language."
	"Sometimes with the friends we are normally, I mean, usually do group work with at school, we use English because we use it. We are use to each other, but with the other friends we speak the vernacular but when we see the teacher coming we try to change."
Contact with English in the school and social environment	"We were never used to people speaking English nicely, 'cause we only had Wambo teachers and they pronounce the way they understand." "My English at school was not that much appreciated 'cause sometimes you can speak English in the class but after class you know there is people addicted to their mother tongue."
POSITIVE REMARKS	
Contact with English as a subject	"We had a good English teacher. He taught us very well. We even passes with high grades in English." "The teacher like explained things so nice and he express (explain – author) till you, when you understand." "My English teacher, I told him that I were trying, so he sent me like assignments."
Contact with English in the school and social environment	"… in Mathematics there was an England teacher … That's why we communicated in English." "During the holidays before we write the end of year exam, I went some holiday classes."

When asked about their contact with English in the social environment, also in question 1 of the interview, mixed reports were received.

- "The children will say, 'no, I don't like you speaking.' You can only discourage, 'you are only talking English. Leave English and talk Oshiwambo.'"
- "Every time, it's [speaking English – author] like it is full time at school 'cause people do not understand the same language."
- "I like to go on internet at home. I search for things are linked to English words."
- "I always speak English with my friends at school."
- "At our home, at our area, we at home we talk like English, but our parents

they have never learnt it."

From this mixed bag of positive and negative comments, it appeared that the participants were poorly prepared for the rigors of tertiary education that is conducted mainly in English at UNAM. The contact with English as a language of learning and communication that these FG entrants had had before coming to UNAM could prove to be detrimental to their successful integration into HE on tertiary level.

I therefore wanted to investigate how entry into HE was influenced by the participants' marks in English in their school-end examinations. In question 9 of the first questionnaire I participants were asked whether they were at present enrolled for the course that was their first choice when they came to register.

- 33.3% of the participants said it was;
- 66.6% of the participants said that it was not.

The reason that 41.7% of the participants gave for not being able to enrol for their first choice was that they did not have the minimum requirements for the specific course and that their D-symbol in English disqualified them from certain courses such as degree programmes. 8.3% said that the course was already full; one said that the specific course was cancelled and one that she was confused about the requirements for the course of her first choice.

When asked who had helped them to choose an alternative course:
- 12.5% of the participants said that the university registration staff enrolled them for the course;
- 28% of the participants said that their family members helped them to decide;
- 50% of the participants made their own decisions;
- 8.3% of the participants consulted colleagues at their work places.

When confronted with the fact that they did not qualify for the course of their choice the majority of these FG entrants participating in the project took command and

made their own decisions about alternative courses to take, or they asked the advice of family members. These data put one of my fears to rest that FG entrants with low marks in English were processed by the university's registration mandate into only certain courses. To determine whether the participants had adjusted to their alternative courses, they were asked towards the middle of 2008 in question 4 of the interview how they then felt about the courses they were taking:

- 54.2% of the participants indicated that they were happy;
- 12.5% of the participants said they were not happy;
- 33.3% of the participants did not attend the interview.

Even though their low school-end marks in English had posed a problem as far as their chosen study fields were concerned, the participants seemed to have found their niches and were mostly content with the courses they were doing (see 5.1.3). Those who indicated in the personal interviews that they were very unhappy that they were not allowed to enrol for the courses of their first choice said during the interviews that, if the opportunity availed itself to them after they had completed the courses they were currently doing, they would still like to enrol for their original choices.

The school-exit results, taken in the context of their own comments as to the place and use of English in their lives before entering HE, indicated that the working English participants brought with them to university, both as a language of interpersonal communication and as a language of learning, was limited. This can be seen in their comments below, and was confirmed in the TALL results which will be discussed later in this chapter.

When participants were asked about how they found it to attend an English medium university, they gave the following responses:

Table 6.6: Participants' comments on attending an English medium university

	PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS
The standard of English at university	"The standard of English they teach us is very good. I mean, compared to the English of my high school. In my high

	school there was a little bit of pleasure (probably "pressure" – author) and here you have to do it yourself."
	"It's easy, but it's just that I am not perfect in English. I'm willing to learn and I think I have improved."
	"Actually when you are reading you can understand better."
	"When I came to UNAM the English used by most of the lecturers, it was very higher, high level."
	"And the standard of English they teach us is very good. I mean, compared to the English of my high school."
Difficulties experienced	"yes, but some books I don't understand. Their English is very difficult; maybe it's academic English or something, but I'm coping."
	"... to understand, very well, but for me the problem is for me to speak and maybe when I write."
	"It is hard when I am with other students, because… according to the school where I came from they were not using the language actually."
	"it was difficult 'cause English here … it's not like that one. Somehow the standard. Unlike that one."
	"My English which I am using now is very poor … I have a problem with my tenses and those kinds of things. But I do learn something new out of everything we are doing. A very good English. I hope that I am going to improve."
	"At the beginning it was somehow difficult for me to cope with the situation."
	"Normally I find it difficult but I try to cope."
	"I came just miss some new words of speaking and came to miss some new things I haven't been taught."
	"I find it so difficult because most of the time I really don't understand. And it's just …Because of the level of the language, I am not good in English"
Coping with difficulties	"… my English has improved. It is not the way came from school. Now I am at least better."
	"I don't really find [it] difficult, but I'm too much addicted to reading story books and such."
	"Since I was here it was difficult for me, but now it's ok."

	"Some words are hard but I'm trying to get them well. I am using a dictionary and get some other translation from friends whereby I can get better."

These comments indicated that the participants were aware that the standard of English in HE was different from the English they had heard and were taught in school. They also commented on the difficulties they experienced, specifically with reading academic texts and listening to spoken English. Success in HE is closely related to the ability to comprehend written material and oral presentations. Their responses thus suggest that FG entrants at UNAM, as represented by the participants in this project, might be in jeopardy due to their limited abilities to utilise English as a language of learning.

Participants did, however, report in the interview in answer to question 6b, and in the second questionnaire in question 18, that they had adjusted to the demands of the academic discourse community at tertiary level to such an extent that their success would not be impeded. These comments by participants are, however, related to subjective perspectives of their own levels of proficiency in English, the quality of their English teaching at school and the way in which they had adjusted to the rigours of studying in an English-medium academic environment (6.1.2). To achieve a more objective perspective, this information was correlated with quantifiable data collected by means of the TALL 1 and 2 (see introduction to Chapter Five) that the participants wrote immediately after entering HE (TALL 1), and again close to the end of the project (TALL 2).

6.1.3 Test of Academic Literacy Levels 1 and 2

In order to gain objective data about the level of CALP that the participants in this project had acquired before entering HE, I opted to employ a standardised test at the end of February 2008. I made use of the TALL that is commercially available from the University of Pretoria, South Africa (see 1.4). According to Van der Slik and Weideman (2005:24), TALL is a low stakes test, since it is a placement and not an access test (see 2.2.3 for the blueprint of the TALL). The results of TALL are

usually utilised to determine what level of support from the tertiary institution may be necessary, in order to raise the level of academic literacy of those candidates that the test identified as being at risk.

Since it is difficult to say that an intervention directed by the lecturer him or herself is the sole indicator of research results, qualitative data were gathered and triangulated with quantitative data to provide a rich description of participants' progress in the ULEG course. The TALL 1 and 2 were employed to indicate a degree of progress but should not be seen as a claim that the literature programme was the only reason for change to the second TALL results. I conducted the first TALL on Thursday, 26 March 2008, during the normal ULEG class period, as pre-arranged with the participants in this project. The 45 minute class period was extended to allow for the 1-hour test to be taken. TALL 2 was written on Thursday, 22 October 2008, again in the same class period as pre-arranged with the participants under similar conditions as TALL 1. Twenty of the twenty four participants in this project sat for both tests. The following results were obtained:

Table 6.7: Comparison of results of FG entrants in TALL 1 and TALL 2

RESULTS	AVERAGE %
TALL 1	19.28
TALL 2	32.38

Although the scores in both TALL 1 and 2 were frighteningly low, it is clear that the FG entrants did show improvement in TALL 2. It did appear as if participants had made specific gains in TALL 2 that could be accorded to the awareness-raising of the existence and use of metaphor that I conducted with the participants. This aspect will be discussed later in this chapter. I realise that the participants' improved performance could, however, not be contributed solely to this awareness-raising, since normal processes of maturation and adaptation to the academic environment would have contributed to this improvement as well.

In order to establish where the FG entrant stood in relation to the CG students in the same course, the scores in TALL 1 achieved by the FG entrants participating in this project were compared to those of the CG students in the same class who also

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wrote TALL 1. An independent samples test was conducted and, since the variances were equal, a t-test for equality of means was further employed.

Table 6.8: Equality of means: FG entrants and CG students' scores in TALL 1

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Academic proficiency	-3.109	25	0.005

When the results of the t-test for the equality of means were statistically compared it indicated that t = -3.109 (p = 0.005 thus < than 0.05). Since I used a significance level of p < 0.05, it indicated that here was a significant difference between the scores of the FG entrants and that of the CG students in the same class who also took the test at the beginning of the project. The CG students also participated in the intervention programme. It could thus be assumed that they also benefited from the awareness-raising of metaphor therefore no comparison between the scores of the CG students and that of the participants in this project was made after TALL 2.

Continued studies (Van der Silk and Weideman 2005; Van Dyk 2005; Weideman 2003; Weideman and Van der Silk 2003) indicate that a large number of the students who enter HE in South Africa also do not commence their studies with the levels of CALP needed for successful tertiary studies. In order to establish a realistic picture of where the FG entrants at UNAM were positioned when compared to entrants into HE in South Africa, I compared the average percentage of the FG entrants at UNAM for TALL 1 to that of a first year student cohort from UP who also wrote the same test. The following results were obtained:
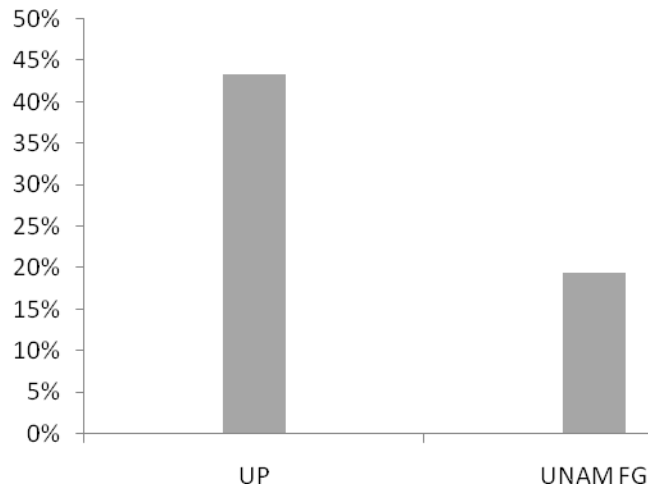
Figure 6.1: Comparison of average percentages in TALL 1: UP entrants and UNAM FG entrants

It is clear that, although the average percentage of the UP entrants was also below 50% (43.38%), the UNAM entrants scored dramatically less (19.28%, which constitutes a high risk level (according to Weideman 2003; Van Dyk 2005) in this test than the UP cohort. I did the comparison to obtain an indication whether my own assumptions regarding the low CALP of the UNAM entrants in general, and FG entrants in particular, could be accepted or whether they should be rejected. Due to the availability of only average percentages provided by the examiners of TALL, a statistical comparison could not be made between the raw scores of the UP and the UNAM cohorts. It is clear that the claim made by Weideman and his associates above is, however, even more applicable to UNAM FG entrants and that the UNAM FG entrants did not show the levels of CALP necessary for a smooth transition into HE.

After the FG entrants had written TALL 2, their scores were compared by means of a paired samples test with their scores in TALL 1. The following results were obtained.

Table 6.9: Paired sample test: FG entrants scores in TALL 1 and 2

	Paired samples test		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
TALL 1 and 2	-4.254	20	0.000

The paired samples test indicated that there was a significant difference between the two tests as t = -4.254 ($p = 0.000$ thus $p = <$ than 0.05). Although the average score for TALL 2 was still very low, the analysis of individual scores indicated that the majority of the entrants had improved and, in some instances, markedly. To contextualise the cases where anomalies were observed, Table 6:10 presents the results of TALL 1 and TALL 2, in conjunction with the participants' school-exit symbols in English as well as their percentages of absenteeism from the ULEG class during the course in 2008.

Table 6.10: Analysis of FG entrants' scores for TALL 1 and 2

FG ENTRANTS	TALL 1 %	TALL 2 %	DIFFERENCE %	ABSENT %	SCHOOL-END MARKS
1	26	27	11	18	D
2	34	30	-4*	18	D
3	36	25	-9*	27	D
4	14	49	35	12	D
5	13	46	33	18	D
6	15	33	18	15	D
7	13	31	18	15	D
8	23	48	25	24	D
9	7	15	9	35	D
10	10	21	11	21	D
11	30	22	-8*	9	C
12	15	38	23	29	D
13	13	13	0	30	D
14	12	33	21	55	D
15	8	27	18	15	D
16	36	55	19	0.06	D
17	35	25	-10*	23	C
18	15	30	15	30	D
19	17	45	28	42	C
20	27	34	7	23	D

The comparison shows that

- Of the three participants who had achieved C symbols (indicated with asterisk) in their school-exit examinations for English, two participants (participants 11 and 17) scored lower in the second TALL than in the first. Participant 11 also had a very low percentage of absenteeism. From observations during the taking of TALL 2, it was clear that these two participants did not take the exercise seriously. They were giggling and

nudging each other throughout the duration of the test which probably led to their low scores.

- Participant 19 had a C-symbol in her school-exit examinations and had an absenteeism percentage of 42%. Her percentage in TALL 2 had increased with 18% from that in TALL 1. From observing her during the year, I had the impression that she should not have been enrolled for the ULEG course as her English proficiency was clearly on a higher level than what is required in the ULEG course.

- Participant 3 also scored lower in TALL 2 than in TALL 1. She came 15 minutes late on the day TALL 2 was written.

- Participant 2 also scored lower in TALL 2 than in TALL 1. She had serious problems with her English throughout the year and was very concerned whether she would pass the course or not. It was clear from her class tests that she had specific difficulties with vocabulary, as well as cohesion in her writing. She did, however, do remarkably well in the examination and passed with 53%.

- The participant who achieved the highest score in TALL 2 was the gentleman who indicated that he stayed at UNAM until the library closed at night to study and that he came to UNAM every weekend to study. He also studied in the libraries close to where he resided with his brothers (see 5.1.4.1). He further had the lowest absenteeism (0.06%) of all the participants.

- The participant, whose scores for the two tests differed the most, was one of the mature age participants from Botswana. In the personal interview he stated that at the beginning of the year he had found it very hard to adjust to the differing circumstances, as well as studying through the medium of English, since when he was at school, they were instructed in Setswana. He clearly managed to adapt well to his new academic environment.

The TALL aims to cover the whole palette of academic literacy proficiency required for academic studies (see 2.2.3); therefore, the personal gain that each participant had made as indicated in TALL 2, whether big or small, could be attributed at least partially to the success of the support programme in critical literacy for students

who did not only show limited interpersonal communication proficiency but who also did not display adequate academic literacy abilities. The means for the subtests of TALL 1 and TALL 2 will be addressed later in this chapter.

6.1.4 Analysis of continuous assessment and examination marks

In order to augment the quantitative data obtained from TALL 1 and 2, I analysed the three official tests, as well as the final examination that the participants wrote as part of the requirements of the ULEG course. Since these tests and examination papers were not standardised or moderated by an external examiner, I have decided to only describe the participants' combined performances in the tests that were written in April, August and September of 2009 rather than to compare raw scores statistically. These tests comprised a reading passage – an extract from an academic text – on which questions regarding inference, vocabulary, the recognition of academic conventions applied in the text, as well as a few questions on basic grammar were based. When the term tests were analysed, the following summary of the participants' performance was compiled.

Table 6.11: Section 1: Reading comprehension (of academic text) and language use (language exercises related to the academic text)

AREA	AVERAGE %
True/false	91.5
Vocabulary	46.7
Academic register	40.7
Correct language usage	48.9

The very high average percentage achieved in the relatively easy section of true/false questions of the three tests may falsely give a positive impression of these ESL students' language abilities in academic English. When, however, compared to the other areas tested, it was clear that that high percentage could not be taken as a yardstick, since in all other sections tested the average scores were below 50%. The second highest percentage was for their ability to use the English language grammatically, and questions were concerned mainly with testing their abilities to employ tenses, direct and indirect speech, as well as active and passive voice, correctly. Since this 'skill' relied much on the participants' BICS, the average percentage of below 50% indicated that the working English they brought to

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university did not provide them with a proper foundation from which they could develop their own academic language proficiency in English.

The low percentage in the vocabulary sections was triangulated with observations of the participants in class. When participants volunteered to read roles of the play in English by a Namibian author studied as part of the literature programme, I was struck by their inability to pronounce many commonly used words correctly or even at all, indicating that these basic level English were not part of their working vocabulary. Incorrect pronunciation of a word is not necessarily an indication that the word is unfamiliar to the speaker; however, the mispronunciation of commonly used words did reinforce the impression gained by previous observations that participants would have difficulties both in following academic lectures and comprehending academic texts.

The very low average percentage of 40.7% for their abilities to employ academic register reflected participants' unfamiliarity with the different written genres of the English language, something that is necessary for success at tertiary level. This consequently seemed to be the area in which the participants required the most academic support and further pointed to the value of introducing them to the different genres in literature. Exposing students to different literary genres will empower them to "experiment with language, and to develop an understanding of how writing works within an environment where collaboration is welcomed and independence encouraged" (Hodson and Jones 2001:Introduction).

In a second section of the term tests, participants were required to write a short academic essay on a topic derived from the reading text provided in each test. In this section their ability to employ correct English in an academic context were assessed. When the raw scores were analysed the following was found:

Table 6.12: Section 2: Essay and letter writing

AREA	AVERAGE %
Content	64
Coherence	45.4
Academic register	68.3
Academic Language use	47.8

These results indicated that the participants did have the abilities to produce acceptable content in their writing. They did manage to express themselves fairly successfully in a formal register in both their essays and in formal letters. They were, however, less successful in conveying their ideas in a coherently sound manner; again these results indicated low levels of academic proficiency in English.

When the scores of the participants in the final ULEG examination at the end of the year were analysed, it indicated the following

Table 6.13.1: Final examination marks, Section 1 and 2: Reading comprehension and language use

AREA	AVERAGE %
True/false	80
Vocabulary	60
Comprehension (academic text)	73.3
Language	52

Table 6.13.2: Final examination marks, Section 3 and 4: Essay and letter writing

AREA	AVERAGE %
Content	55
Coherence	53
Academic register	60
Academic Language use	40

All of the sections concerned with testing participants' proficiency in academic reading comprehension and language use, as well as academic writing, showed improvement in the final examination when compared to the participants' continuous assessment scores. In both the continuous assessment, as well as the examinations, the lowest average scores were, however, still for academic

language use. In the examination the participants seemed to have been more readily able to recognise academic conventions in a given text than to employ these conventions in their own writing to the same extent as they did in the term tests. This discrepancy between the tests and the examination as far as academic register is concerned, indicated that the participants moved uncomfortably around the academic text they were confronted with in the examination situation. Since much of the exchange of knowledge and information at a tertiary institution is done through the reading and writing of academic texts, this discomfort experienced by the FG entrants was debilitating and not conducive to academic success.

6.1.5 Reflections on FG entrants' proficiency in academic and critical literacy

When participants' perceptions of their own proficiency in English (see 6.1.2) were read against their scores in TALL 1, it indicated a substantial divide. This ignorance and inability to judge their performance against what is expected in tertiary studies linked up with the lack of academic know-how by the older responsible generation who themselves did not attend tertiary institutions (see 2.1.2.2 and 5.1). The FG entrants who had to integrate into a largely foreign social and academic environment were thus faced with the reality of their low levels of performance in their first year. In studies conducted in developed countries (McConnell 2000; Read *et al.* 2003; Zwerling and London1990) students appeared to experience a sense of alienation and isolation, also due to their inabilities to cope academically but the participants in this project did not seem to transfer their academic difficulties onto either the institution or its lecturers.

The analysis of TALL 1 clearly indicated that academic support was needed to enhance the critical academic literacy of the FG entrants participating in this project, even though they had obtained the minimum requirements to enrol for HE at a tertiary institution. It is one of the mandates of the Language Centre at UNAM to cater for students who require additional support and preparation to move from the periphery into the heart of the academic culture. I therefore posed the third research question which I will address in the rest of this chapter:

- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in First-Generation entrants at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

In attempting to answer this question, I decided to investigate whether supplementing the ULEG course content (see Addendum B) with a programme in English literature by African authors could serve as a scaffolding mechanism (see 2.2.3.3) to enhance ULEG students' abilities to become academically and critically competent scholars. I furthermore decided to collect both quantifiable, as well as qualitative evidence that could show to what extent participants benefited affectively and cognitively from being introduced to English literature by African authors.

One rationale for integrating literary texts into this course was that the curriculum for Grade 12 learners at schools in Namibia did not make provision for any literature studies (see Addendum A). Since most of the participants in the ULEG group will eventually be involved in either teaching at schools or in adult literacy programmes, it was reasoned that if participants could be introduced to the value, and pleasure, of reading literature for enjoyment, it would indirectly benefit their future customers, either at schools or in adult literacy programmes; own experience shows that a keen reader of 'stories' cannot help but to introduce others to reading for pleasure as well.

Furthermore, Gadjusek (1988:229) has found that in the classroom literature encourages "talking and active problem solving; it generates purposeful referential questions; and it provides the basis for highly motivated small group discussions." For ultimate reading comprehension (Evans 1992/3:39) states that "readers construct meaning by an interacting between their existing background (schemata) and the text." He continues that research has shown that texts based on the culture of the reader are most readily understood by L2 readers. Moyo (1998:46) further advises that "[t]here should be a gradual move by starting with […] texts set in the learners' culture and then to those set in other cultures. Thus learners will become encultured – gradually learn to apprentice themselves to an environment which reflects the general culture. In this way the digestion of human issues in literary texts will move from a process of transmission to one of transformation."

By definition literary texts are furthermore excellent conveyors of metaphor. According to Coulson (2001:198), "the cognitive semantic approach [to study literature – author] allows us to unify our understanding of metaphor with that of meaning and inference more generally."

6.2 Metaphor and the literature programme

In traditional approaches to language, the meaning of a metaphor is reduced to a literal statement of the resemblance between source and target. Because it is thought that metaphors express things that could not possible be true, it is felt that their meanings must be reducible to literal statements that are either true or false (Coulson 2001:197). Furthermore, the overemphasis on representational and computational aspects of metaphoric models might have led scholars to overlook their functional role (2001:200). Since this research project was largely focused on enhancing students' ability to draw inferences in academic texts, the literature programme focused on the awareness-raising of the use of metaphor in literary texts in order to enhance the FG entrants' ability to understand the deeper level meanings conveyed in the texts. In order to measure to what extent this programme enhanced participants' abilities to make the transfer from literal to figurative meaning when reading not only literature but also academic texts, relevant data was collected and analysed.

Table 6.14: Summary of data collection instruments and techniques

Short story reading	Short stories: *The Drug Smuggler* *Happy days of Harrison Gumedi* *The Suit* *Our Wife* Class discussions and assignments Journal entries Observations Survey
English novels by African authors	Class test marks Observations Survey Journal entries
God of Women	Observations Journal entries

Namibian poetry	Observations Survey Journal entries
Awareness-raising of the use of metaphor	TALL 1 and 2 Final ULEG examination: Section 3 Observations Journal entries

In the rest of Chapter Six quantitative, as well as qualitative, data concerning the literature programme, the structure of the programme will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the data specifically concerned with the development of participants' critical literacy as a result of the awareness-raising of the use and interpretation of metaphor in academic texts.

6.2.1 A literature programme in English African literature

I decided to make use of African literature as I gleaned from various surveys and informal questioning conducted previously with students attending courses at the Language Centre of UNAM that they were hardly ever introduced to any literature in English that was written by African authors. I realise that when L2 readers are reading literature by L1 authors in the target language it helps them to build bridges and absorb the culture shock experiences (Inman and Mayes1999:2) when confronted with the total ambit of L2 language learning. Namibians, however, need to become aware of how the African conscience and African, rural imagery are expressed and how beautifully the African idiom is manipulated in English by African authors.

Since the ULEG course (see Addendum B) is already a fully developed course, I decided to supplement the course content by introducing literature in one of the four class sessions allocated to this course per week. I agree with McKay (1982:530) that the study of literature is an invaluable vehicle to increase the reader's vocabulary in the TL, and his/her overall reading proficiency (1982:529). The study of literature also aligns with basic cognitive modalities, namely categorising and narrativising experiences through selective retrospection while continuously monitoring what is happening in, around and to people (see 3.3.4). The study of

literature furthermore promotes verbal interaction of what readers experience (Hernandi 2002:29).

According to Zulu (1997:54), however, the problem with present day literary courses in South Africa – and by default, in Namibia – is that they are too British and therefore give the impression that Africa has no great works in English; such an 'other' literature is thus often still being regarded as substandard. By introducing students at UNAM to the culturally rich examples of local and African literature, this kind of stereotyping may be counteracted. Bean and Moni (2003:839) feel that in a world of constant flow, media images of advertisement and commerce seep into people's lives and strongly influence these people's lives. To counteract such mainly Western influences, African students could be encouraged to hold on to their cultural roots by exposing them to their own traditions and cultural perspectives through the English language.

Students can furthermore become empowered to situate their own problems within an African and even global paradigm. This empowerment should result in the will to either change their world or themselves by adjusting their personal being to the transpersonal being (Hernandi 2002:39) as demanded by specific discourse communities, such as that of their tertiary institution. Literature is furthermore a change agent as far as attitudes are concerned, and it can assist in illustrating and eliminating prejudices. Often in literature the reader is confronted with assumptions, biases and the stereotyping of neighbours in a specific discourse community. In the safety of a fictional world that the author has created the student can first of all become aware of his/her own attitude restrictions; secondly, such a student will more readily be guided into understanding the larger dimensions and finally learn empathy and tolerance (see 2.2.3.2). This kind of self-exploration is essential in becoming a mature individual who can critically express his/her own thoughts about many subjects since, according to Vygotsky (Bruner 1986:72), through language one sorts out one's thoughts about things, thus organising one's own perceptions and actions.

Furthermore, being confronted with the intricacies of real life situations as presented in fictitious scenarios depicted in literature, the reader is stimulated to

employ divergent thinking (see 2.3). Bamber and Tett (2000:59) say that educators have an important role to play in supporting their students to integrate their learning experiences. In literature there will be no right answers to the problems confronting the reader because the author might provide nothing for the reader or problem-solver to work on. Bamber and Tett (2000:62) regard divergent thinking as the need to be making sense of one's own and others' life worlds; this can be seen as the transformation of experience. Seen in this light, learning is an art of being critical, building upon and expanding experience. This process creates new experience that becomes part of what a person knows. Therefore, through exposure to a large variety of fictitious scenarios as presented by authors in literary works, the reader will become adept in combining previous experiences – also of problem-solving – together in a new way (2.3.1).

Gagne's hierarchy of learning (Lovell 1987:65) emphasises that success in solving problems depends on the prior acquisition of a wide variety of knowledge and experience in order to be able to not only reproduce but essentially to "transform knowledge" (Hutchings 2006:235) or as McNamee (1992:287) says, "towards a development that does not proceed toward socialization but toward the conversion of social relations into mental functions."

The socio-cultural aspects of literature are invaluable to the development of critical thinking abilities. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (Hedegaard 1994:349) suggests that in literacy development language is a socio-cultural construct whose development is highly related to people, as well as their patterns of communication and their use of language in order to mediate their activities in their day-to-day lives (see 2.2.3.2). A major premise of Vygotsky's theory is that transformation of basic processes into higher psychological functions occurs in a person's social interactions and through the use of culturally determined tools and symbols (Diaz *et al.* 1992:128). These culturally determined tools and symbols are illustrated and highlighted in the literature of a specific socio-cultural environment where the reader's meta-knowledge or schemata (see 2.3.1) are developed.   .

Furthermore, Kövecses (2005:284) argues that speaking a language and knowing its conceptual metaphors may influence the way we think of abstract concepts.

Therefore, since cultures can be thought of as sets of shared understandings, the creativity in figurative thinking (including metaphor and conceptual integration) can provide readers of literature with the potential of change and new experience, thus of personal growth, not only affectively but also cognitively. Literary texts furthermore are indisputably powerful examples of creativity in figurative thinking, as well as in depicting socio-cultural relationships and conflicts; consequently, they address both the cognitive and linguistic elements of critical literacy. In this literature programme I chose to concentrate on the use of metaphor as one of the cognitive-linguistic elements to explore with the participants in my research project, in order to enhance critical literacy.

6.2.2 The construction of the literature programme

To assist ESL FG entrants at UNAM to extract abstract concepts when working with academic texts, I decided to concentrate on structural metaphors, with lesser attention to ontological and orientational metaphors, and then gradually to move to include poetic metaphors (see 3.1.2). Through the awareness-raising of structural metaphors I intended to nurture the participants' understanding of abstract concepts in terms of more concrete ones (Ibáñez and Hernádez 2003:30). This awareness-raising involved more than just the introduction to metaphors and metaphoric use of language, as illustrated in the literary texts employed in this project. The intention was to assist the participants in developing their critical thinking, since I agree with Freeman (2000:266) that one cannot think abstractly without thinking metaphors.

Furthermore, according to Lakoff (2006:232), "Our metaphor system is central to our understanding of experience and to the way we act on that experience." He continues that metaphor is mostly based on correspondences in our experiences rather than on similarities. Therefore, when one is aware of how one conceptualises metaphor, there is the possibility "to understand novel extensions in terms of conventional correspondences" (2006:194). This ability will allow participants not only to unpack the cognitive layers of a literary text but also to make meaning in their confrontation with academic texts in the normal run of their academic careers. Furthermore, since metaphor mapping is "absolutely central to ordina ry language semantics" (2006:196), the study of literary metaphor is an extension of everyday

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metaphor. Inferring the meaning of unfamiliar figurative expressions also requires, according to Boers (2004:212), "cognitive effort and involves deep cognitive processing."

Although the texts I employed were largely examples of English literature written by African authors, my main purpose was to raise participants' awareness concerning the language of, and more specifically the use of metaphor, in fiction. It was not my intention to use the stories as a vehicle to disseminate knowledge about grammar and syntax but rather to introduce participants to figurative use of language that needs cognitive involvement in order to extract different dimensions of meaning from the written texts. Dissecting a literary work into its narrow linguistic properties could be regarded as sacrilegious. Much more stands to be gained as far as the spontaneous ease of language use is concerned, when merely stressing the formal properties of language in discussions of literary texts (see 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

Short story reading formed the first part of the literature programme. The short story section of the programme will be discussed in depth later. The ULEG study guide was revised in 2006 and on my specific insistence each unit was introduced by a reading passage from which the rest of the content developed. In this study guide I managed to have two short stories incorporated, as I could convince my colleagues of the advantages of creating a culture of reading fiction, even in academic students who follow study fields such as Education or Science that are not necessarily language-related.

I was fairly limited in my choice of material for this literature programme as far as time and content were concerned; I did not receive funding for this project and could also not bring myself to expect financially constrained students to buy extra literary texts for the purpose of this research. I consequently decided to start the short story section of the literature programme with the first story in the study guide, *The Drug Smuggler,* by an anonymous author. Although this story was written by an anonymous author, it gave me some legitimacy to explore short story writing with the participants. The next story that I employed in the programme was *Happy Days of Harrison Gumedi* by Ronald Byron which was also incorporated into the study guide in 2006. I further used two more short stories namely *The Suit* by Can

Themba and *Our Wife by* Karen King-Aribisala (see Addendum F). I decided to start with short story reading as the brevity of short stories would provide the proper bite-size for students hailing from a very limited reading culture. I could also introduce them to the basic characteristics of fiction without encroaching too much on the lecture time allocated to the ULEG course.

This short story section was followed by the introduction to a novel by an African author. Instead of prescribing a novel as class work as I initially intended I decided, mainly due to time and money constraints, to leave participants a free choice of novel to read. I did, however, provide guidelines. A discussion about this section of the programme will follow the short story section in this chapter.

In my ongoing efforts to introduce literature reading into the ULEG course, I managed three years ago to have the play *God of Women* by S.F. Nyathi (1998), a Namibian playwright, prescribed as part of the course material. I therefore made use of this opportunity to introduce the participants to the reading and study of an African play written in English. This section follows the section on the novel and will be addressed in detail later in this chapter.

I concluded the literature programme with the reading and study of some Namibian poetry. This section will be discussed as the final part of the literature programme later in this chapter. Since poetry is notoriously more difficult to comprehend due to the use of figurative language, I decided to conclude the literature programme with poetry reading. A good grasp of metaphorical language use would be tested in this section of the programme; one could thus regard any success as an indication of the participants' grasp of metaphorical use of English and their subsequent drawing of appropriate inferences.

6.2.3 Short story reading

The rationale for the sequence in which these stories were employed was that the story *The Drug Smuggler* was largely context-embedded (see 2.2.3.4). The story thus provided a good platform for the introduction of concepts related to metaphoric use of language to the participants. The metaphors that I identified and discussed in

this story were mainly structural. This short story further enabled me to de-link metaphor from the traditional understanding that some of the participants had about literature that metaphor was "marginalised and treated as a peripheral phenomenon of little significance either to semantics or for cognition more generally" (Coulson 2001:197).

In the next story, *Happy Days of Harrison Gumedi,* my focus shifted slightly from my own prominence as lecturer-instructor in the first story of the programme, and the participants were often given the opportunity to explain how they understood specific structural metaphors that I pointed out to them in the second story. The idea was that they should gradually apply some problem-solving techniques themselves, when confronted with language that they would probably not have recognised previously as used on a level different from the literal. I linked this idea with the following from Writing Development Continuum (2003:6): "problem-solving occurs when children and adults are able to modify and extend their understanding in order to make sense of a situation which has challenged them."

The story, *The Suit,* was read aloud to the participants without any indication of metaphoric use of language, in order to assess whether they did comprehend, during the initial reading the deeper nuances of meaning encapsulated in metaphoric use of language. They were led in a discussion of the story afterwards, and were gradually introduced to poetic metaphors as an extension of "our everyday, conventional system of metaphoric thought that cannot be denigrated to a mere figure of speech that only decorates the literary text" (Lakoff 2006:232).

The final story that will be discussed is *Our Wife.* It constituted an assessment of the participants' development as far as the recognition and interpretation of metaphor is concerned. The participants were tasked to read the story as part of the extensive reading task. They were further asked to explain both structural, as well as poetic, metaphors in the story to illustrate their ability to infer the appropriate meanings of relevant phrases and expression in order to comprehend this rather complex story.

6.2.3.1 *The Drug Smuggler*

Before discussing the short stories with the participants, it was necessary to give them a brief overview of the characteristics of short stories, as well as introduce them to aspects of figurative language use. At this stage of the programme I entered the following into my personal journal on 18 April 2008:

> I was actually quite surprised when I was continuing with the short story in the ULEG class in the beginning of this week. Almost all of the students have taken neat and effective notes from the board (in their journals). They actually asked if they could copy the notes into their own books as the journals belong to me.

This overview was followed by reading the story, *The Drug Smuggler,* aloud to the participants. The reading of the story was often interrupted to point out and explain commonly used structural metaphors. The participants were asked to reread it and then to discuss with their peers specific metaphors that were pointed out. They were then asked to write down as many literal meanings as possible for a single word or phrase that they could think of and underline the one they regarded as the most appropriate in the specific context. The purpose of this exercise was to establish whether they would realise that in their literal form most phrases and words made no real sense in the context of the specific story.

Already early in the programme participants became aware of metaphor and how the author used metaphoric language to add value to the writing. On the whole the participants gave many possible interpretations for the metaphorically used expressions; however, they found it difficult to fit the appropriate one of their possible meanings to the context. It did, however, strike me that in the context of the story the phrase "churning stomach" referred to the protagonist's nervousness about the drugs he was smuggling. Ten of the participants however explained it as being "very hungry" or "an empty stomach." My observations about these interpretations will be discussed later in this chapter.

6.2.3.2 *Happy Days of Harrison Gumedi*

Participants were instructed to read the story, *Happy Days of Harrison Gumedi,* in preparation for an exercise on the identification of metaphors used in the story.

Despite giving them opportunity in class to read the story for themselves, many of the participants did not read the story. I concluded that this might be related to a general unwillingness, underpreparedness or even unfamiliarity as far as reading literary texts was concerned. An entry in my journal reflects my observation at this stage of the programme:

> Today I am quite despondent. Previously I had a vague feeling that whenever I do 'intellectual' work with the students, they would 'die' on me. Yesterday when I started the literature programme with the class I was struck by the dazed look in their eyes – as if they closed up the moment any cognitive input was required.

And

> … my colleague, Chrissie Olivier, who is teaching ULEG for the first time and who also likes her group immensely, also discussed her feeling that students simply shut down at times – maybe a legacy of rote-learning?

I continually needed to remind myself that these students from rural schools might not be used to extensive reading and questions regarding their own opinions, and that an essential element in my task to enhance critical thinking abilities was also to firmly shove them in the direction of taking responsibility for their own learning.

I also wanted the participants to realise that metaphoric use of language is not "something that makes literature difficult," and that reading and writing are not necessarily only "higher order mental process acquired through interaction with more knowledgeable others in the enactment of cultural practices" (King and Pearson (2003:89). I wanted them to see themselves as knowledgeable and as having their own theories of the world and, furthermore, that they were "not empty vessels to be filled" (2003:89). Therefore, although I employed literary texts as the conduit for conducting the awareness-raising of the use of metaphor in English texts, I consciously emphasised that metaphor is not simply a figure of speech but that it is a specific mental, cross-domain mapping (see 3.1.1). In order to illustrate the basic process where a concrete domain as the source domain is mapped on a more abstract or target domain, I decided to first look at ontological metaphors. I listed the names of different animals and elicited from the participants as many expressions as they knew which referred to each of the animals. It appeared initially as if the participants did not realise that this exercise of relating specific characteristics of an animal to, for instance, a person was relevant in their recognition of metaphor; they did eventually cooperate actively in what turned out to

be a fun-filled exercise. In this process of cross-domain mapping, participants were continually encouraged to relate their answers to the stories they may have grown up with.

To reinforce this exercise, participants were further tasked to relate specific abstract concepts to concrete objects. The following list of animal names was employed to elicit corresponding abstract concepts from the participants:

Lion, tortoise, snail, tiger, owl, hawk, hyena, fox, fish.

Only about 60% of the participants completed this exercise and many only described some of the animals; getting their minds around the literal meanings of words still seemed to be a novel experience to many of them. It was furthermore interesting that an owl was seen by many participants as *stupid, ugly* and *unimpressive.* This seemed to be contrary to the widely accepted perception of wisdom associated with the owl. This anomaly will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. By the end of this exercise, however, the participants seemed to be very much aware that when reading, words and expressions could not be taken only at face value but that a deeper level of interpretation would assist them in comprehending the writer's intention more fully.

At this stage of the literature programme, I decided to introduce the participants to the difference between structural and poetic metaphors as used specifically in literary texts. The participants were made aware that "the generalisations governing poetical metaphorical expressions are not in the language but in thought; they are general mapping across conceptual domain …. [but that] these general principles which take the form of conceptual mappings apply not just to novel poetic expressions but to much ordinary everyday language use" (Lakoff 2006:185). As we were reading this story, I therefore often asked the class to stand still at not only poetic metaphors but also at the many structural metaphors that are often taken for granted by proficient readers.

The participants were invited to discuss their interpretations of some of the metaphors. It was interesting that the participants' discussions shifted gradually from focusing on the mere factual information conveyed by the narrative to more

fundamental, existential questions. When it thus came to the discussion of *Happy Days of Harrison Gumedi,* participants did become intrigued by the story and related positively to the circumstances of the young black African male who came to work in Johannesburg during a previous political regime, and how he was able to establish himself through hard work as a successful businessman in the townships. There was real accountability in the classroom, and it was clear that the participants used the text as a source of evidence for the claims they were making in relation to themes they were construing in the discussion of this short story. I was in truth struck by the fact that Harrison Gumedi actually became a role model to many of them and that he was referred to in other discussions long after we had completed this story.

6.2.3.3 *The Suit*

Before I commenced with the reading of the next story, I decided to reinforce the categorisation of concepts through domain-mapping. The participants were given five nouns (flower, rock, sea, pillar, tree) and asked to characterise themselves accordingly, (e.g. I am a rock – I am trustworthy, steadfast, strong). To promote the conceptual transfer from source domain to target domain, they had to explain their choices. I first gave a few muddled examples, e.g., *I am a scarecrow – I am beautiful.* Despite some initial antagonism, participants seemed to enjoy this exercise although the male participants in general were reluctant to associate themselves with a flower and felt that the female participants could not be associated with any features typically given to a rock (see 5.1.5.2). It appeared that archaic gender-specific roles were still strongly embedded, and that thinking out of the box of patriarchal hegemony was met with resistance by especially the male participants.

After this exercise in domain mapping, I subsequently read the short story, *The Suit,* aloud in class. According to Knickerbocker and Rycik (2002:208), "reading a literary work aloud to students provides a risk-free situation in which the student, free from the mechanics of reading, is able to access meaning more easily and experience the pleasure of reading. Unhampered by a lack of decoding skill/limited fluency, the listener is able to focus on creating mental images which is a critical

cognitive response needed for independent reading." I did not alert the participants beforehand to specific metaphors, structural or poetic, in the story but I often asked them to close their eyes and to picture the setting and the characters for themselves.

One of the male participants had asked previously why we were doing "this metaphor thing" and I explained that it was to "understand higher level academic writing and to be able to draw inferences." In the reading of *The Suit* this particular student asked what a *cesspot* was and why the one woman in the story was called a *cesspot.* It was an ideal opportunity to illustrate how a metaphor like *cesspot* described the men's opinion of a drunken, divorced nurse whom the female protagonist was thinking of, and why leaving her own husband suddenly did not seem such a good idea anymore.

When asked after the initial reading and before any discussion of the story, the participants agreed that they had observed many metaphors in the story which needed to be discussed and understood in order to grasp the full dimensions of possible interpretation of what was conveyed by the author. They were obviously inquisitive and asked questions about metaphors and expressions they did not fully comprehend. Others were forthcoming with their own interpretations. After previous experiences of a class where little cooperation was taking place, I observed a readiness to give and take in the classroom talk about the text.

The success of this specific exercise lay in the fact that the participants at this stage of the programme could be regarded as a true community of practice (Wenger 2001:84), who became a resource for the negotiation of meaning shared in a dynamic and interactive sense. It can be agreed with Kong and Pearson (2003:90) that in this instance it was clear that "instruction [was] not a set of skills, processes or bodies of knowledge, but of providing scaffolds as students make sense of texts through reading, writing and talking" (see 2.2.3.4). I consequently realised that the participants were prepared, and able, to comprehend this story on a much deeper level than, for instance, *The Drug Smuggler.* Although the events in the story happened in Sophiatown, the story addressed a number of cultural issues prevalent in the Namibian society as expressed in daily newspapers, such as adultery, the

husband as authority figure and the acceptability of corporal punishment or not in a marriage.

After the reading of this story, the participants had the opportunity to discuss it in a lecture period set aside for class discussion. I intended to assist them in developing and practising their own 'voice' (see 3.3.1), not simply referring to their own point of view but as an "auditory metaphor for intellectual development and ways of knowing in which self and interaction with others are intricately intertwined" (Miller and Legge 1999:29). The participants voiced and argued their own positions towards moral issues addressed in the story and indicated appreciation for, for instance, the innovative way in which the husband in the story handled the adultery of his wife. They took cognisance of and argued about alternative ways of solving problems such as communication versus suicide or even the choice to rather humiliate the adulterous offender than to mete out corporal punishment. They actively argued (see 3.3.2) the conclusion of the story where the suicide of the wife forced the husband to realise that he had exaggerated the retributive measures he had imposed on his wife.

I observed the same "fundamental shift in their attitudes towards activities of the mind through this activity and the social relations in the class" as did Miller and Legge (1999:56) in their study. The participants indicated a readiness to actively immerse into the narrative of the story and the exploration of the figurative language which added to the depth of the theme. They were arguing gender issues resulting from the story and were relating these to the subject, Contemporary Social Studies, which is a compulsory course for all first year students at UNAM. They were thus not only provided with the opportunity to differentiate between the varying nuances of word meaning in English but indicated some divergent thinking which may serve them in future problem-solving (see 2.2.3) of similar situations in their personal lives.

6.2.3.4 *Our Wife*

The final short story that was used in this programme was *Our Wife*, a short sketch with an obscure story line (See Addendum E). It is autobiographical and written in a rich and colourful language full of vivid but complex metaphors.

At this stage of the programme I wanted an indication of the extent to which participants were able to relate to structural metaphors, and also to what extent they were able to give meaning to new, figurative expressions in context (poetic metaphor) when reading a short story on their own. I was prompted to look into this by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:19) who say that, "[w]e feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis." Since this sketch was concerned with a non-African woman who had married into an African culture and her experiences as junior wife at a typical African funeral, I thought that the blend of African and non-African cultures might be a challenge for the participants from a specifically African cultural origin. I also wanted to establish whether the use of the more Western source concepts in the categorisation of the target concepts (see 2.3.2) would be problematic to them.

To establish how the participants could deal with the story with minimum guidance of me as the lecturer, they were asked to read this sketch on their own and then explain certain metaphors that were indicated in bold print in the story. I tried to include a fair number each of structural and poetic metaphors. I wanted to investigate whether there would be a difference in their abilities to draw inferences from structural metaphors and from poetic metaphors. I also wanted to assess to what extent this would influence their comprehension of the story. It proved to be a very complicated exercise and it was very difficult to ensure a response from all of the participants. It was clear that they had found the task extremely difficult, probably also, since no help and direction were given. The number of correct/incorrect inferences they drew from the metaphors in the story, as well as failure to give any answer, is tabled as follows:

Table 6.15: Summary of recognition of metaphors and drawing inferences (*Our Wife)*

METAPHORS	INFERENCES		
	Correct	Incorrect	No answer
1. *He's done for …*	9	15	0
2. *My alien unaccustomed flesh …*	5	14	5
3. *The wrapper was a sword …*	7	13	4
4. *The entire outfit has an innate majesty…*	6	12	6
5. *These head-ties could be vicious weapons*	6	13	5
6. *My heels told me their bloody story…*	12	10	2
7. *A physical wreck …*	5	15	4
8. *My stomach wrenched its signal of fertility…*	3	16	5
9. *My body ached its way to the graveyard …*	3	17	4
10. *Promises, all over with those few spadefuls of earth …*	5	11	8
11. *The endless battalions of relatives …*	6	13	6
12. *My heels refusing to serve the relatives ...*	8	11	6
13. *My stomach refused to accept the sticky yam .*	15	4	5
14. *The weight of the oppressive reams of materials which seemed to imprison my … movement.*	9	4	1
15. *An electric guitar whose sharp twangs cut the air with a gash of sound ….*	5	13	6
16. *The band-leader's falsetto rose and fell*	6	10	8
17. *The general noise was punctuated with cries*	4	13	7
18. *The day rolled on …*	15	3	6
19. *It seemed as if her garments were weeping …*	6	11	7
20. *The sequined huba blinked wearily …*	2	14	8
21. *Its heavy mountain of folds …*	2	14	8
22. *Lonely mermaid with the sword of heels ...*	2	12	10
23. *Our wife, my dear.*	4	6	14

First of all, this table indicates the large number of incorrect inferences drawn, suggesting that it would have been very difficult for most of the participants to comprehend the sketch. The reader's attention is drawn to the following:

- In numbers 6 and 13 the majority of the participants drew correct inferences. It could be argued that the images conjured up by the metaphors in 6 and 13 are similar and common structural metaphors.

- The metaphor in number 18 actually constitutes a commonly-used metaphor and, as can be expected, the majority of the participants were able to infer an appropriate meaning.

- The structural metaphor in number I strangely posed difficulty for the majority of the participants, as it was interpreted as "he had finished." This most probably come from their colloquial use of the phrase "I'm done" meaning "I

have completed my work." This may constitute a misreading of the preposition "for " (see 1.2); however, misinterpreting this metaphor at the beginning of the story might have influenced the way they related the introduction to the rest of the story and might from the beginning already have put them on the wrong track.

- I was further surprised that the metaphor used in expression 8 was wrongly interpreted and that at least 75% of the participants interpreted it as "being hungry" (see 6.2.3.1). One should be very cautious when assuming that when participants categorise a metaphor where the source domain is the stomach to an inevitable target domain of hunger as indicative of their pre-occupation with hunger symbolising poverty. I would rather see it as a basic and logical level of interpretation where the "churning" of the stomach as encountered in the *Drug Smuggler* and the "wrenching" of the stomach as encountered in *Our Wife* were seen merely as symbolic of hunger. The fact that this would not be the most appropriate inference to draw in both the instances mentioned remains indicative of how comprehension of texts could go wrong when participants interpreted words on a literal level and thus apply inappropriate target domains to metaphors used in texts.

- It was further astounding that such a large number of participants drew incorrect inferences concerning the very commonly-used metaphor "a physical wreck" as used in the sketch.

- The rich descriptions of the women's clothes further seemed to have been missed by the majority of the participants. This could possible be because words such as "garments" (number 19), "sequined" (number 20) and "folds" (21) used in connection with clothes might be unknown to African students and thus rather pointed to cultural differences between the source domain and the target domain. According to Grady *et al.* (1999:86), "Metaphoric researchers (e.a., Lakoff and Johnson (*et al.*) have been unanimous in invoking the principle of 'experiential motivation' rather than arguing that metaphors are arbitrary or innate." These ESL students generally looked up unknown words in dictionaries; it was clear from many answers that they tried to manipulate the dictionary meaning of a specific word into the context of the metaphorical expression, with understandably unsuccessful results.

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This exercise of finding word meanings in the dictionary as the main source of acquiring new vocabulary is an indication of why students find drawing appropriate inferences in specific contexts very difficult. They need exposure to new words in different genres and different contexts to learn by experience the different nuances of words as used in different contexts.

- An expression such as "the weight of the oppressive reams of materials which seemed to imprison my every movement" was, however, correctly inferred by almost 50% of the participants. It might legitimately be assumed that participants were aware of the physical weight of dresses worn by African women at cultural events.

- The use of the largely context-reduced metaphor of "the lonely mermaid with the sword of heels" (number 21) as employed in *Our Wife* seemed to be remote from the socio-cultural framework of the Namibian students and therefore was, not surprisingly, incomprehensible to most of the participants.

- The most disturbing, however, was that only 16.7% of the participants comprehended what was meant with the final expression of "Our wife, my dear" (number 23) and that 58% of participants did not even attempt to infer any meaning at all. Since it is also the title of the sketch, one cannot but wonder whether the sketch made any sense at all to the participants, and whether they understood the underlying theme of acceptance and conciliation portrayed in the sketch and signified by the metaphoric title "Our Wife." It was also further discouraging to realise that the ensuing bewilderment after reading a text that is laden with largely unfamiliar metaphors may be indicative of what happens in the reading of non-literary but academic texts participants are confronted with in the course of their academic studies.

I analysed their responses to the structural and poetic metaphors separately:
- Numbers 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 18 and 23 were classified as structural metaphors
- Numbers 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 and 22 were classified as poetic metaphors.

Table 6.16: Analysis of participants' responses

	STRUCTURAL	POETIC
Answered correctly	16.3%	10%
Answered wrongly	17%	30%
No answer attempted	8.5%	18.6%

These findings indicated at the end of the short story section of the literature programme that participants still had trouble drawing the most appropriate inferences from metaphoric language. They did, however, fare better with interpreting structural metaphors than they did with the somewhat alien poetic metaphors employed in this specific story. Given the fact that the story was complex, and that the metaphors addressed in the story were often highly context-reduced it implied that readers of this sketch would benefit from schemata from a Western cultural orientation. It was not surprising therefore, that the participants found if difficult to assess the deeper nuances of this literary text and that they were not very successful in drawing appropriate inferences from metaphoric language used.

After my discussion of the story and the metaphors in the story, I entered the following into my personal journal on 24 July 2008:

> " The students only returned in drips and drabs (from the mid-year break – author). When we started the discussions on *Our Wife* the class was silent and the students again had that vacant look as I have described earlier. I felt as if it would take some time for them to readjust to university life. I took two periods to work through *Our Wife*. I discussed the metaphors and the underlined expressions but I felt it was not a great success."

The rationale for including this rather alien text was that in the course of their studies the participants would be confronted with academic literature of a mainly Western orientation. It was thus important that their horizons should be expanded. One of the ways of doing this would be by engaging with literary texts, ideally as a leisure occupation. If students could become involved in engaging with texts, using both African literature (that should be culturally more familiar to them), as well as Western-oriented literature, they could become versed in those elements such as metaphor found in good writing that create different levels of possible interpretation and comprehension. This is, however, a long process and not necessarily containable in the ambit of a single programme like this one. This limitation was

illustrated by the fact that no specific correlations could be drawn between the participants' recognition, or not, of structural metaphors in this short story and their ultimate use of metaphor in their own writing. This aspect of the research project will be discussed later in this chapter.

6.2.3.5 Consolidating the discussion of the short stories read

In order to establish the level of insight and enhance the ability to form an own critical opinion regarding the short stories read, participants were asked to choose one protagonist from one of the stories, and to find pictures in magazines that they would regard as representative of their own impressions of the specific character. I wanted to assist students who may still have a limited vocabulary when wanting to express abstract ideas, as well as make them internalise and use a visual metaphor to indicate their own interpretation of the text. The pictures were to act as prompts for participants to verbalise their own perceptions of the characters and the stories which they presented orally to their peers. I stated in my personal journal that "I hope this will be a practice in metaphoric transfer – using a visual picture to help them formulate their thoughts." Furthermore, since I experienced, like other researchers (Miller and Legge 1999; Spack 1985), that the participants indicated a reserve to voice their own opinions in class, I wanted to foster their self-confidence. The provision to allow own opinions to be represented by pictures would enable them to risk expressing their ideas, without fear of being ostracised, and to trust their instincts about what they had to say.

Most of the participants elected to discuss Harrison Gumedi, the protagonist in *Happy Days of Harrison Gumedi,* or else Philemon or Matilda, the protagonists in *The Suit.* Very few opted for the *Drug Smuggler* and no-one for *Our Wife.* Many participants still merely retold the story of their choice rather than portray personal reflections. It was clear that they had had little practice in expressing critical thought and personal opinion or at seeing themselves as an 'authority' worthy of voicing opinions. Participants were also asked to comment on using pictures to illustrate their perceptions of the characters. The following quotes are some of their responses:

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- "By looking at the picture you can know what could be happening to the character."
- "By looking at the picture I started imaging of how Mr Harison Gumedi looked like."
- "During my presentation this really helps me a lot cause I don't really need to explain much because as soon as I showed the pictures to my audience they're already reflecting and building images in their mind."
- "Because some pictures are exactly like the characters who were involved in the story therefore it is easy for me to build my story on those pictures."

An interesting aspect of this exercise was that although participants were very much aware that the characters in *Happy Days of Harrison Gumedi* and *The Suit* were black, the pictures they had cut out to illustrate characteristics were indiscriminately of white and black people. I was delighted by the aptness of most of the pictures, and when participants were asked to show and discuss the pictures in their presentations, they were adamant about their choices and defended them vehemently.

The responses from participants further indicated that many of them were able to see the 'bigger picture' and could isolate specific themes from the stories for themselves. They commented mainly on Gumedi's success as a businessman and related it to themselves, e.g.,

- "Relating to this story of life, he worked for white people and later works for himself, to me that is a very important success in life."
- "I learned that life could change the behaviour/life of a person in a period of time."
- "we must respect where we came from, we also need to respect our culture let's look at mr Harrison Gumedi he lived in a rich palace but where he came from was very poor, he never wanted people to find out that he is from a poor family until a woman from the village turned his life upside down."

Conversely, a large number of participants failed to see the comic element of the woman who came from the village and threatened Gumedi with exposure of his

humble origins, and who eventually foiled his plans to get rid of her. They took it very seriously, e.g.,

- "This story is a clear picture to those who like acting like riches while their real family are suffering, it teaches us to be ourselves and to respect the norm where we came from."

- "It was not necessary for Harrison Gumedi to try to forget his original roots and to make him self some one els, that is why it has become so irritated to him after so many years to show his past in front of the model (one of the characters in the story – author), the rest of the city people and neighbours."

When participants presented their own comprehension of the theme of *The Suit,* it indicated that they were able to see beyond the narrative and deduce the underlying issues addressed in the story, e.g.,

- "The theme suits the story well. It teaches me about the badness or effect of being unfaithful. That is adultery can cause divorce alcoholism, murder or suicide. The story shows that a guilty conscience judges itself."

- "In this story I learnt interesting things in this suit story. It gave me a courage to handle any problem come over in life."

- "In conclusion this suit story is giving a reader an critical thinking and left him/her with different question."

Participants were eloquent about all the stories, except about *Our Wife*. Some comments about *Our Wife* were as follows:

- "It contain complex proverbs and new words or key word that need long time to understand. Some words are used indirect way and I have to find the meaning of it in reality and late (relate – author) to the sound of the story."

- "I've learned nothing since I just did not like the story neither jargon, high level English words have been used therefore it was difficult for me to figure out what the story was all about."

- "it was having metaphoric words that gave me a tough time to think about them."

- "Because there are many vocabulary words so I was trying to use a dictionary for me to cope with them."

- "Since up to now I have no picture of what realy the story is all about eventhough I tried to read it as many times."
- "Because the language used is very difficult to understand. It's like kind of metaphoric words."
- "I also think that the overused of the metaphoric words and sentences made it even more terrible for me as a student to understand the story."

It can thus be deduced that participants were hampered by their limited comprehension of the metaphoric use of language employed in this story. This might have been underscored by the visual impact of the many bold printed expressions in the copy of the story they read (See addendum E). Part of the success of this particular exercise for me lay specifically in its visual appearance – indicating metaphoric expressions in bold showed the participants the importance of being able to read beyond the surface meaning of single words in order to fully comprehend the intended meaning of the author. Conversely, it might have intimidated them. All in all, however, I found the exercise and the subsequent findings illustrative of the difficulties encountered by ESL FG entrants (and students in general), when it comes to the drawing of appropriate inferences when reading texts that demand advanced levels of critical language proficiency.

The short story section of the literature programme was concluded when the participants wrote their own short stories. These stories were just written and read as a diversion, and to offer participants an opportunity to try their hands at employing some of the techniques they came across in the short stories they had read. The story was supposed to have an African theme and participants were encouraged to relate tales they grew up with. Since it was not intended to inhibit participants who might be sensitive about their own low proficiency in English, their stories were not employed for the purposes of this project but were merely circulated anonymously among their peers and read for pleasure.

6.2.4 Reading an English novel by an African author

I agree with Spack (1985:720) that literature does not necessarily need to be studied through formalist criticism "that is bogged down in technical terminology and complex symbolism." The study of literature could be taught as an exploration of meaning. The interpretative procedures involved in exploring meaning are valuable to students and can be applied to "a range of language uses, both literary and non-literary, which they encounter inside and outside the learning situation" (1985: 706). McKay (1982:527) also says that literature can provide a basis for extending language usage. Therefore, to consolidate the progress made in the recognition and interpretation of structural and poetic metaphor in the short story section of the literature programme, the participants were instructed in the second section of the programme to read a novel written in English by an African author as an exercise in extensive reading.

A further rationale was that reading a novel could provide the affective, attitudinal and experiential factors which would motivate the participants to read (McKay 1982:530). I did, however, decide that, since in aesthetic reading (such as in reading novels) the experience is primary (Woodward 2001:532), language use, such as metaphoric language use, should be explored only to the extent that it was relevant to that experience. I wanted the participants to experience the enjoyment of interacting with the text, and since usage only comes into play when it impedes or highlights that experience (2001:532), I decided to leave the participants mainly to their own devices of extracting meaning in their reading – with the optimistic idea that at least a smattering of their experience with metaphor use would rub off on their reading comprehension of the novel they were reading. The participants were consequently left to choose and read a novel of their choice in their own time. A list of available novels with their library location was given to guide them.

After allowing the participants three weeks to read the novel, they were given an open-book test in which one of the questions was that they should write down five metaphors they had come across in the novel and explain their meanings in the specific context of the novel in their own words. The average mark for the test was

72% and the average mark for the question concerning the metaphors was an encouraging 83.7%. In my personal journal I reflected:

> On Thursday (14 August 2008 – author) they wrote the test on the novel. I was delighted with how well they were able to pick out metaphors and expressions, and explain them to me.

As part of the programme the participants were alerted to the richness of the imagery often contained in English novels written in the African idiom before they selected the novel they wanted to read. Since much of the imagery in African novels would have been familiar to the participants, and they were comfortable with the story lines, it was not totally surprising that they were able to identify language used metaphorically and to draw appropriate inferences. From the following examples that the participants selected and explained, it can be concluded that they were able to recognise and interpret metaphors that they encountered in their own reading.

- The future is not happy/Joy has broken – No more happiness in your life because if you are in prison you cannot enjoy life.
- You cannot buy a friend at the market – you cannot get a friend easily because he/she is precious.
- Because he is from silver plates – he comes from a rich family.
- Many words do not fill a basket – a lot of speech will not make somebody understand.

Since no study of literature is included at present in the Grade 12 English L2 curriculum in Namibia (see Addendum A), I was aware that not many of the participants were acquainted with novels and specifically with English novels with an African theme. In order to establish whether this introduction to such novels might encourage participants to continue reading for pleasure, I conducted a survey after the test, and the following was found:

Table 6.17: Results of survey on novel reading

QUESTIONS	YES	NO	MAYBE
Was the novel you read about an African story?	23	1	0
Did you enjoy the novel?	24	0	0
Would you again read any novel?	23	1	0
Would you again read an African novel written in English?	23	0	1

From this response it can thus be deduced that the participants understood and enjoyed reading the novel, even though it was not part of the ULEG course content. The value of introducing ESL readers as early as possible to extensive reading for pleasure will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

6.2.5 A Namibian play

Miccoli (2003:123) sees drama as "a way of bridging aspects of language naturally into the language classroom. It also allows for making literature and cultural analyses of characters where participants use English in meaningful ways." I therefore decided that the third section of the literature programme should consist of studying a play prescribed for all the ULEG students. The specific play, *God of Women,* afforded an ideal opportunity to work with metaphor, since it is rich in African imagery and idiom; many of the metaphors can also be regarded as ontological metaphors among people native to Namibia, since they are mainly concerned with the flora and fauna indigenous to the country. Participants would therefore be able to relate easily to them.

At the initial discussion of the play as another literary genre, I observed that participants again presented a blank wall of incomprehension (see 6.2.3.2). It cost a large amount of effort to turn them around to interact with the text. It was almost as if with every new genre of literature I introduced, we were starting anew, and that the bigger picture still eluded many of the participants. I became increasingly aware of the urgent need to incorporate literature programmes into core courses for ESL students at UNAM, in order to provide a bridging mechanism between a teacher-centred past and a learner-centred present.

In my journal reflections I recorded my own apprehensions about the way in which I should present the play to the participants, since I wanted to elicit their active involvement throughout the study of this play. Woodward (2001:532) advises that "since in aesthetic reading the experience is primary, this is where a classroom approach should begin and language usage should be explored only to the extent that it is relevant to that experience." I consequently decided to follow the advice given by Spack (1985:710) who said, "do not provide too much information for fear

of spoiling the pleasurable experience of reading a masterpiece of fiction." In class the participants were consequently invited to come to the front to read the character roles while I would read the interjections. After breaking the ice of participants' initial reluctance to become involved with the text, and by inviting the more extrovert participants to read the different roles, the rest of the participants became very keen to also read the character roles aloud in class, and turns were taken to do so. I see the reading aloud of a play as corresponding with what Liu (2000:354) said:

> … a dramatic approach to literature is a creative oral reading of any type of literature that contains "theater", be it a play or otherwise. … meanings of a given text are constructed and/or reconstructed through dramatic exploration, which invites creativity and imagination … .

I was, however, struck by the many grossly mispronounced words by all those participants who took part in the reading. They often failed completely to pronounce certain words (see 6.1.4). My despondence about the participants' reading of the play is reflected in my journal entry of 31 July 2008:

> I find however that their English vocabulary is horrendous. When reading, even ordinary words are mispronounced. I discuss metaphors in the play with them but I wonder how much of the rest of the words they understand in any way. Is my programme too advanced for their language level? Is the answer in designing special programmes? There must be an answer somewhere!

The fact that the words they could not pronounce were what can be regarded as basic sentence vocabulary worried me, as it seemed that their own English vocabulary might be limited and that higher level academic English might prove to be not easily accessible to them. This aspect was triangulated with their test scores (see 6.1.4) and examination essays which will be discussed later in this chapter. Although in my journal I voiced my fear that participants' limited vocabularies might complicate awareness-raising of the use of metaphors in the play the play, *God of Women* lent itself particularly well to study metaphor as used in the African literary text. Many of the metaphors grew to become symbolic representations of specific characters. The patterns in which these symbolic representations were used clearly indicated the moral decline, or moral growth, of the different protagonists. This framework of imagery assisted the participants in their comprehension and later interpretation of specific characters and those characters' roles in establishing the moral thread that ran through this play.

Directly after the reading of the play I entered the following into my personal diary on 7 August 2008:

> "It was rewarding that they enjoyed the play. Although I had to explain very much and really had to draw out answers from them, it did seem as if they were beginning to understand metaphoric themes in the play."

Consequently when, after the reading of the play, groups of participants were tasked to explore the moral journeys of specific characters in the play by referring to specific metaphoric expressions, symbols and imagery I was surprised by what they found in the play. For example, the Lewanika group picked up that Lewanika, the arrogant and domineering chief and husband of four wives, was symbolised throughout the play by *the rooster* metaphor, as he described himself. They discussed the aptness of this image as a metaphoric description of the character of Lewanika. They traced this image through to "the rooster asked who of us has succumbed to the colour of his feathers" (who of us is pregnant by him). Participants traced it further to where Lewanika realised his folly at the end of the play, and that the child was engendered by his own unknown son. He said, "How blind for a wise man, who sees bellies of all birds of unknown feathers flying past above, … ." Participants further traced Lewanika's moral decline and journey to his fall through the way in which he addressed his wives. For example, the participants showed this by referring to the following pattern they had established in Lewanika's dialogue, seeped in metaphor, with his wives:

- "is your intelligence ageing, woman" – addressing his senior wife.
- "Our first contact coincided with the intense flow of the river. Were you unattended before, or were you simply on the moon?" – abusively addressing his second wife, denigrating their first sexual contact and accusing her of infidelity.
- "All my hopes lay on you until you proved yourself barren beyond an ordinary desert" – addressing his infertile third wife.
- "You all crept here as destitutes. I sliced my land for you. I traded you for half my stock. None of you standing here can claim hunger." – addressing all of them together.
- "My honeyed wife" – expressing his unfair preference for his child-bride.

The participants discussed Lewanika's realisation of his wrongful behaviour as it culminated in the end of the play when he addressed the son, whom he had wanted his senior wife to abort before their marriage, in the following words:

> No, no! My deeds are not worthy of your pity. I defiled taboos of sanctity and they spat a curse on me.

It was further remarkable to what extent the participants were able to trace the development and growth of the abused wives, divided by their jealousy, towards conciliation and solidarity because of the realisation of their mutual plight and suffering near the end of the play.

> Nsala: All he does is sit there and demand the labour of your palms. Love does not foster neglect, Ma Inonge.
> When last did he say "please" to you? He knows what he has done to you – and I know we are all in that line.

For me the awareness-raising in this project concerning the use of metaphor in literature by African authors culminated with the study of the play *God of Women.* The participants related closely to themes such as abuse by an all powerful husband, abortion, child bride preferences and polygamy, disguised heavily by recurring African symbols and images in the play as taboo subjects, but which the author illuminated from various angles through the use of different metaphors accessible to the participants. The class discussions of a specific character by each group in all cases developed into discussions of social issues addressed in the play. Again participants referred often to their studies in Contemporary Social Issues (see 6.2.3.3).

At the end of this part of the programme there was an observable sense of achievement present, not only in the participants but I also experienced it myself very clearly. From reflections quoted from my personal journal it is evident that, like the participants, I swung between highs and lows as we progressed through the literature programme. Sometimes assumptions concerning the participants linguistic abilities were confirmed but also often they were rejected, and I was surprised and delighted by the progress made and the many successful executions of tasks. This roller-coaster ride is not unique to the project and it is not unique to working with

ESL FG entrants. It did, however, serve to ground me, as the researcher, in my attempts to objectively assess the progress made.

6.2.6 Namibian poetry

The poetry section of the literature programme consisted of the reading of some poems written by Namibian poets. The poems were first read to the students without any interruption and, in a second reading, responses were elicited. These remained unfortunately largely very one-sided and only the same participants braved opinions. The participants were clearly aware that poetry constituted a high level of language use. This and the fact that poetry is by definition highly context-reduced might have intimidated the participants to voice their own opinions more freely in class.

To assess the impact the reading of poetry had had on the participants a survey was conducted after the completion of the poetry readings and discussions. The following responses were received:

Table 6.18: Results of survey: poetry

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
Do you like poetry?	19	5
Did you enjoy the poems we read?	22	2
Have you ever written poetry yourself?	11	13

The results of this survey were confounding, since it appeared in class as though participants were not at all involved. The reasons given for why they liked poetry can be categorised as follows:

Table 6.19: Participants' comments on poetry reading

	PARTIPANTS' COMMENTS
Specific topics addressed by poetry	"Real life situation or occurances are reflected and those that are not easily discussed such as death."
	"i enjoy how they were structured especially in the one

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	about <u>mother</u>" "They really showed me what the poet was illustrating. Especially the one for the abused child."
The cultural importance of poetry	" I do injoy it and I am a poet. Also in our culture we do poetry and other traditional thing like songs, dance." "Because they teach and train me to be smart.' "The language used in poetry is romantic and sometimes I find it direct to what we do in reality."
Studying poetry to write poetry	"Poetry is creative and innovative structuring of sentences (Rhyming and metaphors and personification)." "They do tell a lot as a poem should. The metaphor of them saliva could just drip out of your mouth.' "I'm a poet and the type of metaphors makes me understand what the poet is saying"

The two participants who indicated that they did not like poetry said,

- "They are written in riddles and are hard to understand."
- "They have a hidden language – difficult to understand."

To consolidate the poetry reading and discussion, participants were free to submit their own poems about the name of power that they had chosen for themselves. Unfortunately very few of them opted to participate in this exercise; however, a few participants had tried their hands at manipulating the English language, in order to produce endearing examples of budding poetic endeavours, for example:

Hardworker

Sunrise and sets
Acting like a slave
Sweating for the future
So friendly with my books
Hardworker, hardworker,
It's how I always feel

With strength, courage and support
I ever hope happiness at the end
Chasing laziness apart
Working seriously but hard
Hardworker, hardworker

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It's how I always feel

As I walk on the road I build it
It's all I believe
Hard work never kills
Hardworker, hardworker
It's always how I always feel

Some of the other metaphors that the participants employed in their own poems are briefly quoted.

- Just work with knowledge
  Work harder with your own hands
  To build your future.
- Patient always
  Conquer many things
- My name is a saying
  Identity with resemblance
  And remembrance.

It was interesting that most of the metaphors the participants used as names of power for themselves were related to hard work. They related hard work to physical work even though they clearly intended to refer to themselves as hard working students, for example, *acting like a slave, sweating for the future, work harder with your hands* but then also *so friendly with my books*. These target domains seemed to be very familiar to them, and they easily conceptualised the more abstract idea of mental work by means of this target domain.

Since poetry can be regarded as highly context-reduced writing, and the reader needs to rely heavily on the understanding and appropriate interpretation of figurative language I decided to complete the literature programme with the reading of these poems. From the participants' responses in the survey I detected an appreciation for not only the poetry read but also for African literature in general. I do think that the world of fiction and the joys of seeing beyond the immediate were opened up through the assisted journey that they undertook in the ULEG class in 2008. These participants were not students of English language but were associating with the characters and their circumstances as portrayed by the authors in the works of fiction they were introduced to. I thus agree with observations made in Writing Development Continuum (2003:4) that the "teaching strategies that are used and the texts selected are very powerful transmitters of cultural knowledge

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and how children (and ESL adults – author) construct the task of learning to be literate. In relation to the texts selected, what seems critical is the way in which they are used, rather than merely trying to select the 'right' text, because all texts convey values of some sort."

6.3 TALL 1 and 2

In order to balance my subjective observations of how the participants responded to the literature programme and the awareness-raising, I collected quantitative data that would indicate whether the awareness-raising of the use of metaphor by means of the literature programme described previously had indeed enhanced the participants' abilities to draw appropriate inferences when reading academic texts. The following subsections of the TALL (see 6.1.3) were classified as follows by the test developers

Subtest 1: Scrambled text
Subtest 2: Interpreting graphic and visual information
Subtest 3: Text types
Subtest 4: Academic vocabulary
Subtest 5: Understanding texts
Subtest 6: Text editing

Although the TALL measures participants' total academic literacy proficiency on entry at HE (see 2.2.3), I was interested mainly in the development of the UNAM FG entrants' critical literacy proficiency. As far as the TALL was concerned, my main area of focus was on subtests 4, 5 and 6, since these three subtests would give an indication of the development of the participants' academic vocabulary, as well as their understanding of texts and correct usage of English; these were the problem areas that I intended to address in this project.

Table 6.20: Comparison of subtests in TALL 1 and TALL 2

	TALL 1	TALL 2
Subtest 1: Scrambled text	1.35 (SA = 1.25)	1.3 (SN = 1.38)
Subtest 2: Interpret. graphic and visual info.	2.49 (SA = 1.76)	2.55 (SN = 1.83)
Subtest 3: text types	1.47 (SA = 1.02)	1.10 (SN = 0.89)
Subtest 4: Academic vocabulary	2.35 (SA = 2.43)	4.35 (SN 2.86)*
Subtest 5: Understanding texts	11.72 (SA = 8.18)	18.32 (SN = 6.58)*
Subtest 6: Text editing	1.92 (SA = 3)	4.72 (SN = 3.29)*

* Difference between TALL 1 and TALL 2

The analysis of the raw scores as calculated and provided by the test developers indicated that in TALL 1 the means for all the students in the ULEG class who wrote the test were 22.30 (SA = 11.07)[2] and in TALL 2 the means were 32.33 (SN = 10.42)[3].

In subtests 1, 2 and 3 the means did not show a difference between TALL 1 and TALL 2. When it, however, came to subtests 4, 5 and 6, which were testing participants' academic vocabulary, their proficiency in comprehending academic texts in English, as well as their abilities to edit texts, it showed an increased score from TALL 1 to TALL 2. Since none of the other subtests showed a marked increase in performance, it could be inferred that the increase in performance in subtests 4, 5 and 6 could not be subscribed only to natural maturation and exposure to the academic environment.

Since the programme that was followed with the FG entrants participating in this group was aimed at improving their ability to draw appropriate inferences from academic texts, it seems safe to say that the increased performance in subtests 4, 5 and 6 in October can at least partially be attributed to the awareness-raising of the use and interpretation of metaphors in literary, as well as academic texts, with a rub off benefit of an increased higher level vocabulary as indicated in subtest 4. It thus indicated that the participants were also able to attack the reading text in TALL

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[2]   SA: Standard deviation TALL 1
[3]   SN: Standard deviation TALL 2

2 from a more advanced critical literacy proficiency level, and thus achieved a higher mean for subtest 5 of the second TALL.

6.4 Final examination essays

As a final measure to indicate to what extent the awareness-raising of metaphor and its effect on drawing appropriate inferences in academic texts assisted the participants, I studied the essays in their final ULEG examination. In order to counter personal bias and the danger of marking the student instead of his/her work, a colleague peer-marked a photocopied set of unmarked essays for me. In many cases the marks we awarded the essays corresponded fairly closely although there were differences.

Table 6.21: Analysis of exam essay scores as assessed by two different examiners

MARKS GIVEN	NO.	ANALYSIS
same marks given	4 essays	
1 mark difference	7 essays	I scored 6 essays lower
2 marks difference	3 essays	I scored 2 essays lower
3 marks difference	4 essays	I scored 3 essays lower
4 marks difference	3 essays	I scored 2 essays lower
5 marks difference	3 essays	I scored 2 essays lower

It appeared as if the marks I awarded the essays were in most cases lower than that of my colleague. Since there was a marked difference in the marks awarded by my colleague and myself in 10 of the cases, I decided to analyse the essays only qualitatively in order to establish whether the participants comprehended the given text (see Addendum F) to such an extent that they could contribute critically to the following instruction:

Making use of the reading passage in Section 1 and your own ideas, write three paragraphs on the following topic:

Education, health and welfare reforms play a major role during trade and financial liberalisation.

In general, the majority of the participants were able to identify specific aspects in the given text which related to the topic that they had to discuss and they were able, albeit fairly basically, to contribute critically. Although they still lifted a great number of the phrases from the passage, they demonstrated that their understanding of a rather difficult text might have been enhanced by the awareness of the use of metaphor in academic texts. Some of the metaphors from the text that various participants incorporated in their own essays were:

- "Offcourse, poor countries will *face difficulties in meeting official distribution of resources*; however, other countries will entervene to render assistance."
- "*Safety nets such as education, health and welfare* should be provided to the poor to improve their life and to learn skill that will improve their capacity."
- "If the world is filled with people that are educated in economic health sector, that we will have a world that will *play major roles in education, trade and financial liberalization*."
- "Globalization can reduce poverty because *it acts as a filter that magnifies the impact that institutions and policies have on the poor.*"
- "*Knowledge and skills serve as a better tools to improve one's life*, Meaning that if people are well-educated then they could be able to *utilize the available materials for better standard of living.*"

The participants incorporated a fair number of additional metaphoric expressions, albeit not very original ones, effectively in their writing as well, for example:

- The redistribution of wealth needs to be *on track* during crises or volatile times. It helps to protect the poor from the cruelty of dominant porverty."
- "For me as student who is studying community development *I would like to impact upon this topic* and support it by adding some examples: like in our country Namibia *development is still young we are fitting* [probably *fighting* – a*uthor*] *almost everyday to overcome* the problems we have."
- " … if a person is healthy then she/he will have the energy to work, so that she/he can *bring the bread of tomorrow on the table again*."

As a final investigation to assess the development of FG entrants' ability to maintain themselves in the academic domain, I decided to compare their performance in the

final ULEG examination with that of the CG students in the same class. The rationale for this was the fact that in TALL 1 the CG students outperformed the FG entrants significantly (see 6.1.2). I wanted to establish whether the FG entrants were still outperformed by their CG peers at the end of the year. I therefore decided to compare the scores that students in both groups attained in the final ULEG examination. I conducted an independent samples test and, since the variances were equal, a t-test for equality of means was conducted. When the scores of the FG entrants were compared to that of the CG students the following was found.

Table 6.22: Equality of means: FG entrants and CG entrants and students' scores in the final ULEG Examination of 2008

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Exam marks: FG and CG stude	-1.916	31	0.065

This t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between the scores of FG entrant and CG entrants and students in the final examination as t = -1.916 (p = 0.065 thus p = > 0.05). These findings strengthened the fact that the FG entrants who indicated in the TALL 1 that they were at a linguistic disadvantage compared to their CG peers, were at the end of this programme on par with them.

6.5 Reflections on the value of awareness-raising of metaphor in literary texts and FG entrants' academic and critical literacy

During the course of the year I noticed that the participants in the study seemed to have attached different meanings to concepts in English than was normally understood by Western users of English. This idiosyncratic use of English went beyond the conceptualisation of structural metaphors, e.g., in their use of idiomatic expressions such as "on the one hand … on the other hand" (used as "and … and" and not as "either … or") and "by all means" (used not as a descriptor of intent but as indicating everything necessary to accomplish a task). This indicated a possible transfer from their L1, since the use of these expressions were common and

widespread among the participants and could thus not solely be due to previous ESL teaching.

Some of the idiosyncratic uses of specific words could be regarded as remnants of the apartheid era and the political changes of the past. Previously, the *lingua franca* in Namibia was Afrikaans. During the liberation era many of the people who had had no knowledge of English were targeted by political campaigners and certain slogans were frequently used by politicians. Many of these words had undergone a kind of semantic divergence and had lost their political connotations; they have come to be used in a more general and personal sense, e.g., *discriminate* ("Students discriminate me because I am poor); *independence* – this word has become a concept for any freedom, starting with personal freedom to do what you like ("At my aunty's house I do not have independence to make my own food"); *corruption* – this word is a metaphor for anything that goes wrong ("Due to corruption at my home, I could not learn for the test"); *discrepancy* – this word is used for any misunderstanding and argument between two people ("Students sharing a room often have discrepancy."); *appreciate* – this word is used in the sense of being good' ("My English was not that appreciated because we only had Wambo teachers"). Some words that have a new connotation are words that are frequently used in community training such as *addicted to* – this is used for anything that is frequently done and liked by people and does not necessarily carry a negative connotation ("People are addicted to their vernacular").

This shift in connotative meaning of words and expressions can be deemed a natural but divergent growth of English as used in Namibia. At present a rather derogatory term, "Namlish," is used for the English spoken locally in Namibia but the future development of a specific Namibian English cannot be excluded; however, rigorous mainstream demands are currently still being made on UNAM students who need to become part of a predominantly Western academic discourse community.

I subsequently returned to the research questions that prompted this project and that were addressed in this chapter,

- What is the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM?
- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in First-Generation students at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

When I combined my observations and data collected with the responses from the participants when I was doing awareness-raising of the recognition and use of metaphor in literary texts, I was impressed by the difficulty that the participants, who were all FG ESL students, had to draw inferences. It appeared that much of what they thought they understood was conceptualised differently from what it was intended to mean (see 6.2.3.4). Their inevitable misconception of much of what they had read often rather muddied the waters instead of providing plain sailing. Being concerned with enhancing students' academic literacy proficiency it actually implies making a distinction between academic or classroom register and more formal register.

Even though it is indisputable that literary texts can be employed as additional tools in enhancing ESL students' levels of academic, as well as critical literacy, the findings concerning the literature programme that I employed in this project as discussed above caution against too ambitious intentions. It should not be forgotten that the students who were enrolled in the ULEG course were those whose low proficiency in English forced them to take this extra year-long foundation course in English in the first place. The strength of this specific programme and the successes gained by the participants, I believe, lay in the fact that I employed texts that were not only familiar to them in their cultural settings but also in the exploitation of the African idiom and metaphor presented in English. The combination of a familiar setting and familiar imagery assisted these participants who all could be classified as at risk in their academic studies when their scores in TALL 1 were analysed (see 6.3), specifically in enhancing their ability to read beyond the surface level of the texts. This ability to see beyond the surface level of the texts could be seen in their frequent indications that they identified with the characters and they, gradually over the course of the programme, became more

willing to engage in discussions about the texts, as well as the social issues that were embedded in these texts.

Some positive gains were thus reported but other areas of under-development of the participants' competence in English as a language of higher learning such as insufficient levels of working and academic vocabulary were opened. I suggest that foundation courses which precede an EAP course, such as the existing course content of the ULEG course at the Language Centre of UNAM, be enriched with an introduction to English literature by African authors but that it should be supported rigorously by course content that will assist in developing at risk students' overall language proficiency in English. Students' ability to perform and improve their performance at university is not related to their level of proficiency in BICS alone but rather to a high level of cognitive performance as manifested in academic English. The difference between the CALP that students, and in this case FG entrants, had when they entered HE and the cognitive academic and critical literacy proficiency required for successful studies can thus not be left to develop naturally through a process of rub off. The students deserve to be supported with ways and means that would assist the rapid development of those cognitive abilities they require to enhance proficiency in academic, as well as critical literacy at tertiary level.

6.6 Concluding summary

In Chapter Six the structure, implementation and development of the literature programme employed in this research project were discussed and illustrated by means of data collected and the subsequent findings that evolved from those data. The rationale for employing specific literary texts in this intervention programme for students with a low level of CALP was revisited, and the value of African literature written in English was argued. Furthermore, through the discussion of the programme, and the resulting findings, I attempted to make sense of the needs of ESL FG entrants and the degree to which intervention programmes such as the one described in this chapter could provide useful tools to lecturers when exploring specific areas of academic support for students from educationally marginalised environments.

I am fully aware of the subjective nature of the description, especially of the qualitative data I had collected; however, this project was envisaged as an experiment to clarify not only my own understanding of the level of academic and critical literacy of ULEG FG entrants at UNAM but also of my own and my colleagues' possible contribution to enhancing critical literacy at tertiary institutions in Namibia, a developing country in Africa. I therefore feel justified to present subjectively the information that I collected in a year-long journey with young people who trusted my integrity as a lecturer and also as a person.

In Chapter Seven the findings will be interpreted and synthesised. The contribution of this project to a future incorporation of studies in literature into curricula of academic courses at UNAM will also be discussed. I will address the limitations of the study, as well as the obstacles, foreseen and unforeseen, that I encountered in conducting this research project. I will make recommendations as far as the project as a whole is concerned but also of possible ways of basic exposure to African literature written in English that can assist students in academic support programmes at the University of Namibia.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FIRST-GENERATION ENTRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION AT UNAM

THE WAY FORWARD

Chapters Five and Six discussed the data that were collected in this project in response to the following research questions posed:

- How does the profile of the FG entrant at UNAM compare with that of FG entrants in developed countries?
- What is the level of cognitive academic literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM?
- How does a course in English African literature contribute to developing critical thinking in FG students at UNAM with specific reference to interpreting metaphor in order to draw inferences?

The final chapter of this thesis will be concerned with the interpretation and the synthesis of the data collected and presented in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Seven further contains a discussion of salient points and the interpretation of results in terms of the literature and theory that underscore this project. It further discusses anomalies and deviations in the data and concludes with a look at the larger significance of the results, their relation to existing policy and other recommendations.

7.1 FG entry profile at UNAM in relation to global FG student profiles

One of the driving questions in this project was to form an understanding of FG entry into HE in the Namibian context. It often seems as if answers to questions concerning support and foundation courses for students in developing countries, such as Namibia, are sought mainly from international authorities and data of FG entry in developed countries. The findings in this project, however, clearly indicated

that the socio-political situation of the Namibian FG entrant differed markedly from the profile of FG students in developed countries. Where FG entry into HE education in developed countries is marked by minority population groups immersing and dissolving – or even drowning – in majority CG student populations in HE, in the Namibian context the majority of tertiary students are FG students pioneering an educational territory as yet alien to their families (see 5.1.). The Namibian FG student is by virtue of the changed political situation in the country politically empowered, however, the limited working English language proficiency they bring along to HE is disempowering them in tertiary education (see 1.1.3).

In contrast to FG students in developed countries the findings in this project showed that the Namibian FG entrant does not lack aspirations (see 2.1.3.1). Despite challenging personal circumstances that would be alien to most of the FG students in developed countries, the Namibian FG entrants did not give up or drifted away from their tertiary institution. Contrary to general assumptions, it appeared from data collected and analysed in this research project that FG entrants at UNAM might be more resilient than their disadvantaging experiences at university and their personal circumstances would allow them to be (see 5.1.4.1 and 5.1.4.2).

Although every day was a quest for financial survival for the large majority of the participants in this project, they were determined to complete the courses they had enrolled for – even if it would take longer than the designated time. It would therefore be short-sighted to regard these students as people in need, who are lacking skills that can be remedied – temporarily – by measurable advances in academic skills training. A mind shift is therefore necessary because, by perpetuating the concept that FG entry into HE constitutes a lack of skills in the students, the educator and course designed in the Southern African context will remain moving in circles.

Furthermore, when the non-academic experiences of the FG entrants at UNAM, as demonstrated by the participants in this project, were compared to those of students in developed countries, a significant number of differences was established. Firstly, it seemed that the UNAM FG entrants integrated more easily into the academic society of their institution than has been reported in developed

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countries (see 5.1.5.3 and 5.1.6). This is most probably because the majority of the students at UNAM are FG students and they thus share the same initial experiences and background circumstances. I have repeatedly been struck by the dynamic of solidarity that reigns at UNAM – between students and students; between students and lecturers and even between lecturers and lecturers. This bourgeois character of conventionally respectable conservatism offers a bedrock of affective safety to the students attending the institution. The findings in this project therefore oblige me to agree with Penrose (2002:458) in her observation (2.1.2.3) that perhaps FG students' self-assessments reflect a greater understanding of the distance between their family discourses and those of academia; thus they do not necessarily have less confidence in their abilities than their CG peers but they may have a greater understanding of what they need to master in HE.

Secondly, the findings in this project indicate clearly that the main obstacle for the FG entrants at university is their low levels of proficiency in English which is in about hundred percent of the cases the students' second language. It is indisputable that their knowledge of the linguistic elements of the language is insufficient, and support courses are necessary to assist them with the expansion of their ESL proficiency. Course designers, however, need to make a distinction between improving language proficiency, on the one hand, and simply teaching those aspects of academic literacy proficiency that are employed in good writing and that are needed in intensive reading. The development of language proficiency as a means of concept formation and the conveyance of thoughts and ideas should receive equal, if not more, attention, because the ability to formulate and express own thoughts and comprehend what others have thought and expressed underlies all academic language proficiency.

7.1.1 The academic profile of FG entrants at UNAM

At the commencement of the project there was a significant difference in academic performance between the FG entrants participating in the project and their CG peers (see 6.1.3, table 6.8). Their scores in an academic proficiency test [4] indicated

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[4] This is a test not used as a matter of course.

that they were at a high risk of academic failure (see 6.1.3, figure 6.1). Since the academic experiences in HE of participants in this project were, however, essentially the same as those of their CG peers, it was not surprising that they demonstrated end-of-year cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes that were generally equal to, if not better than, students whose parents had had a moderate level of post-secondary education. In retrospect, it may thus be that being an FG entrant conferred its major liability in these students' initial adjustment to, and survival in, post-secondary education. The findings in this project indicate that the FG entrants who participated in the project (and who were able to persist financially in the institution) were on par with the CG students in the ULEG course at the end of 2008 (see 6.1.4, table 6.22). It can therefore legitimately be assumed that they had derived the same general benefits from HE as other students; they could consequently not be seen as lacking the potential to progress in HE, as seems to be a common assumption embedded in the curricula of many existing bridging courses at universities such as UNAM.

Since UNAM appears to have become a safe haven for the Namibian FG entrants, and FG students, the participants in this project did not indicate the same low levels of academic engagement as the FG students in developed countries did (see 2.1.2.3). This manifested in much better academic engagement, such as visiting the library and seeking continual contact with lecturers concerning assignments, as well as general advice. It could thus be assumed that the comfort of FG students at UNAM is embedded in a broader feeling of bonding in the university setting, contrary to the isolation felt by FG students in developed countries (Penrose 2002:440). It seemed that the FG entrant at UNAM experienced a sense of belonging that FG students in developed countries often did not experience and were therefore more likely to discontinue their tertiary studies (McConnell 2000; Pascarella and Terenzini 1991; Penrose 2002; Pike and Kuh 2005; Thomas and Quinn 2007; Zwerling and London 1990) (see also 2.1.2.3).

I can only agree with Thomas and Quinn (2007:124) that FG entrants, on joining the institution, become insiders and are no longer outsiders in the educational and social community; it consequently becomes the responsibility of the institution of HE to treat them as insiders, both in planning and executing curricula in the different

fields of study offered to students. Although curricula may be geared towards the dissemination of subject knowledge, they have the collective obligation to foster critical literacy that will lead to a spirit of life-long enquiry and critical analyses of different kinds of information. Embedded in this concept is a presumption of "growth" or, according to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991:16), "the potential growth, toward maturation, toward greater complexity through differentiation and pursued as a desirable psychological and educational end, perhaps even a moral end."

7.1.2 The enhancement of critical literacy through African literature

Even though FG entrants in general confront all the anxieties, dislocations and difficulties of any other tertiary student, it was evident from the findings in this project that the participants' experiences often involved certain cultural, as well as social and academic transitions, similar to what Pascarella *et al.* (2003:420) found in developed countries. Pascarella and Terenzini (1991:58) regard this transition as a "form of culture shock involving significant social and psychological relearning in the face of encounters with new ideas, new teachers and friends and quite varied values and beliefs ..."

It was further evident that the FG entrants at UNAM also faced a large number of debilitating personal circumstances (see 5.1.4); they were furthermore poorly prepared in secondary schools to meet the linguistic demands that an English-medium university with a largely Western academic culture poses (see 6.1.1). That English as a second language, and at the same time the medium of instruction at the tertiary institute, is a challenge for the Namibian FG entrant is beyond debate. The findings in this project indicate that the academic English proficiency of these students put them at a very high risk of failure in academia. The participants also reported their shock when realising that the English they had brought to university was insufficient to carry them in their academic studies. In the discussions of the short stories, the participants indicated that they associated with the protagonists and even saw them as role models (see 6.2.3.2); therefore, what better role models as successful ESL users are there than authors from Africa who excelled in their creative writing abilities in English, that was also their second language, a Wolle

Soyinka, a Chinua Achebe, a Ngugi wa 'Thiongo and maybe even less well-known talents such as Kaleni Hiyalwa and Lydia Shaketange from Namibia.

The main purpose of this project was not to study literature through formalist criticism tied to technological terminology and complex symbolism but rather as an exploration of meaning (see 3.3.4). Rather than limiting the focus of the literary study to either language usage or cultural content, literature was viewed as "an inquiry into the way a language is used to express a reality other than that expressed by conventional means" (Spack 1985:705). It was argued that the students' aim should be to learn how the language system – the structures and vocabulary of English – is used for communication. The findings in this project indicated clearly that the FG entrants, who participated in the intervention programme of awareness-raising of the use of metaphor, showed the most significant improvement in subtests 4, 5 and 6 between TALL 1 and TALL 2 (see 6.3). Subtest 4 was concerned with academic vocabulary, subtest 5 with understanding texts while subtext 6 with editing academic writing. Furthermore, even though the practising of academic writing was beyond the ambit of this project, I observed (see 5.1.5.2) some kind of a rub-off effect on those written assignments that were part of the data collection techniques.

From the findings it thus appears that the teaching solutions may equally apply to, and facilitate, more critical work with expository texts as well (see 3.3.4). Highly context-reduced, expository prose is characterised by many contextualising devices such as introductions, transition words and sentences and even complex grammar structures. The same distance exists between writer and audience in literature as in expository writing; however, the techniques for contextualisation are different. In literature they are more consistently implicit. In reading literature, it is assumed that, since there is no access to the physical world outside the text, each line is meant to interrelate with the others to create an internally coherent meaning. The reader is therefore immediately engaged in procedures of interpretation, negotiating meaning and setting about making sense of expressions by referring them to other parts of the text (discourse) in which they occur.

Furthermore, my own expectations as a lecturer concerning the literature programme were such that I encouraged a deep and critical approach to the texts studied. By approaching the literature from the known social and political worlds portrayed by the authors to the unknown linguistic world of the English language, I have applied what the participants already knew and understood, instead of just "fixing" their academic literacy proficiency by providing a set of rules and guidelines (see 2.3.1.1). As the literature programme continued through the year the level of participation, as well as the quality of the participation in discussions, progressed as well. If the often stunted participation in the discussion of the short stories is compared to the relative ease with which the participants were able to interpret metaphoric language use in the novels they had read later in the programme, and the much deeper level of interpretation which culminated in their discussions of the characters in the play they had read, it is indisputable that these participants had made some gains in critical literacy proficiency. When compared with what was mentioned about their own writing previously, it can legitimately be assumed that this programme did not stand alone but was a definite support mechanism and a scaffold for the ESL FG entrant into the often confusing academic world of tertiary studies (see 2.2.3.4). A scaffold like this literature programme also minimises the threat for ESL students of confronting the unknown, and encourages them to take risks, both in reading and in writing in academia.

From the findings in this project concerning the profile of the UNAM FG entrant, it was, however, evident that a large number of both the male and female participants still conformed largely to deep-seated cultural conventions (see 5.1.5.2), and had difficulty in accepting and tolerating ideas that did not fall in the ambit of their, sometimes narrow, paradigms of what was culturally acceptable and what needed to be rejected on traditionally demarcated grounds. Reading literature can help to show them other ways of thinking and thereby broaden their ability to deal critically with texts from a wide variety of sources.

The literature programme therefore aimed to coax the UNAM students into developing their own voices (see 3.3.2). It was reasoned that, whereas lectures that convey specific subject content might not be the most comfortable conduit to convey the concept of academic freedom of thought and expression, discussion

classes where literature is the driving force might just prove to be an invaluable opportunity for divergent thinking. In doing so, students would be shoved gently into not only considering a variety of viewpoints but also becoming confident speakers who know that their opinions count. The growth of the participants in this project concerning their abilities to read beyond the surface levels of word meaning was clear. They had moved from an initial position of almost non-participation through to discussions of moral issues raised in the short stories. This development culminated in their recognising those cultural taboos which were heavily disguised by metaphor in the play they studied. They ventured to voice, albeit only in small discussion groups and in their own written responses, their awareness of moral complexities embedded in, for instance, cultural traditions that may be debilitating to personal growth and empowerment as expressed in the literature. A possible snowball effect may just be that these students will become life-long learners who are empowered to engage with text and make meaning in an academic environment.

Dart (2001:73) has coined the power of such effective functional literacy aptly. Interestingly, he does not distinguish between academic and critical literacy as two complementary entities but manages to neatly capture their inter-relationship:

> In addition to more mundane purposes, we read to enlarge our understanding of the world and our place in it; to explore our lives, to take pleasure in the virtual reality which we conspire with the author to create, and the language which gives it life. We write to shape our thoughts, to put them in a form which makes them communicable to others, to put our mark on the world.

In order for tertiary students to create their own 'resource centres' of language and linguistic competence, to enable them to shape thoughts and put them in a form which makes them communicable to others, the treasure trove of rich vocabulary available in works of literature will inevitably enable students, who love to read, to create non-fiction texts of substance. They will encounter vocabulary that could assist them to express the finer nuances of their own understanding of the world. It was evident that the participants in this research project attempted to weave into their own writing (see 6.4) some of the elements of metaphoric use of language that they were introduced to in the literature programme they had followed.

7.1.3 The study of metaphor to enhance critical literacy

To become functionally literate, a person has to be exposed to the deeper levels of understanding of how language usage contributes to meaning-making. I have therefore chosen to explore with the participants in this project the complex mechanisms of metaphor, and also how metaphoric use of language contributes to meaning-making through the drawing of appropriate inferences from what has been communicated. I agree with Lakoff (2006:232) that metaphor systems play a major role in the grammar and the lexicon of a language. Metaphors are not just a way of expressing ideas by means of language but it is a way of thinking about things (Ungerer and Schmidt 1996:118) or as Lakoff (2006:232) says, "[o]ur metaphor system is central to our understanding of experiences and to the way we act on those experiences." Furthermore, the closer the perceived relationship of an experience is to the phenomenon itself, the greater will be the effect of the experience upon behaviour and functioning (Combs *et al.*1976:204). Learning might consequently be described as the discovery of one's personal relationship to events and ideas; therefore, metaphor can be seen as "a basic cognitive mechanism" (Ibarretxe-Antuňanu 1999:2).

I chose metaphoric use of language to explore with the students by relating it to their existing experiences or the schemata that they had brought with them to university as part of their traditional background. I opted for using fiction to stimulate not only their literacy development and divergent thinking but also their imaginations. According to Dart (2001:66), it is the imagination that connects or unifies "outer" and "inner" experiences; and I do agree with him that "yet classrooms have done little to realise its awesome powers." Namibian ESL students, by their own admission and from the evidence presented in class, draw on an oral culture of story-telling and dramatic performance which supports the study of fiction; however, they had had very little contact with the formal exploration of literature at secondary school level. By acquainting them with a literature to whose metaphoric language they could relate, I envisaged that they would be more receptive to extensive reading in future.

The project went beyond a pre-test/post-test research design that would measure success through quantifiable data. One of the main aims of the project was to ensure that academic students engage with the reading of works of literature as a source of continued problem-solving and critical academic literacy.

7.2 Contributions of this project

My reasons for incorporating a literature programme into the course content of ULEG are multiple. First of all, reading to learn instead of learning to read will expose students to the large variety of life situations, environments and circumstances portrayed by different authors in their fictional works. This would provide mental practice in divergent thinking and problem-solving, particularly when mediated by a scaffolding teaching and learning approach. It therefore provides me with a sense of achievement to be able to state that the Language Centre at UNAM, on my insistence and advocacy of the literature programme, decided to incorporate the short stories used in this programme, as well as the novel, *Meekulu's Children* by Kaleni Hiyalwa, and the play, G*od of Women* by S.F. Nyathi, both written by Namibian authors in English, as part of the future course content of the ULEG course.

Young Namibians need to be provided access to English literature by African authors. Conventional approaches to literary studies are unfortunately still mainly concerned with the English classics. One should keep in mind that specifically the FG entrants live on the margin of two cultures. Zwerling and London (1990:7) describe this marginality as students who "live and share the life and traditions of two distinct cultures, never quite wanting and willing to break with their past, even if permitted to do so and never fully accepted, because of prejudice, in the culture they seek." Although the UNAM FG entrants may not really be subjected to prejudice, the findings in this project indicated their ties to cultural traditions and taboos (see 5.1.5.2 and 6.2.5). The importance of the formal study of literature is not underestimated; though, such formal study should be catered for in formal literature studies incorporated in degree courses. Should it, however, be possible to introduce future teachers and adult literacy facilitators, majoring in whatever possible field of study, to the joys of extensive reading and specifically reading the

African culture, the potential for the nurturing of a reading culture among not only future generations of students but also among previously disadvantaged adults, may ensue. Furthermore, the formal acceptance of the validity of an African literature canon by HE institutions in Namibia could contribute to the eradication of marginality based on prejudice.

These may be grand designs; however, I am confident that many of the FG students who participated in the literature programme, incorporated in this project in 2008, may just become keen explorers of the literature of African writers in English.

7.3 Limitations of the project

While I realise that this investigation is an initial step in understanding the university experiences and relative cognitive growth of FG entrants at UNAM, I am fully aware that it has been limited by the fact that a single group of participants was followed only for the first year of their tertiary studies. The investigation further considered only certain cognitive outcomes, as were measured by the standardised TALL (see 6.1.3) and some assignments, continued assessment and examination performances of the participants in a single core subject in their first year. These data were furthermore triangulated with descriptions of observations and information obtained from personal interviews which will always contain elements of subjectivity to a lesser or larger degree. The findings do, however, present one prismatic side of the participants' journey towards the attainment of a tertiary qualification.

Another limitation was the relatively small sample of students who participated in the study. Since, however, the research design was a case study, where each of the participants became a small case within the bigger case, it enabled me to probe much deeper than I would have been able to with a larger number of participants. The methodology employed in this project, a mixed methods approach where both quantitative, as well as qualitative, data were collected and triangulated, served this project well, and analyses and findings of data collected can thus legitimately be regarded as representative of the general population of UNAM ESL FG entrants.

The need to create a reading culture with the participants in this project was underscored by one of the limitations of this project. Many of the FG entrants participating in this project had not been exposed to any literature study in their secondary school careers. They were thus not introduced to any formal knowledge of literature but were also, by their own admission, not raised in a reading culture. In the execution of the literature programme in this project, I encountered initial resistance and a marked underpreparedness to participate each time a new literacy genre was introduced.

Furthermore, the participants as members of the Namibian population were raised in a culture that is predominantly still patriarchal in its orientation (see 5.1.9 and 6.2.2.3). The freedom of thought and expression (as constructed by the academy) and concomitant critical engagement with text and discourse are a type of culture shock for many FG entrants, not only in Southern Africa. Throughout the discussion of critical literacy in Chapter Two the issue of having a 'voice' and voicing opinions were raised by a large number of scholars as integral to becoming critically literate (see 2.2.3.1). Apart from the fact that issues such as gender-bias are detrimental to participation on a global platform, the difficulty to accept and tolerate different cultural norms, as present in any institution of HE, remains an inhibitor of critical literacy and the attainment of high levels of independent thinking. Therefore, the difficulties the participants in this project revealed, when engaging with literary material of a controversial nature on critical levels of thinking and discussion, could be seen as a remnant of the rote-learning at secondary schools, as well as the existence of cultural taboos in traditional cultures (see 5.1.5.2).

McGhie (2007:67) agrees that "[l]iteracy, and even more so critical literacy, is not a set of autonomous technical skills to be imparted to those lacking them." She affirms that there are multiple literacies in communities and these literacy practices are socially embedded. Onakuogu (1999:147) also confirms that even in the Nigerian context there is a pre-occupation with the disintegration of literacy instruction, since language, and by implication proficiency in a language, is usually "disintegrated into four sacred skills." He continues by saying that, "[a]lthough there is abundant research to show that interest motivates learning and that meaning generates interest, we harass the learners ruthlessly with repetitive structural drills

and skill specific exercises that lack relevant meaningfulness." He further regards it as a "major weakness in our literacy instruction" that there is a separation of literature from language.

The focus in HE has in recent times come in response to the many complaints from lecturing staff that students no longer read and that they cannot write; they therefore need 'language support.' Boughey (2002:298) suggests that this is also true for many in HE in South Africa today, and it appears as if the call for language support is couched in terms of language simply as a means of communication. According to Van Schalkwyk (2008:39), "the default is still the skills deficit model and the proliferation of language intervention modules seen on many campuses including my own has strengthened the perception that it is grammar and vocabulary teaching that is needed for struggling students." Boughey (2002:296), however, states that such modules are increasingly being countered in the light of burgeoning research, both in Southern Africa and internationally, that has led to the recognition that the difficulties students experience stem from issues relating to academic literacy and not language *per se.*

These limitations acknowledged, this project remains as yet the only investigation which specifically examines relevant experiences and traces the development of the critical literacy proficiency of ESL FG entrants at UNAM. This thesis ventures beyond the mere description of the demographic profile of the FG UNAM entrant, as it considers the levels of academic and critical literacy proficiency of these FG entrants as well. The findings could thus be generalisable to the larger majority of school leavers and HE entrants currently in Namibia. This project further advocates the use of literature in enhancing critical literacy in ESL support courses at university, and concentrates particularly on promoting the reading of local and African literature in English.

7.4 Recommendations

It is evident that many academics are becoming increasingly aware of the value of incorporating additional source material, such as literature reading, into academic courses. What is needed, however, is a mind shift concerning the design of such

courses, since the study of literature as a canon might not necessarily enhance the development of critical literacy in the mainstream academic student. Therefore, avenues to expose all readers at all levels of proficiency to extensive reading should be explored by all institutions of learning, and not only by a few dedicated professionals at HE institutions.

In any approach to EAP in ESL programmes, academic language teaching should foster literacy, not only in terms of basic reading and writing skills but also in terms of a broader discourse competence that involves the ability to interpret and critically evaluate a wide variety of written and spoken texts (Kern 2000:2). Students need time to reflect on an experience and what they have learned from it. According to Writing Development Continuum (2003:10), "[t]oo often they hustle from one learning act to another with no time, no space and no structure to help them stand back and think about what they have learned." Should they be encouraged to pause and reflect on the insights they have gained, they could take control of their own learning in a new way. Students thus need to be given opportunities to interact with print, in both reading and writing, in contexts that make sense to them and which have a counterpart in real life (2003:7).

Furthermore, low levels of academic literacy proficiency are often not the ESL FG entrant's only problem as institutions want to make out (McGhie 2007:52). She calls this a "rather narrow-minded approach to address a problem that was much broader than individual students and that begged for a much more integrated and holistic approach to academic development." Institutions like UNAM also tend to subscribe to the teaching, and most importantly, the testing of a standard of literacy that requires adherence to usage prescribed by a socially dominant norm, more often than not a Western-dominated academic discourse norm. Moreover, this literate standard becomes increasingly reinforced and insisted upon as one progresses through the levels of academic language study. Treating speaking, listening, writing, reading and culture as separate "skills" (Kern 2000:5) will inevitably lead to limited, overly-compartmentalised goals described in terms of discrete behaviours or pieces of knowledge, rather than in terms of integrative abilities.

In order therefore to add value to existing goals in EAP programmes, educators need to embrace the plural concept of multiple literacies; "we need a pedagogy that emphasises critical and analytical thinking, a methodology that values the pursuit of understanding, not just information and skills" (Zwerling and London 1990:53). Ayaya (2001:59) also feels that, for the UNAM students, there is a need to use reflective thinking methods that will make students active participants in the learning process" as "[r]eflective thinking enables students to reflect on how to apply the knowledge they learn."

According to Hutchings (2006:235), development of critical thinking is an important part of being able to transform knowledge. He sees critical thinking as "the ability to synthesise information from texts, prior knowledge and experience, and through analysis and evaluation, to transform information for the learners['] own purposes." To achieve these goals, especially for marginalised FG students in a developing country like Namibia, support programmes in EAP could make effective use of scaffolding mechanisms (see 2.2.3.4). Richard *et al.* (1990:41) also say that "FG students need ladders with every rung in place in order to provide them with a fair opportunity for overcoming incomplete preparation, non-specific educational objectives and non-traditional modes of college attendance." One rung of such a ladder could be the inclusion of African literature in English to enhance the critical literacy of African students. Furthermore, FG entrants, still standing on the periphery of HE, need to be led by the safe world of fiction to learn to grasp the characteristic features and demands of literary genres, in order to become critically involved with the huge variety of academic texts they need to access in the course of their tertiary studies.

The Namibian National Qualifications Framework (NNQF) is, like the NQF in South Africa, the recognised and official system through which people's learning is recognised and is equivalent to the NQF as it exists in South Africa. It is a multi-level framework of all qualifications from the compulsory Level 1: General Education and Training Band (up to the end of Grade 9) to the Level 8: Doctoral Band. The qualifications that fall into the Higher Education and Training Band (levels 5 – 8) are national certificates, diplomas, higher diplomas, first national degrees, honours degrees, master's degrees and doctorates (Kilfoil 2000:54). Like

in South Africa the NNQF also envisages an integrated system for the generation and quality assurance of qualifications, as well as the accreditation of various bodies concerned with the provision of education standard setting and accreditation.

Two of the aims of the NNQF are, firstly, to open up systems of qualifications and career paths to learners; secondly, it aims to promote education and training that are broader and more related to today's needs. These aims of the NNQF seem to promise "a rapid expansion of accessibility for everyone to public, as well as private institutions of learning" (McGhie 2007:36); however, these theoretical aims need to move from promise to effective execution.

The findings in this investigative project have led me to the conclusion that there exists a discrepancy between practically dehumanised assumptions about academic ESL support for the UNAM student cohort and the qualitative reality of the human product for whom the NNQF promised to cater. This discrepancy cannot be solved by only reworking or 'upgrading' existing curricula; the institution has to take an intense look at the stance it takes towards specifically the FG entrants from previously marginalised backgrounds.

7.4.1 The possible positioning of the tertiary institution regarding critical literacy

Zwerling and London (1990:7) found, from studies conducted to establish the profile of the FG student also in developed countries, that there is a common element, namely

> … these students live on the margin of two cultures … they live and share in the life and traditions of two distinct cultures, never quite wanting/willing to break with the past, even if permitted to do so, and never fully accepted … in the culture they seek.

Thomas and Quinn (2007:4) suggest that FG entry "lacks interrogation in its own right." They feel that "in the international policy and implementation arena focus has tended to fall on employment rather than on social engagement and transformation," and that this "has a tendency to reduce and narrow the role of

HE, which impacts detrimentally on some of the traditional benefits of HE, which thus are being denied to new cohorts of students" (2007:1). Institutions should consequently respect the past experiences, language and culture of FG students as strengths and weave these into "the fabric of knowledge production and dissemination," but not as "deficits that must be devalued, silenced and overcome" (Zwerling and London 1990:62).

It is necessary to define an approach to position academia as far as the enhancement of the critical literacy proficiency of FG entrants at UNAM is concerned. It begs therefore to revisit the two binary institutional approaches as discussed by Thomas and Quinn (2007) (see 2.1.3).

7.4.2 The academic approach

In the academic approach (see 2.1.3.1), FG students may have the potential to enter HE and succeed but it is regarded that they lack either the aspirations or necessary information to access HE. This would explain the differential rates of participation on the basis of attitudinal factors which are distinguished from students' educational potential. The findings in this research project, however, defy such an assumption, and I can not agree with an institutional approach where non-participation is viewed as the consequence of a lack of expectations or, at least, of low aspirations of students.

Such an approach furthermore positions the individual, family or group as inadequate and thus culpable. It shirks responsibility by placing the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the non-participants, and thereby excuses the national system and HE institutions from reform. In this accusatory approach the solution of the problem apparently lies largely within the individual, and attention is deflected from the structural and institutional factors which inhibit and constrain access and success. Should this approach be perpetuated by institutions, there is little hope for dynamic growth and for keeping up with rapid changes inherent in the post-modern global society. Remedial work and the loading of already congested EAP programmes will not rectify assumed deficiencies, since any positive personal contribution of the FG entrants to HE is ignored. FG entrants cannot be regarded as

inanimate objects which require 'fixing' (see 2.3.1.1) or normalisation, since such fixing leads to commercialised, depersonalised teaching. Even at UNAM this approach has given rise to project-based activities which all too often have a short-term orientation. Furthermore, such a stance ignores the complexity and multiplicity of obstacles facing people from lower income socio-economic groups and offers simplistic solutions.

Sadly, it does appear as if this academic model has informed a significant proportion of governmental thinking around access to HE, not only in the UK (Thomas and Quinn 2007), but also very much so in Namibia. Even in Nigeria, exam-centred curricula are often only product-conscious and, according to Okanuogu (1999:148) "we never collect diverse kinds of data which mirror how the individual is grappling with the task of acquiring literacy." It seems that also in Namibia the main reason for introducing academic literacy development programmes or bridging courses and other scaffolding mechanisms at tertiary institutions is solely to teach 'language skills', in order to prepare academically underprepared students for the rigours of mainstream academic studies (see 2.2.3.4). Training in separate skills areas, which can be easily sliced and served, as well as quantifiably tested, seems to have taken away the inspiration and creativity of course designers. This unfortunately works towards the stagnation of many EAP courses resulting in only short-term benefits for the attendees.

Such support efforts often remain at the ideological level of facilitating academic literacy development (essentially the rules of the academic game, according to Du Toit 1997:154) which is a prerequisite for success at tertiary level. HE in Namibia should rather invest in the holistic development of the student in the subsequent grooming of independent, critically analytical citizens who could contribute to the economic and social growth of a developing Namibia.

7.4.3 The transformational approach

After considering the analyses and interpretation of the findings of this investigation, it appeared that the transformational approach (see 2.1.3.3.), as advocated by Thomas and Quinn (2007), would be the most appropriate for an institution such as

UNAM in a developing Namibia. This approach relates to progressive thinking around adult education and more radical perceptions of access movement (2007:105). The strength of this approach lies in the fact that it embraces the idea that HE should change to enable it to gauge and meet the needs of under-represented or marginalised groups, rather than being predicated on deficit models of potential entrants and positioning students as lacking aspirations, information and academic preparedness. The FG population of UNAM does not constitute an under-represented group; however, their specific profile as far as ESL and proficiency in English for academic purposes are concerned demand an approach that would consider the student rather than the subject.

In practice, though, transformation requires serious and far-reaching structural changes. These changes should be informed by an institutional culture that does not require participants to change, before they can benefit from HE and should be supported by the NNQF. Diversity needs to be perceived as a definite strength. This transformation should further focus not on creating changes via short-term, marginal projects, undertaken by a few committed practitioners, but should rather underpin and inform all of the institutions' activities through valuing and learning from difference and diversity. It would therefore require the institution, in accordance with the aims of the NNQF, to review its processes of knowledge production, as well as transfer and internal structures of power and decision-making. One consequence would be that curricula should be perceived partly as a response to the input of new categories of learners and should also encourage critical reflection, together with an understanding of the constructed qualities of knowledge and various implications related thereto.

Furthermore, a reading culture that would contribute to the enhancement of writing proficiency should be nurtured from the very lowest grades in schools. I add my voice to Bui (2005.2), when he says the following:

> It is important, however, to examine what variables prior to high school predict college attendance among these disadvantaged adolescents for two reasons. Firstly, students' experience in middle school is a precursor to their high school experience, which then predicts college experience … Second, and more importantly, because parents of first-generation students do not have college experience, their children need intervention earlier than high school to develop aspirations for higher education.

Teachers should expose children, even at beginner reader level, through guidance and support to different models of writing to explore a wide variety of texts. In this project there were strong indications that the knowledge the participants gained when being exposed to different literary genres fed into their own writing and informed not only their decisions but also the way in which they went about crafting their own expository writing (see 6.2.3.1).

Current initiatives in the teaching of literacy in developed countries, according to Hodson and Jones (2001:1), recognise the significance of the process approach to writing where writing is more than the simple eliciting of a product by a teacher. The process approach involves thinking and shaping meanings. Children are viewed as authors and their work is treated as creative and meaningful. It is consequently important that already at an early age children should be aware that the decisions they take will affect the writing they are to undertake. Teachers can, and should, develop children's understandings by focusing on these aspects within shared reading and writing sessions. Hodson and Jones (2001:2) further feel that there "are obviously strong links between the breadth of children's reading and the variety and appropriacy of the writing they are able to produce" as "both shared and personal reading is an essential part of the process for children."

It is thus imperative that the National Institution of Education Development should urge the Namibian Department of Education to reconsider its lethargic stance towards the integration of literature studies into the English Senior Secondary syllabus (see Addendum A). The study of literature, and specifically African literature in English, should be reintroduced into all levels of English teaching at schools. In order to demonstrate that the importance and value of establishing a reading culture among ESL learners, who are also potential FG entrants into HE, has been recognised by the education authorities, literature studies in secondary schools should furthermore be assessed formally in the final examinations. Teachers may just need this impetus to consider expanding their learners' reading horizons.

Course designers should also tap into available sources such as African literature written in English to complement their courses. All Namibian ESL learners need to develop more than reading, writing, speaking and listening skills; from the earliest possible ages they need to hone their academic literacy proficiency in questioning and seeking out new ways of understanding the world; therefore, every teacher from primary through to secondary school they come in contact with should have a contribution to make that will enrich and extend the education of learners. Teaching should be seen as holistic; furthermore, all teachers need the support of one another, if children are to gain the benefit of growing up in a community of learners (Writing Development Continuum 2003:11). Learning should become relevant to their lives and be concerned with personal, social and political change. One of the guiding principles in creating an approach that would serve, for instance, students at tertiary institutions, would be the challenge for educators "not how to build FG students' confidence but how to restore or reclaim it, or better yet, how not to undermine it in the first place" (Penrose 2002:457).

7.5 Concluding remarks

It remains important to keep in mind the impact of how students perceive themselves in the integration process into HE. If they see themselves as being 'different' from the academic discourse community or as having special needs, this will inevitably affect the process of 'fitting in.' Socialisation is an important aspect of integrating into HE and the academic community, and needs to have a positive impact on academic motivation, willingness to seek help and personal achievements.

Thomas and Quinn (2007:107) categorically state that the current divide exhibited in educational research and practice between widening participation activities and community-based informed learning is a false and unhelpful one. Therefore, making FG entry the locus of investigation is one way in which theoretical and practical bridges can be built. Another is to privilege the cultural heritage the African student brings along to the institution of HE by exploring the value of English literary texts by African authors. This will embrace FG entrants' identity and self-awareness, and

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assist FG students with the development of cognitive academic language proficiency.

Therefore, a post-modern pedagogy which moves beyond a simplistic transmission mode of instruction would necessarily be one which must facilitate the advancement of context-sensitive language based on a true understanding of local linguistic, socio-cultural and political particularities. It may be necessary to rupture the reified role relationship between theorists and practitioners by enabling teachers to construct their own theory of practice, and tap the socio-political consciousness that participants bring with them in order to aid their quest for identity formation and social transformation. I believe that one such vehicle would be the safe environment that a world depicted in a work of fiction creates for both the learner and the instructor.

What is required is a pedagogy that seeks to help students construct not only knowledge of the subject matter in their respective fields of study but an understanding of the social, cultural and ideological role of that subject. In other words, the ideal pedagogy for post-independence Namibia would be one that moves students and teachers far beyond simple models and conceptions of teaching, learning and knowing, into one of solidarity and understanding, of independence to make and express informed choices, not only as tertiary students but especially later as responsible leaders in their own developing communities.

From my journey with the participants in this project through the first year of their academic studies, I have become aware of their resilience and potential to become responsible leaders. It is, however, necessary that we as the new responsible older generation, who will be taking them on their path of academic learning, should ensure that they are not hampered by limited levels of academic and critical literacy levels. We should ensure that we are able to learn and develop with the changing times and the changing student profiles that we engage with, and ensure that we can transform our teaching methodologies and support programme structuring in such a way that will really benefit the ESL FG entrant into Higher Education.

Conducting this particular programme was fraught with many personal and conflicting emotions. I was often pushed from a position of exhilarating optimism to depths of frustration and despair. I learnt to empathise with the participants' struggling in their own whirlpools of optimism and courage, alternating to levels of despair and fear of having to drop out of UNAM because of their dire financial states. The end of the journey, however, left me probably with a more tempered and therefore realistic assessment of the value of the programme that I designed and executed with this group of participants. The successes gained and the failures suffered are, however, balanced when I look at reflections of some of these ESL FG entrants concerning themselves as university students towards the end of 2008.

> From my own personal point of view with addition to what people are saying (especially my high school mates) I have changed a lot … in 3 words I am a very quiet, honest and peaceful person, although I can be arrogant at times if one annoys me. One of the contributing factors to these changes is my subjects.

> I'm different because I have improve my knowledge. I have gained a lot of life experience that was absent in my life before coming to UNAM. At this time around, I can handle problems in life or even help a coligue solve problems.

> I know that my mind and common sinse will change. I will gaint more new ideas, knowledge and good communication in English. I will be a different person especially in academic records.

> At the end of my first year I think I will get more knowledge than I had before, being a first year student it is hard because you meet a lot of people from different tribes and countries, therefore in most cases you are not free but afta the first year you will be used to the people and stay free and act like you are at your own home.

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ADDENDUM A: EXTRACT OF THE ESL CURRICULUM

NAMIBIAN SENIOR SECONDARY CERTIFICATE
ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE SYLLABUS
ORDINARY LEVEL
GRADES 11 - 12

4. OVERVIEW OF LEARNING CONTENT

4.1 GENERAL

The Learning Content is the same for all learners. The Learning Content in English as a Second Language has been grouped according to the five skill areas tested by the examination. Therefore the content is listed under the columns Skills, Objectives and Competencies. The integration of *Reading and Writing* and *Listening and Speaking* is considered desirable in order to reflect the way in which language is actually used.

Note: Although Language Usage had been listed as a separate skill in this document it should be taught in accordance with the practice of teaching language in an integrated way.

4.1.1 Listening
4.1.2 Speaking
4.1.3 Reading
4.1.4 Writing
4.1.5 Language Usage

4.2 TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCES

Although literature is not formally assessed in the NSSCO curriculum, it forms part of the reading programme for learners and teachers have to include poetry, prose and drama in their choice of texts. Teachers may consult the Textbook Catalogue for suitable literary texts. In their choice of reading texts teachers should consider the age of their learners as well as suitability of these to learners. A list of poems and prescribed books will be announced in an annual circular.

The Textbook Catalogue is a viable source of approved titles to choose from. Schools may also use textbooks previously listed in the Textbook Catalogue but which do not appear anymore. Examples of other viable sources teachers may wish to use are newspapers, magazines, listening cassettes, dictionaries, encyclopaedia and the Internet.

ADDENDUM B: ULEG COURSE OUTLINE

Document 2- Module information for APC / Senate Approval

Module title: English for General Communication
Code: ULEG 2410
NQF level: Level 4
National professional standard competencies: N/A
Contact hours: 4 hours per week
Credits: 32

Module Assessment:
Continuous Assessment 60%: 4 reading tests, 4 writing tests, 2 oral presentations, 1 literature worksheet
Examination Assessment 40%: 1 x 3 hour paper

Pre-requisites:
D symbol in English (NSSC) or a D symbol in English Ordinary Level or an equivalent symbol

Module description:
This module attempts to assist students to improve their general English proficiency. It is intended for students registered for diploma courses. The main goal of this course is, therefore, to develop the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of students in order for them to perform tasks in an academic meaning system. The general course description and expected outcomes of the English for General Communication (ULEG 2410) course focuses on the skills needed by students to perform cognitive academic tasks in an academic environment.

Exit learning outcomes:
Upon completion of the module students should be able to: 1.
    Apply effective reading strategies 2. Employ effective writing
    skills 3. Practice general listening skills 4. Employ general
    speaking skills 5. Apply study skills

Module requirements and expectations:
At least 80% class attendance; active class participation; obtain prescribed materials; uphold academic integrity; make use of lecturer consultation time; take notes in class. Students cannot go beyond the second year if they have failed the English for General Communication module.

Issue date: 2008

Next revision date: 2012

ADDENDUM C: QUESTIONNAIRES 1 AND 2

FIRST QUESTIONNIARE: 2008 – ULEG Students, D-SLOT, UNAM

Dear Student
I will really appreciate it if you would be prepared to answer the following questions. It will greatly assist me in my research. Your answers will remain confidential and will not reflect or be linked to you personally. The information you give will also only be used for research purposes conducted at UNAM. The results will be made available to all participants.

<div align="right">Ms Talita C. Smit</div>

A. EDUCATIONAL DETAILS:

1. In what year did you complete your school career?

Before 2000	2001 – 2006	2007

2. Where did you complete your school career?

NAMIBIA: rural area	NAMIBIA: urban area	OTHER COUNTRY rural area	OTHER COUNTRY urban area

3. What were your marks (or %) for English in your final school examination?

D symbol or below / (40 – 50%)	C symbol / (50 – 60%)	B symbol / (60% and above)

.
4. How do you rate your own English proficiency?

EXCELLENT	FAIR	AVERAGE	NOT VERY GOOD

5. How would you describe the quality of English teaching you received at school?

EXCELLENT	FAIR	AVERAGE	NOT VERY GOOD

6. Have you ever attended any other college/university before coming to UNAM?

YES	NO

   i. If you did, where was it?

NAMIBIA	OTHER COUNTRY

   ii. What year did you **leave** that institution of Higher Learning?

BEFORE 2000	2001 – 2006	2007

iii. Did you complete the course you were taking?

YES	NO

If you marked **NO**, give the reason why you left.
………………………………………………………………………………

7. What is your home language? ....

8. With whom do you live while studying at UNAM?

WITH RELATIVE / RELATIVES	WITH PARENTS	ON CAMPUS	OTHER

i. If you marked **OTHER**, please specify ……………………….…………..

ii. If you live off campus, how far do you have to travel every day you come to UNAM?

0 – 3 Km	4 – 5Km	more than 5Km

iii. What kind of transport do you use to travel to UNAM?

PERSONAL TRANSPORT	BUS	TAXI	OTHER

If you marked **OTHER,** please specify. ……………………….……………...

iv. How many hours on average do you spend at UNAM per day?

0 – 3 HOURS	4 – 5 HOURS	6 HOURS OR MORE

9. Before you decided to come to university where did you get information about UNAM?
………………………………………………………………………………

i. Are you satisfied with the kind of information that you received about UNAM before coming here?

.YES	NO	NOT SURE

ii. What course are you enrolled for at the moment?...................................

iii. Was it your first choice?

YES	NO

iv. If **NOT**, what would you have liked to study? ....

v. Why did you not enrol for the course you mentioned in **iv**?
....
....

vi. Who helped you decide about taking your present course?

MYSELF	FAMILY	UNAM	SCHOOL	OTHER

If you marked **OTHER**, please specify.
………………………………………………………………………………………

vii. Are you happy with the course you are now enrolled for?

YES	NO	NOT SURE

10. Who is responsible for paying your study expenses?

PARENT / PARENTS	RELATIVE / RELATIVES	SELF / WIFE / HUSBAND	BURSARY	LOAN	OTHER

If you marked **OTHER**, please specify.
………………………………………………………………………………………

11. How would you rate the financial support you receive from your family?

EXCELLENT	FAIR	AVERAGE	NOT VERY GOOD

12. How would you rate the emotional support you receive from your family?

EXCELLENT	FAIR	AVERAGE	NOT VERY GOOD

13. Do you have an off-campus job?

YES	NO

14. How do you rate your own chances of success in your university studies?

EXCELLENT	FAIR	AVERAGE	NOT VERY GOOD

B. PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. How old are you?

YOUNGER THAN 20	BETWEEN 20 – 25	OLDER THAN 25

2. What gender are you/?

MALE	FEMALE

3. Are your parents still alive?

Mother:

YES	NO

Father:

YES	NO

4. Do you look after children at your home?

YES	NO

If you answered yes, are they your

OWN CHILDREN	SIBLINGS	RELATIVES	OTHER

If you marked **OTHER**, please specify …………………………………………………...

5. What is your student number? …………………………...…………………….

I hereby confirm that I completed this questionnaire as a contribution to research conducted at UNAM**.**

Signature: ………………………………………….

Date:……………………………..

SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE ULEG Students D-Slot 2008, UNAM

1. With whom did you grow up before you came to UNAM?

PARENTS	MOTHER	FATHER	AUNT	BROTHER
GRANDPARENT/S	RELATIVES	SISTER	UNCLE	NONE OF THESE

    If your answer is **NONE OF THESE**, please specify. ……………………………

2. What work does the person who raised you do? ……………………………………..
    I do not know ……………………………………………………………………..

3. How much do you think does the person who raised you earn per month?

VERY MUCH	MORE THAN ENOUGH	ENOUGH	NOT ENOUGH	VERY LITTLE

4. Where exactly did you grow up (e.g. farm, village, town city – give the name)
……………………………………………………………………………………..

5. Did you have electricity in your house?.................

6. Did you have running water in your house? ………

7. With how many people did you share your house?.................

8. How many brothers do you have?............

9. What are their ages? …………………

10. Has any of them attended any university?......... If *yes* who and where?
………………………………………………………………………………....

11. How many sisters do you have? ……………

12. What are their ages? …………………………

13. Has any of them attended any university? ………………… If *yes* who and where?
………………………………………………………………………....

14. Who pays for your registration and study fees while you are at UNAM?
……………………………………………………………………………………

15. Mark the main reason why you decided to study at a university?

To improve my knowledge
To get a well-paid job
My parents wanted me to come
None of the above

If you marked the last one, please write down what was your reason for joining the university
…………………………………………………………………………………………

16. When you complete your studies, will you want to work (mark)

in the rural areas
in Windhoek
in any other town in Namibia

Give a reason for your answer……………………………………………………………………

17. How would you rate your own academic performance in all your subjects as it was in March 2008?

Very good	good	average	not very good	weak

18. How would you rate your academic performance now in October 2008?

Very good	good	average	not very good	weak

If there is a difference, give a reason why you think it is different.

………

………

………

………………………………………………………

19. In a few sentences, describe how you felt in the first week, after you had arrived at UNAM.

……

……

……

……

……

……

………………………………

20. At the end of your first year, to what extent are you different from the person you were when you arrived at UNAM in the beginning of the year?

……

……

……

……

……

……

……

……

…..

STUDENT NUMBER …………………………………………………………………..

NAME ……………………………………………………………………………………

ADDENDUM D

Question areas addressed in semi-structured Interviews with ULEG students: 2008

1. a. Can you tell me about the English teaching at your school?

    b. What other contact did you have with English outside school?

2. a. Tell me about your decision to come to UNAM and the course you wanted to take.

    b. Are you at the moment doing your course of choice?

    c. Are you happy with your course at present?

3. a. Tell me about your accommodation.

    b. How do you get to UNAM and back every day?

4. Tell me about your finances here at UNAM.

5. a. How do you experience the support you receive in your studies at UNAM?

    b. Do you take part in any extracurricular activities here at UNAM?

    c. Do you feel at home or do you feel isolated at UNAM?

6. a. How do your parents/family feel about the fact that you are a university student now?

    b.. How do you feel about being a university student?

7. What are your future plans?

ADDENDUM E: COPY OF SHORT STORY

OUR WIFE   by Karen King-Aribisala

1. They slit the heels of condemned criminals. It's a way of making sure they don't get to heaven. The angels might believe a certain soul looks well enough. But once that soul turns his back, **he's done for**. The soul is escorted to hell, the gashed heels telling the ugly tale.

2. The red ripe bruises on my heels brought home these thoughts with a certain insistence. No one had cut my heels, but the bruises were there all the same. It was the wrapper of heavy woven material which some Nigerians call *asoke*, that did it. It zagged and cut this edge into **my alien unaccustomed flesh**, until every movement was agony.

3. I began to feel like Hans Anderson's 'little mermaid'. The mermaid turned woman, who, for love of an earthling, gave up her life in the element, the nether depths of her sea; and changed her fishes' tail for human legs. Every step was pain for her. Like cutting swords in tender flesh, the writer said. Pain for love of her earthling prince. Pain for her lost life in the sea. Pain for her love of a prince who could not begin to fathom her depths, her element. Pain, pain and more pain.

4. The wrapper was a sword. In all fairness, it was a splendid affair. Indeed, **the entire outfit has an innate majesty.** The wrapper itself was thickly braided, with its intricately woven threads and elaborate embroidery. It hung from the waist in a multitude of folds. The *buba* tucked into it was of a lacy material. It was partially hidden by a longer piece of cloth carried over the right shoulder like a shawl. And the entire ensemble was set off by a *gele* of crisp silk which stuck out from the head at various angles.

5. These head-ties could be vicious weapons when the need arose. At the church I had to sit by a woman whom I know didn't like me. She wasn't partial to the idea of a foreigner in the family. Maybe I imagined her aggressive attack, but at moments, she'd suddenly swing her head, and an angle of head-tie jabbed my face, my eyes. I had to spend the rest of the service avoiding the head-tie, ducking and lowering my head.

6. By the time the service had ended, I was **a physical wreck**. My neck ached. My head, with its weight of *gele*, pounded as we emerged into the noonday sun. And. Of course, **my heels told me their bloody story**. The ceremony was not yet over. **My stomach wrenched its signal of fertility**, and **my body ached its way to the graveyard**. It was as hot as hell, and as some spadefuls of earth were thrown over the body, a relative screamed and beat her breast in vain. Her man was gone. She would never touch. See him smile. Quarrelling was over. Reconciliation. **Promises, all over with those few spadefuls of earth.**

7. Slowly we walked from the graveyard to a large compound to eat. There were many houses of red earth. The polluted drains channeled their dank filth to an open court-yard, where elaborately dressed friends and relatives of the bereaved sat around in various groups.

8. As a junior wife, I was expected to serve **the endless battalions of relatives.** But then, my heels bled. Dollops of pounded yam were unwrapped from parcels of cellophane paper and placed on the plastic dishes specially commissioned for the occasion. And soon the *egusi* soup displaced the face of the dead man. Not altogether. For between mouthfuls his now grease-stained face, beamed up at us from the plate's centre. We ate, **my heels refusing to serve the relatives.** The senior wives of the family really did not mind my reticence. The foreigner was, after all, out of her element. She could not be expected to understand this celebration of death. Let her be.

9. My stomach refused to accept the sticky yam. The *egusi* soup repelled. My whole body it seemed was in a state of rebellion; the senses assaulted by the heat. The stench of the gutters, the heaviness, **the weight of the oppressive reams of materials which seemed to imprison my every movement.** Then there was the noise. A band had assembled for this ceremony of death. About twenty musicians gyrated. And twisted to the beat of their instruments. Mostly drums, and **an electric guitar whose sharp twangs cut the air with a gash of sound.** The shrill voice of **the band-leader's falsetto rose and fell about us.**

10. The other wives were still busy distributing pots of food to the relatives of the deceased. It was the regular ceremonial fare: joloff rice, stews in red oil, spinach bruised with the red of tomatoes and palm oil, and the steamed bean cake called *moin moin* suffused with vegetable pinkness. **The**

general noise was punctuated with cries of *Iyawo* ("wife"), as the crowd demanded their share of the food.

11. **The day rolled on**. 'Spraying' had begun. It seemed like a game. A macabre, gruesome drama, unraveling before me. About twenty women in a group. All wearing the same uniform *asoke* and lace, shuffled in the dust. One of them held a picture of the dead man high above her head as she moved her hips and folds to the sound of the music. A particularly rotund woman sat on a man's knee and wiped his face. He gave her money for her efforts.

12. It was only then I noticed her. The bereaved, the wife, whose man had died. She was sitting two chairs away from me, and she was staring into space, immobile. Her hands neatly clasped in front of her. She seemed completely isolated from the bustling din around her. And in that glance and pose **it seemed as if her garments were weeping.** The wrapper's edge dragged into the dust with an indescribable tiredness. **The sequined** *huba* **blinked wearily,** with glassy unshed tears. Even the wicked *gele* seemed to be in mourning. **Its heavy mountain of folds** swelled and dropped, nearly obscuring her face. She must have caught, felt, my unabated stare, for she looked at me full in the eyes, blankly before she gazed into nothing.

13. The other wives left her alone. But they were exhorting me to dance, dance for the dead man. Again I remembered the **lonely mermaid with the sword of heels.** Eventually she died. She threw herself into the sea, and was turned into white foam on the crest of a wave. Her prince married another earthling. Her prince had loved her. But he had loved her as a child. A plaything. And when the time came, she had to return to her element, the sea.

14. The sword on my heels pierced the flesh until they reached the bone. I rose to dance for the dead man. I danced and danced and ached and jiggled to the music. With the other wives, I placed money on the heads and foreheads of relatives. They placed money on my aching body.

15. But the ceremony of death was not yet over. And so I danced. Someone saw the edge of the wrapper laced in crimson. The wives told me to sit down and rest. But I could not. Seeing me dance, the relatives cried increasingly for me to serve them.

16. They were hungry; they wanted more food. When they saw the tray in my hand, they were delighted. '*Iyawo, Iyawo,* come and serve us,' they cried. I had never seen so many eyes and hands stretching and claiming.

17. The revelry went on all night until the early hours of the morning. The bereaved woman sat on. As she turned to go home to her husbandless house, she moved towards me. **"Our wife, my dea**r," she said. "Thank you for joining the dance."

ULEG EXAMINATION: READING PASSAGE

SECTION 1: READING

Read the article entitled **Effects of Globalization on the poor** and answer the questions that follow.

Effects of Globalization on the poor

1. Globalization in its literal sense is the process of making or rather the transformation of some things or phenomena into global ones. It can be described as a process by which people of the world are united into a single society that functions together.

2. This process is a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political forces. It is often used to refer to economic globalization that is integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology. Together with poverty, they epitomize two of the most pressing issues in international development today.

3. While the process of globalization possesses an enormous potential capacity to accelerate economic growth and development, the depth of poverty found in many parts of the developing world is still unacceptably high. Pro-globalization proponents say the globalization process is turning into a destructive tsunami that wrecks the already low standard of living of vulnerable households.

4. Despite the world wide passionate debate about the impact of globalization on the world's poor, there are very few studies which have systematically examined the various transmission mechanisms through which globalization ultimately affects the poor within different specific contents. This extract contains writings by leading development economists analyzing critically and rigorously how different manifestations of globalization tend to influence poverty in the developing world.

5. Many contribute globalization as direct cause of the downfall of the poor across the globe. However, globalization can be pro-poor if a government implements correct policies and institutions.

6. Although many countries have failed during their globalization process, these experiences provide any developing country with substantial information about how to avoid their problems during globalization. Globalization is a process, and as such, requires careful decisions along the way.

7. Several of some once-developing countries exist, and these countries are models for any developing country that is globalizing. Avoiding globalization is not an option because countries that have taken this route, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, are in a terrible state.

8. The four components that determine the extent to which each country has globalized are economic integration, personal contract, technology and political engagement. According to Foreign Policy Magazine which tracked each country throughout the past decade, these components are effective proxies of economic growth, world inequality, and world poverty.

9. The calculations used to determine economic integration are: Trade, which is the sum of imports and exports, foreign direct investment inflows and outflows and net factor income paid foreign factors production are the factors used to determine economic integration. However, other people argue that economic integration increases income inequality.

10. Personal contact consists of international phone traffic, international travel and tourism and cross border capital transfers, such as loans, securities or aid and remittances, which are defined as transfers of money by workers to their home countries. Higher personal contacts reduce poverty. The technology component is an aggregate of the number of internet users, internet hosts, and secure internet servers. Both personal contacts and technology transfers decrease income inequality among people within a country.

11. The number of embassies in the country, the number of memberships in international organizations, and the number of UN Security Council missions undertaken during the year determine the political engagement statistic. Political engagement is not correlated with poverty or inequality with statistical significance.

12. Globalization can reduce poverty because it acts as a filter that magnifies the impact that institutions and policies have on the poor. The outcome of globalization for the poor depends on the quality of economic institutions and policies. Therefore, if a country has sound policies in its institutions, globalization can positively affect the poor.

13. The effects of globalization are difficult to isolate from other effects that have had significance on the poor. However, some effects of globalization have been isolated and follow some basic trends which comprise capital technological change, labor saving technological change and volatility of income prices, among others.

14. Capital saving technological change can be pro-poor if the poor are able to learn the technology, if a skill-biased company demands more goods that are produced by unskilled, or if skill-biased company creates intermediate inputs that are used by an unskilled. Labor saving technological change, which is pro-poor because, in developing countries, increases the marginal productivity to unskilled labor.

15. Volatility of income, prices, or output in the short-run, which is bad for the poor, unless policies and institutions are implemented to enhance microeconomic stability. Extreme volatility for primary commodities is bad for the farmers that produce primary commodities, but is mixed for the poor who consume primary commodities because their prices, although volatile, are less expensive.

16. Potentially lower tariff rates can have an extremely positive pro-poor impact. Capital flows are pro-poor if the money is foreign direct investment but are bad for the poor if the money is speculative (unhedged short-term capital attempting to make gains from arbitrage). Capital flight, which is bad for the poor, can occur unless there are regulations to regulate interest rates, ensure full disclosure of information, avoid moral hazard, avoid over-lending, and avoid lending to risky loan applicants.

17. Safety nets such as education, health and welfare reform should be provided for the poor during trade and financial liberalization. These institutions create an opportunity for those who are living in extreme poverty to learn skills that will increase their marginal productivity, and therefore their wage grades increases.

18. The redistribution of wealth, such as asset ownership, for the poor, targeted lending, progressive taxes and consumer subsidies, is also considered a safety net that can be used during crises or volatile times to help protect the poor from the cruelty of extreme poverty. If redistribution is necessary to correct some of the short and medium-term effects of globalization, then several methods of redistribution are possible. These include increase asset ownership, targeted lending, targeted education, progressive taxes and consumer subsidies. Some of these redistribution techniques will not work for low-income countries. For example, low-income countries will have a hard time implementing minimum wage, targeted income or wage subsidy programs, whereas middle income countries will have more success with these programs.

19. Pressure must be placed on the governments in developing countries to provide the proper redistributive methods, in the short-term, that do not deter incentives that would have otherwise created a strong economy. If redistribution is provided over the long-term, the incentives to become globally competitive are thwarted, and people will always require handouts. People need to become self- sufficient, and therefore, redistribution must not carry into the long-term as an end in itself.

Source: Focal point, Vol. 1 Issue 4

ADDENDUM G: LETTER OF DIRECTOR OF UNAM LANGUAGE CENTRE

Language Centre
UNAM
WINDHOEK
12 December 2007

Dr S. F. Nyathi
The Director
Language centre
UNAM
WINDHOEK

Dear Dr Nyathi

PhD Study

I would just like to inform you that my proposal for a PhD thesis at the Universty of Stellenbosch has been accepted. I envisage conducting an empirical study for this degree in 2008.

The title of my thesis is as follows:
    The Role of African literature in enhancing Critical Literacy in First-Generation entrants at the University of Namibia.

As discussed with you previously, I will be conducting my research while teaching a group of UCG students in 2008. The data collected in this study will be used as part of the PhD thesis and will remain the property of the University of Namibia.

Should you want to discuss my study with me, you are welcome to contact me at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

Talita C. Smit

Director of the Language Centre: ....

Date: 19/12/07 ....